

Bellone, Suffolk Officials and Veterans Announce 2nd Annual Suffolk County Marathon: Freedom Fest 2016

Suffolk Marathon to be held on Sunday, October 30, 2016

SUFFOLK COUNTY, NY – (February 1, 2016) – Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone was joined by Suffolk County legislators, state officials, local veterans, members of the running community and the Greater Long Island Running Club today to announce the 2nd Annual Suffolk County Marathon: Freedom Fest 2016 which will be held on Sunday, October 30, 2016. The event will include a marathon, half marathon, and a newly added 5K race. Residents and visitors can register for any of the races at www.suffolkmarathon.com.

“I am extremely excited that Suffolk County will be hosting yet another a destination marathon where runners from all across the country can come to our region to participate in a wonderful race that will help to support our veterans,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “Whether it is by participating in our training runs, entering the race, becoming a volunteer or simply watching the runners on race day, this is an event that we want our residents to be proud of and for Suffolk County to continue to host this for years to come.”

All net proceeds will once again benefit veteran services in Suffolk County. Last year’s inaugural event raised more than \$160,000 for local veterans. The Suffolk County Marathon Fund Disbursement Advisory Committee is currently reviewing all grant applications submitted by not-for-profits. After comprehensive review, the Committee will distribute funds in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Disbursement Committee.

"As a veteran, I think it’s important that we highlight the needs of our veterans and any event that supports their efforts is critically important and certainly special to us,” said Presiding Officer Legislator DuWayne Gregory. "Thank you to County Executive Steve Bellone for his vision, his thought and energy to bring this event to fruition."

“It is wonderful to be part of the 2nd annual Suffolk County Marathon and we are proud and honored that once again Heckscher State Park will be included as part of the route for the Marathon, stated New York State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey. “State Parks encourages healthy recreation and exercise and there is no question that active lifestyles strengthen mind, muscles, heart and lungs and State Parks and communities across Suffolk County provide ample opportunity to run. We encourage everyone to sign-up and participate in this year’s marathon that benefits both our veterans and local businesses.”

"It’s exciting for me and for all of Patchogue Village to be able to be a part of the beginning and end of the race this year,” said Patchogue Village Mayor Paul Pontieri, whose son is currently serving in the United States Army. "To me, the monies that go back to the veterans organizations

is the paramount part of this event. My hope is, as we put this together, we can drive even more people to this race than we had last year, bring them into town and make this a very special event.”

"We had a great start with the marathon last year and this year we intend to keep it going – to keep making it better and better," said Mike Polansky, President of the Greater Long Island Running Club. "We want to make this the most runner-friendly event in the running community and we're going to do just that with County Executive Bellone's help and the help of the Suffolk County Legislature."

“This is an important event not only for the community but for everyone outside of Long Island to come in and get a taste of all of our beautiful, vibrant downtowns and our culture,” said Kristen Jarnagin, Executive Director of the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The marathon route will be enhanced and encompass a reversed route, which will mirror last year's course as much as possible to highlight the downtowns of Suffolk's south shore communities.

The enhanced route will begin in Patchogue Village and pass through the heart of the downtowns of Bayport, Sayville, Blue Point and Heckscher State Park, and finish back in Patchogue Village in order to provide more water and scenic views. Race organizers will work with local businesses, civic associations and chambers of commerce to organize watch parties and events along the route.

The race will also have a special veterans category for all active military and retired veterans as well as a para-olympics component.

The 2016 Suffolk County Marathon will be the third marathon County Executive Bellone plans to run in, including the 2015 Suffolk County Marathon and the 2014 New York City Marathon. The County Executive's active participation has been inspired by his commitment to live a healthier lifestyle, which includes a 69 pound weight loss since 2013.

For information on the 2nd Annual Suffolk County Marathon: Freedom Fest Marathon 2016, visit www.suffolkmarathon.com or www.facebook.com/SteveBellone.

Mike Polansky, GLIRC, Legislator Kevin McCaffrey, Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, County Executive Steve Bellone, Rose Harvey, NYS Parks Commissioner, Brendan Barrett, Sayville Running Company, Mayor Paul Pontieri, Wayne Horsley, Long Island Regional Director of NYS Parks

County Executive Steve Bellone signing up as first Suffolk County Marathon registrant.