



More than 30,000 to Run on Chevron Houston Marathon Weekend

Record turnout expected to generate nearly \$1.5 million for local charities

HOUSTON (Jan. 13, 2010) – Record participation has become synonymous with the annual Chevron Houston Marathon Weekend – and this year is no exception. More than 26,000 runners will take to the streets of Houston Sunday to participate in the Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Houston Half Marathon, El Paso Corporation 5K (“EP5K”) and Texas Children’s Hospital Kids’ Fun Run.

Fields for the 38th annual Chevron Houston Marathon and the ninth running of the Aramco Houston Half Marathon sold out for the fifth consecutive year, reaching capacity just 36 hours after registration opened. The EP5K also reached its field limit of 4,500 runners and an additional 4,000 are expected in the Saturday running of the Texas Children’s Hospital Kids’ Fun Run. The combined field is the largest in event history.

“Each year, we think we have reached a threshold for participation, and each year, the response from the running community in Houston, and around the world, exceeds our expectations,” said Brant Kotch, race director of the Chevron Houston Marathon. “We are extremely fortunate to have the support of a number of loyal sponsors that make these races possible, and allow us to host an event that delivers a race experience second to none.”

The record number of runners is expected to result in a new standard for money raised by the Run for a Reason program. The annual charity initiative connects runners with 46 Houston-area nonprofit organizations. Participants in all three races can collect donations on behalf of a charity of their choice. Even before a mile has been run, runners have raised more than \$1.2 million, giving Run for a Reason a chance at raising close to \$1.5 million for participating charities.

In the elite races, runners from Kenya and Ethiopia are expected to show the way in the marathon, while American athletes will compete for national half marathon championships.

Jason Mbote and **Charles Kibiwott**, both of Kenya, are the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds, respectively, in the marathon. Both runners own sub 2:09 personal bests. American **Brett Gotcher** (Flagstaff, Ariz) also could contend for the marathon title. He won his first national road championship at 20k in September and is seeded third.

Defending champion **Teyba Erkesso** of Ethiopia is the top seed among the women. Erkesso dominated the race a year ago en route to setting a course record of 2:24:18 in her very first marathon. **Paige Higgins** (Flagstaff, Ariz.) is the No. 2 seed in the marathon, while **Tara Quinn-Smith** of Canada is seeded third.

Both the men’s and women’s winner will be awarded \$35,000, part of a total marathon prize purse of \$130,000.

The Aramco Houston Half Marathon is once again hosting the USA Half Marathon Championships. **Josh Rohatinsky** (Portland, Ore.), **Tim Nelson** (Portland, Ore.) and **Antonio Vega** (Minneapolis, Minn.) are the top seeds in the men’s division.

The women’s field features three highly decorated runners, led by 2008 Olympian **Shalane Flanagan** (Pittsboro, N.C.). The two-time Olympian won a bronze medal at 10,000m at the Beijing Games and is seeded second in her first half marathon. Defending champion **Magdalena Lewy Boulet** (Oakland, Calif.) is the No. 1 seed. She won a year ago in 1:11:47.



Runners in the championship races will be competing for \$59,500 in prize money, with \$12,000 awarded to each winner.

Chevron Houston Marathon Weekend 2010 will get under way with packet pickup Friday at the Memorial Hermann Sports Medicine Institute EXPO. The EXPO – featuring more than 100 exhibitors, along with seminars on health, fitness and running – will be open Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the George R. Brown Convention Center, Hall A3, third level. The EXPO is free and open to the public. Packet pickup is not available on race day.

The race action will begin Sunday at 6:45 a.m. with the marathon and half marathon wheelchair start. The first of two waves in both races will begin at 7 a.m., followed by the second wave at 7:10 a.m. The EP5K will start at 7:30 a.m.

The Chevron Houston Marathon, a Running USA founding member, is the nation's premier winter marathon, annually attracting participants from nearly all 50 U.S. states and many foreign countries. In 2009, more than 26,000 runners participated in four marathon weekend events (marathon, half marathon, 5K run and children's run). The Houston Marathon has been ranked among the top five in the nation by the *Ultimate Guide to Marathons* for fastest course, organization and crowd support. More than 5,000 volunteers organize the race, which is Houston's largest single-day sporting event.

For more information, visit www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com or call 713-957-3453.

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