

B'ham hosts in-line skating benefit

The 2nd Annual Fresh Start In-Line Skating event will run on Aug. 8 in downtown Birmingham.

The Fresh Start event features five hours of in-line skating and related activities, with a focus on families and newer skaters. Proceeds from the event will go to EMEAC's environmental education program in area high schools.

It will take place on closed streets in downtown Birmingham, including Maple, Pierce, Merrill and Henrietta. Skating begins at 8 a.m., with the start of the Earth-Skate Marathon. The Marathon is a "pledge" event, designed for skaters of all abilities, with the simpler course allowing participants to skate as long and as fast as they want.

"We want local residents,

EMEAC members and serious skaters to all join us for a fun skate that morning," said executive director Elizabeth Harris.

"The Marathon allows anyone to skate as they like while raising funds for a good cause."

EMEAC is working to make the Marathon a skating and financial success, by trying to involve every category of skater. Harris and race director Kurt Martin have both pledged to skate the Marathon regardless of weather, and have offered themselves as "surrogate" skaters for people interested in collecting pledges but unable to skate the event themselves.

"What's great about the Marathon format is that it allows people to skate at their own pace for as long as they like and, collec-

tively, to significantly support local groups like EMEAC," explained Harris.

A 10 kilometer race follows the Marathon at high noon, split into different categories by age and ability. "This year people skating the 10k will find themselves with more people of similar speed. It should make for exciting racing and some close finishes," Martin pointed out.

The Fresh Start winds up with 100 and 400 meter sprints to crown the Fastest Skaters in Michigan. After the sprints, the event center switches to Shain Park, where the Awards Ceremony will crown the 10k and sprints winners.

Designed to be an environmentally friendly athletic event, the

Fresh Start will focus on giving the maximum number of people possible a positive impression of the joys and value of in-line skating. Free demonstration equipment and certified instructors will give people who have never skated before a chance to get a good start.

"In fact, someone could show up on the day of the event and skate all day, without owning or buying any equipment, or even knowing how to skate," Martin said. "We'll have skilled instructors and plenty of skates, helmets and protective gear. So anyone can come enjoy the day on wheels."

In addition, merchants will offer healthful food, skate accessories and athletic clothing throughout the day. Emphasis will be placed on keeping garbage to a minimum throughout, with composting and recycling of the event's waste a priority.

New laws regulate real estate sales

To the delight of real estate agents, Gov. John Engler signed two new laws regulating sales.

Realtor-initiated HB 4375, the property seller's disclosure act, and HB 4269, amendments to the real estate agency representation and license law, were signed Monday at the Michigan Association of Realtors summer meetings at the Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island.

"With the signing of this legislation into law, Michigan citizens will gain additional assurance that the American dream of home ownership and private property rights does not turn into a nightmare," said Bowen Brook, president of the Michigan Association of Realtors.



Pen pals: Bowen Brook (left), president of the state Realtors group, witnesses the governor's signature.

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