

MEDIA ALERT CONTACT

Dan Bourgeois
504-669-1530
dan@msgulfcoastmarathon.com



SOAK UP THE RUN at 1st Annual

Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon, December 9 - 11, 2016

A Three-Day Running Festival Showcasing the Mississippi Gulf Coast Culture

BILOXI, MS (March 14, 2016) - Registration opens for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon, a three-day running festival happening December 9-11, 2016 beginning in Pass Christian, Mississippi, winding along the beach front on Highway 90, or Beach Boulevard, to Biloxi, Mississippi. A true celebration of running and Mississippi Gulf Coast culture, the running festival seeks to establish itself as a destination event with strong ties and opportunities for locals to showcase the music, the food and the entertainment this coastal region has to offer.

After five years of producing the award-winning, rapidly successful Louisiana Marathon, the same production team founded the Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon in partnership with local municipalities and travel partners, including Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast and select casino properties, to attract over 3,000 runners and 5,000 attendees from around the country. Eventually, the organizers intend to host 10,000 runners and 25,000 attendees.

Event director Patrick Fellows grew up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and has a unique bond with the area since he completed a swim for over 32 miles in the bay as his foray into endurance sports. He actually swam more than 26 miles before he ran his first marathon. As an accomplished Ironman, marathoner, motivational speaker and restaurateur, Fellows intends to, in his own words, "Make this 'the event' that best represents where I grew up and where my parents live."

"Entering our first year on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and realizing our dream of producing a first-class event where I attended high school and celebrated many family events is special," said Craig Sweeney, co-founder and strategic partnerships director of Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon. "We attribute our continued success to our volunteers, staff and partners who also share a similar goal to not only improve the health and fitness of those along the Coast, but also have the event recognized as the premiere Running Festival on the Gulf Coast."

Earlier this year, more than 8,600 runners, 1,100 volunteers and 24,000 attendees from 48 states and 11 countries enjoyed the various aspects of The Louisiana Marathon, resulting in an economic impact of over \$5,700,000 for Baton Rouge and the State from those traveling from outside of the city. A geographical breakdown of the field splits evenly into thirds: from Baton Rouge, from Louisiana and from outside of the state.

"Before moving to Mississippi I had the pleasure of working with these guys and enjoyed Pat's stories about swimming 32 miles across the bay," says Renée Areng, Executive Director of Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast. "With that much passion and energy, local ties and the success in recent years in Louisiana, we look forward to a long and successful future."

"We hope to have similar impact to local businesses and the travel industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast as we have had in Baton Rouge," said Jonathan 'Juba' Dziuba, Race Director for both running festivals. "We are fortunate to have this opportunity and we respect the responsibility entrusted to us by our partners and our runners since we are not just producing one race for many runners, but rather many races for each runner."

Online registration for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon will be open to the general public at noon, Thursday, March 17, 2016, on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants should register now, as fees will increase slightly as running festival grows closer. In honor of their service to our country, a 20 percent discount on registration is available for military, law enforcement personnel and other first responders.

Founded in 2015, The Mississippi Gulf Coast Marathon, a Coastal Running Fest, will be held December 9-11, 2016 to

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celebrate the local flare and beauty of running along the scenic beaches from Pass Christian to Biloxi. Races include a marathon (26.2 miles), half marathon (13.1 miles), 5K (3.1 miles) and kids marathon race program (a 1.2 mile fun run). The weekend kicks off Friday, December 9 at 11:00 am until 7:00 pm, with a health and fitness expo at the convention center. On Saturday, December 10 the 5K, Kids 5 and a Kids Marathon starts off at 8:00 am, followed by a post-race party and the expo reopens from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. On Sunday morning, December 11 the marathon starts in Pass Christian and half marathon starts in Gulf Port at 7:00 am. The Finish Festival, a post-race beach-party offering local Gulf Coast seafood, Mississippi style barbeque and live performances featuring country, rock and blues, begins when runners cross the finish line and jams until 2:00 pm -- location to be released.

For more information, and to register, visit www.msgulfcoastmarathon.com.

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