



## **Ottawa Race Weekend breaks attendance and participation records**

*Organizers estimate weekend injected \$20 million into local economy*

May 24, 2009, Ottawa – New records for attendance, course, world times and fundraising marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ottawa Race Weekend as more than 36,000 participants lined up to run in one of 7 race events.

Under perfect weather conditions, crowds of more than 100,000 lined city streets to catch fleeting glimpses of world-class elite racers and familiar faces of family and friends.

“We were aiming for 35,000 runners for our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary,” said Jim Robinson, General Manager, Run Ottawa. “By Tuesday of last week three of our races were sold out, and we entered the weekend with 36,690 registered athletes.”

The following records were broken:

- 8k (5 mile) distance during the MDS Nordion 10k race. Deriba Merga of Ethiopia beat the standing 8k world record of 22:02 minutes in 21:48 minutes.
- Deriba also beat the course record, running 27:24 minutes to beat the 28:12 minute record held by Ottawa Race Weekend Race Director John Halverson since 1988.
- A world record for single leg amputee competition was set by Rick Ball of Orillia, Ontario, who ran the 10k MDS Nordion race in a time of 37:55 minutes, 5 seconds faster than the old time.

Final registration numbers for the 7 races:

Ottawa Marathon: 4,200  
Half-Marathon: 10,435  
MDS Nordion 10K: 9,520  
MDS Nordion 5K: 8,083  
MDS Nordion Family 2K: 2,395  
Kids' Marathon: 1,772  
Wheelchair Marathon: 5



As for participants in the MDS Nordion Ottawa Hospital Race Weekend Challenge, they have more than just crossing the finish line to be proud of. Together they raised a record \$835,560 for The Ottawa Hospital – the official local charity of Ottawa Race Weekend. The Ottawa Race Weekend ranks in the city’s top 5 festivals, attracting among the highest numbers of out-of-towners.

“A study done five years ago, when we only had 23,149 participants, showed the economic impact was more than \$16 million,” said Robinson. “With 36,670 runners, I would say that the impact on the city’s tourism industry and local merchants must now be close to \$20 million.”

Participation in the 2009 Ottawa Race Weekend was up by close to 10 per cent over last year.

“Running continues to grow in popularity at home and with out-of-towners choosing Ottawa as a race destination,” said Robinson. “Our goal for next year and beyond is to continue delivering the best running event in the country.”

#### **ABOUT THE OTTAWA RACE WEEKEND**

The Ottawa Race Weekend, Canada's premier running festival, combines competition, participation and fundraising to make a distinctive contribution to the health of the community. The 2008 Ottawa Race Weekend welcomed more than 32,873 participants in seven races, including the Ottawa Marathon and the MDS Nordion 10K. Run Ottawa, the organization behind the Ottawa Race Weekend, is run by a volunteer Board of Directors.

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