



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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THE WOODLANDS MARATHON MANAGEMENT UNVEILS FASTER, SAFER COURSE FOR 2013 RACE

THE WOODLANDS, TX (February 11, 2013) – In an effort to lessen the traffic impacts to the community and improve the safety of all participants and spectators, The Woodlands Marathon Management, LLC is excited to announce significant changes to its course for both the Fidelity Investments The Woodlands Marathon and St. Luke's The Woodlands Half Marathon, to be held Saturday, March 2, 2013.

"The Precinct 3 County Commissioner's Office has shown their willingness to make the events in The Woodlands safe and successful by assisting with the education of residents to minimize impact on the roadways," says race director Willie Fowlkes. "The Woodlands Marathon has a large economic impact on the community and supports many local organizations through donations.

"The benefits far outweigh the small sacrifices the residents make over a six-hour period."

Residents, participants and spectators will be able to access The Woodlands Marathon Traffic Guide from the event website at www.thewoodlandsmarathon.com for detailed information about how to navigate through The Woodlands on race day.

"We believe educating the residents on where to go with the Traffic Guide and how to commute around the course should make automobile traffic flow easier," said Fowlkes. "The new setup makes it safer and easier for us to open roads for vehicle traffic."

Instead of a generally clockwise course that last year put runners going west on heavily-traveled Woodlands Parkway, runners will now navigate a loop bounded by Six Pines Drive, Research Forest Drive, Kuykendahl Road and Lake Woodlands Drive in a counter-clockwise direction.

Half marathon participants will complete one loop while marathoners will make two complete loops.

Additionally, the Precinct 3 County Commissioner's Office has approved the complete closures of the eastbound lanes on Research Forest and the westbound lanes of Lake Woodlands Drive.

"Research Forest, however, will open one lane after the final participant of the first loop turns on to Kuykendahl," explained Fowlkes.

Complete closures deliver benefits to runners, volunteers and spectators alike.

"There will be less congestion, meaning runners will be able to spread out and move at a pace faster than being restricted to one lane and a shoulder," Fowlkes said. "It helps the volunteers by moving the water stops out of the drainage areas and onto the streets, which provides for safer footing.

“Our spectators will be in areas, at least on the first loop on Research Forest, where the risk of automobile traffic whizzing by them is a concern.”

The changes have already received favorable reviews from both of last year’s marathon winners, Warr Acres, Oklahoma’s Camille Herron and Flagstaff, Arizona’s Jeffrey Eggleston.

“I’m planning to be really fit for it, because the course is flat and fast and faster than many others,” said Herron, who will run the Mercedes Marathon in Birmingham, Alabama next month before returning to The Woodlands.

“I also believe this course is well setup to be fast with the right personnel and conditions,” added Eggleston.

Herron returns to defend her marathon title while Eggleston hopes to take aim at one loop of the eight-turn course in the St. Luke’s The Woodlands Half Marathon.

The prize purse for the 2013 Fidelity Investments The Woodlands Marathon and the St. Luke’s The Woodlands Half Marathon will be a combined minimum of \$26,000.

The elite athletes are not the only ones who will find the new course, which takes runners west on Research Forest Drive and brings them back east on Lake Woodlands Drive, to their liking, says Dana Lyons of Finish Strong Coaching, the marathon’s official training partner.

“Athletes wishing to do well (on this course) should add some longer runs on a rolling course, some hill repeat workouts as well as some goal paced runs,” he says.

Both courses were measured and certified by USA Track and Field last December.

The Woodlands Marathon will be a qualifier for the 2014 Boston Marathon and was where 78 runners ran qualifying times in 2012.

For more information about the course, including pictures of the course maps and a street-by-street description, please visit www.thewoodlandsmarathon.com and click on “Course Info” under the Marathon or Half Marathon tabs.

About The Woodlands Marathon Management

The Woodlands Marathon Management is an event production company that operates with a primary goal of providing individuals the opportunity to participate in a running event that promotes the advancement of running. The directors of The Woodlands Marathon Management share a passion for The Woodlands community, the Houston region and the active sport lifestyle. They have teamed up to produce this premier event that will provide The Woodlands and surrounding communities options for living a healthy lifestyle with purpose.

About The Woodlands

Located just 30 minutes north of Houston, Texas and minutes from George Bush Intercontinental Airport, The Woodlands is the destination for leisure guests, individual business travelers and groups of all sizes. Visitors to The Woodlands enjoy more than eight million square feet of world-class shopping, dining and entertainment options, more than 194 miles of hike-and-bike trails, 124 parks, the 1,700-acre George Mitchell Nature Preserve, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, kayaking on Lake Woodlands, and taking a cruise on The Woodlands Waterway. The Woodlands features world-class sporting events including the Memorial Hermann Ironman Texas, Insuperity Golf Championship and the Nike South Invitational. The Woodlands also is home to more than 1,500 guestrooms in upscale and boutique properties, select service, limited service, conference and convention centers and a resort.

For more information on The Woodlands, go to www.VisitTheWoodlands.com. Also, “like” The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/VisitTheWoodlands, “follow” them on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheWoodlandsCVB and “view” them on YouTube at www.YouTube.com/TheWoodlandsCVB.

For more information, please visit the event website at <http://www.thewoodlandsmarathon.com/>.

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