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Tourism Bureau Announces Marathon to Promote Starved Rock Country

Ottawa, IL, November 19, 2013 – The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau formally announced plans for a Starved Rock Country Marathon, which will be held on Saturday, May 10, 2014. The event will include a full 26-mile Marathon, as well as a Half Marathon, beginning and ending in Ottawa. Bob Navarro from the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau and Race Director Matt Skelly, of Starved Rock Country, released details of the Starved Rock Country Marathon at a press conference Tuesday afternoon. Joining them were Ottawa Mayor Bob Eschbach, Boyd Palmer of the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, John Newby of Starved Rock Country, and Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau Vice President, MaryBeth DeGrush.

"We're hoping the Starved Rock Country runners, their friends and family will be spending nights in our hotels and eating in our amazing restaurants, shopping our unique and interesting stores," said Heritage Corridor CVB President/CEO, and avid runner, Bob Navarro. From Morris to Princeton, Mendota to Streator, all of the towns have the potential to see benefit from the May 10 Marathon, he added. "We encourage all hotels, restaurants, tourism attractions, local shops and businesses to get into the racing spirit," said Navarro. Planners are expecting a large number of runners, estimating as many as 2,000 could participate. "It's going to be a great event for everyone involved, whether runners, supporters or local businesses," said Starved Rock Country Marathon Race Director Matt Skelly. Skelly and the planning team are eager to get the word out to local runners, but also look to broaden the news of the event throughout the Midwest region. Marathon registration is open at the newly-launched website, www.starvedrockcountrymarathon.com.

Ottawa's Mayor, Bob Eschbach, anticipates a good outcome for the entire region. "It's important for us to continue to host events that draw visitors to Ottawa and the entire Starved Rock Country region," said Eschbach during the press conference. "We're eager to see a boost in visitors and economic impact to the entire area." Eschbach praised the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau, a Starved Rock Country Marathon sponsor, in helping to promote another Ottawa event. Matt Gross, District staffer for U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger, offered similar enthusiasm for the event, saying, "Congressman Kinzinger is eager to share news of this great event with his constituents." He added, "This Marathon is a terrific way to introduce those visitors new to the region to the beauty that is Starved Rock Country."

The Starved Rock Country Marathon will start at 7:00 a.m., in Ottawa, with the half-marathon set to begin at 7:15 a.m. The all-road race will be held on a Certified U.S. Track and Field Course, and will be a Qualifier Eligible Race. The exact route will be announced in January, 2014, once finalized plans are approved by the State of Illinois to ensure road closures and maximum participant safety. The route will be challenging, as it will cover elevations and hills typical to the Starved Rock Country region, according to Navarro. The cost for runners will be \$80 for the full and \$60 for the half-marathon. Registration for the event can be made through the newly-created website, www.starvedrockcountrymarathon.com.

The Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau generates economic impact within the communities and counties along the 94-mile Illinois & Michigan Canal. In 2014, the CVB will be commemorating its 30th Anniversary, as it was in 1984 that Congress designated the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor as the nation's first such Corridor. For more information, go to www.HeritageCorridorCVB.com, or call 800.926.CANAL (2262).

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