Going green with the Paddy Pint
Paddy Pint Run set for St. Patrick's Day to benefit the Tooth Taxi and Crook County Foundation

By Holly Scholz, Central Oregonian | Tuesday, March 07, 2017

It's time to kick up your heels, plop on your green hat, and join the Fourth Annual Prineville Paddy Pint Run.

The St. Patrick's Day 5K and 1-mile fun run starts at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 17.

"The major focus of this event is to have fun on St. Patrick's Day," said race director Dr. Tony Ramos, a dentist at Ochoco Dental in Prineville. "We wanted to have a cause and include as many organizations and businesses and groups as possible."

Event proceeds will be split between the Tooth Taxi and Crook County Foundation as a way of promoting community health.

Performers will sing the National Anthem, and the firing of a cannon will announce the start of the race at 5:30 p.m. at Good Bike Co. near the Crook County Courthouse.

"Costumes are absolutely encouraged," Ramos said. "We have prizes for some of the best costumes we see."

The timed 5K race begins in the center of town and weaves to the east by Starbucks, and then it weaves back and through Ochoco Creek Park on the bike path and then west of town to Harwood Street and circles back to Fourth Street, where it ends at Windermere Real Estate and Room 1868.

"It makes a big figure eight," Ramos said.

The 1-mile race stays in the center of town and makes a smaller loop.

Racers can make several stops along the way — whether to have a brew at Sons of Beer and Ochoco Brewing Company or to stop for a coffee at Starbucks.

"If you stop with your bib on, it allows you to get a drink — all part of the fun and part of St. Patrick's Day," Ramos said.

The family-friendly event also has lots of other activities planned, such as a small obstacle course by Central Oregon Trail Alliance.

"They will build it as part of the run to help promote the trail alliance and some of the neat projects that they're doing around our community," Ramos said.

CrossFit members will encourage racers to add some extra cardio to their workout by having sets of repetitions and weights that they will do at different locations along the course.

"Some are carrying weights with them throughout the whole 5K. Others are stopping and doing pushups and air squats. It's a spectacle," Ramos laughed.

He also noted that the schools are involved, and proceeds will help their athletic funds.

Young runners can play games in a carnival afterward in Room 1868 next to the finish line. The entry fee covers "bangers and mash," traditional Irish fare.

"It's usually quite cold at the end of the race, but they'll get some food in the belly and warm up quick." Ramos said.
Live music and other food and drinks will add to the festive Irish atmosphere of the block party.

Local chiropractor Paul Slater will emcee the finish line, calling out the winners. There will be prizes for the fastest runners, the best costumes, and for the first kids who finish the 1-mile race.

The biggest winners will be the children who benefit from the dental work that the Tooth Taxi provides.

Proceeds from previous Paddy Pint Runs have been donated to the Tooth Taxi, which is a project of the Dental Foundation of Oregon. The dental van travels around the state, providing dental care to those in need, especially in rural areas. Ramos said the Tooth Taxi used to visit Prineville but then stopped.

"This seemed like a way to encourage their return. We've raised money for them, and not only have they have come back, they've committed to return annually for future Paddy Pint events," he said.

"For the $5,000 we raised and sent to them in a year, they'll come back and do $20,000 to $30,000 worth of work in our community on our kids. So it's huge bang for our community's collective dollar, plus we're having fun," Ramos said. "Part of the Paddy Pint's mission and my personal bias is to promote community health."

And new this year, race organizers have partnered with Crook County Foundation.

"We want to branch out a little bit and do some other things for the community that promote health and activity," Ramos said. "We haven't fully committed to a project yet, but half of the dollars this year will go to the foundation. There will be a fund that will grow for some sort of visible active-life promoting project."

An example, he said, would be helping with lighting for the bike path, so people could feel safer if they're running in the dark.

Ramos encourages runners to pre-register online and pick up their race packets between 4 and 7 p.m. Thursday, March 16 at Ochoco Brewing Company. Preregistering will make it easier for the runners to be timed properly.

"Some people are more competitive, and they're using it as a competitive race," Ramos said. "It's part of the fun for them. Others aren't. Some people don't even finish the race. They just stop at different places and socialize and never make it back."

The Paddy Pint Run has grown from 50 the first year, to 200 participants the second year and 325 last year.

"We're expecting 400 to 500 participants this year," Ramos said, adding that he encourages businesses along the route to participate as well for a chance to showcase the community.

"We want to really show off Prineville for what it is," Ramos said. "It's a pretty little place, and we get people from out of town."

Paddy Pint Run Details

Date: 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 17

Begins: Good Bike Co., 284 NE Third St., Prineville

Register online: runsignup.com (search Prineville)

5K fees: $27 for adults, $15 for 15 and younger, plus $2.50 fee

1-mile fees: $22 for adults, $12 for 15 and younger, plus $2.50 fee

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