

Registration for the second annual Mankato Marathon will open on New Year's Day. The inaugural race, held Oct. 23, drew about 2,000 runners. Officials plan to double those numbers for the Oct. 22, 2011, event.



File photo

# Thousands testify first Mankato Marathon was long on success

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The inaugural Mankato Marathon on Oct. 23 drew about 2,000 runners and turned away many more who wanted to participate in the race. Thousands more friends, family members and curiosity seekers lined the roads and trails of the course and waited at the finish to show support for the runners.

Former Gustavus Adolphus runner James Sorenson and Minnesota State women's track and field coach Jen Blue won the

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men's and women's titles, respectively. A half marathon and 10-kilometer race also were held.

"It was an even better success than we imagined," said Anna Thill, president of the Greater Mankato

Convention & Visitors Bureau. "There was lots of excitement in the community that people are still talking about three months later."

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# MARATHON: Next year's race to have 1,500-runner limit

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That past success is the reason why the marathon ranks fifth on The Free Press' top 10 stories of 2010. But Thill and other race organizers aren't spending as much time looking back as they are looking forward.

Registration for the second marathon will open on New Year's Day.

The race will take place on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011, and the course will be tweaked to accommodate twice the number of participants.

"There definitely was a celebratory spirit," race director Mark Bongers said. "It was a big success. ... We hope to improve it, and make it larger."

According to Bongers, next year's race will have a

1,500-runner limit for the full marathon (about 800 ran it last year), a 2,000-runner limit for the popular half marathon (1,100 ran it last year) and a 750-runner limit for the 10K race. Bongers said a Friday-evening 5K race will also be held, and it will be open to 750 runners.

To accommodate the extra runners, the course will be tweaked. The race will be

taken off the trails, like the Red Jacket Trail, and out of downtown's Entertainment Alley.

Streets like Riverfront Drive will be used, and the finish will take place at Riverfront and Hickory Street, not far from last year's finish line, which sat on Hickory Street in front of the Verizon Wireless Center. Officials are working with

the city to make for a smooth race day.

"It's generally the same course," Bongers said. "We're going to change some areas. More of the course will be on the roads, rather than on the sidewalks and trails. There might be more (traffic) congestion on that day."

All of the post-race activities will again take place on Hickory Street.

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