



Edwardsville named Runner-Friendly Community by national running organization

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville has always been known as an active community in many ways.

There's no shortage of things to do in the Edwardsville area; running is a popular activity for those who are interested in it.

Road races often take place almost every weekend in the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon area, and thanks to the support given to the community by clubs, stores and area government, the Road Runners Club of America has named Edwardsville one of the organization's Runner-Friendly Communities of 2017.

The Metro Milers running club held a celebration of the designation Wednesday evening at Town and Country Bank in Edwardsville as part of the lead-up to next Saturday's Route 66 10K run in Edwardsville, which included a 10K (6.2-mile) run as part of the get-together.

"It was a rigorous application we submitted last August (to the RRCA) that included criteria along the lines of infrastructure, the running community and government support," said Matt Feldmann, the treasurer of the Metro Milers. "Madison County Transit is a large reason why we were able to apply for this because we have so many trails that are local – within Madison County, there are 160 miles of trails.

"If you look just within Edwardsville, there are seven different ways that you can go out on trails that can take you for as many miles as you can imagine. People do it all the time."

Feldmann understands the importance of the trails in Edwardsville and the rest of the community, which prompted the Milers to submit the application for the designation from the RRCA. "When we started looking at it, we said 'why aren't we one of these runner-friendly communities,'" Feldmann said. "We saw other towns like Belleville and Peoria had applied for it; I've run in both of those (cities) – I think we've got a leg up on both of those cities, so why shouldn't we apply for it.

"As we looked at it, it's a neat event, a neat process to think about why we're such a great place to run. As I thought about it, we're not just a runner-friendly community, I'd like to think that we're a runner-spoiled community. We've got three running stores, two (RRCA) clubs and several more clubs who aren't necessarily associated (with the RRCA) and the success of Edwardsville High's cross-country and track teams.

"How many other high schools can you say that you've seen that have a dedicated track and field complex (the Winston Brown complex at EHS); it's a very rare thing."

“I’d like to thank all of you for what you do for the community,” said Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton in remarks after being given a plaque commemorating the honor. “Really, as mayor, what I love to see and love to build our relationships, and what you’re seeing here today is a relationship between Edwardsville and Madison County Transit, we’ve got SIUE represented and what you have done from a business standpoint and a volunteer standpoint – think of all the events and fundraisers that running has brought to this community.

“It seems like every other weekend there’s a different 5K or 10K - that’s been a fantastic thing.”

