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Livestrong announces title sponsorship of Austin Marathon

Share By [Pam LeBlanc](#) | Tuesday, June 8, 2010, 02:57 PM

The city's biggest running event will take on a yellow hue starting next year.

Livestrong, the Austin-based non-profit founded by seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong and dedicated to providing support for people living with cancer, announced on Tuesday a three-year title sponsorship of the Austin Marathon & Half Marathon.

The organization will contribute \$250,000 a year in in-kind and cash contributions to the event. Some of the donations will come in the form of shirts and race supplies from Livestrong corporate partners, including Nike.

Livestrong and the Austin Marathon share the goal of encouraging fitness and healthy lifestyles, and the collaboration between the two adds energy to the race, said race director John Conley. The event, which includes a 26.2-mile full marathon and 13.1-mile half marathon, will mark its 20th running on Feb. 20, 2011.

"Livestrong and the Austin Marathon are both in the business of changing peoples' lives," Conley said.

The sponsorship likely will mean a surge in participation in the race, which now ranks as the 23rd largest marathon in the United States. To date, some 130,000 runners from 50 states and more than 40 countries have crossed the finish line.

"When people think of Austin they think of UT and football, South by Southwest and Austin City Limits," Conley said. "We want them to think of the marathon in the same way."

In 2011, race organizers will cap entry at a combined 20,000 runners between the full and half marathon.

"From an awareness standpoint, this could be as big as the Livestrong Challenge," said Livestrong president and CEO Doug Ulman, referring to the organization's signature event, a fund-raising bike ride held each October that draws cyclists to Austin from all over the country. "It's an opportunity to reach 20,000 more people and their families and friends."

Some 28 million people around the world are living with cancer today, according to Livestrong officials.

The marathon already serves as a fund-raising engine for local and national charities through its 26 Miles for 26 Charities program, which draws athletes to run for pledges and volunteers to man 26 water stops along the race route.

Organizers say the race has generated more than \$90 million for the local Austin economy and \$6 million for Austin non-profits since it was first staged in 1992.

"This marathon is an Austin institution, and Livestrong is an Austin institution," Mayor Lee Leffingwell said at a press conference to announce the news.

Does the new partnership mean that Lance Armstrong will run the Austin Marathon? Livestrong Austin Marathon & Half Marathon organizers would love to think so, but that depends on whether or not the cyclist is still racing bikes.

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Race registration is open at www.youraustinmarathon.com. For more information about Livestrong go to www.livestrong.org.

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