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SLO Marathon & Half Event Seeks New Home After Nearly a Decade in San Luis Obispo

SAN LUIS OBISPO, California – (December 6, 2019) – The 9th annual SLO Marathon & Half event is searching for a new home. The SLO Marathon, the largest running and fitness festival in the County, has been hosted in San Luis Obispo City since 2011. The weekend-long fitness festival includes a marathon, half marathon, relay races, 5K and two kids running races. Every year, a local who has made a significant contribution to the running community is acknowledged and introduced into the RaceSLO Hall of Fame. The YogaMusic Fest was added in 2018 to round out the three day weekend. The weekend long festival with food, beverages, music and vendors is free to the public. The event will be on hiatus for 2020 and will resume at it's new Central Coast location in 2021.

"Our dedicated team of locals and I have spent the last 13 years building a thriving community around endurance sports and outdoor fitness here on the Central Coast," said Samantha Pruitt, RaceSLO Founder and CEO. "Nationally, we have helped to put RaceSLO Town on the endurance map, showcasing the best of what San Luis Obispo has to offer in running, cycling, healthy lifestyle and human connection. Our tribe has selflessly created both economic and social impacts unique to our beloved hometown. My heart is heavy, not just for our company and my team but for the over 35,000 nationwide athletes, local sponsors, local vendors and suppliers, volunteers and beneficiaries who are all losing something they also hold dear. Though we have had our share of uphill obstacles, we always continued to work diligently with our community partners to overcome them. However, without a long-term commitment of venue and support from city and county stakeholders, we simply cannot continue to call San Luis Obispo our home. We're deeply grateful for our loyal sponsors and community members who continue to support us as we look towards the future and open up the invitation to one of the surrounding cities to become our new hometown location starting in 2021."

Based on an independent study by Productive Impact LLC, the [SLO Marathon & Half generated \\$2.44 million](#) in economic impact every year and countywide. An average of 56% of the race's athletes came from out of town and stayed all weekend. Additionally, for every one dollar spent by RaceSLO itself just putting on one of their local sporting events, \$5.63 worth of *additional* economic impact was generated into San Luis Obispo County. The annual race weekend hosts anywhere from 3,000 to 4,000 athlete guests and an additional 6,500 to 8,000 spectators. Collectively, RaceSLO's endurance sporting event portfolio generates over \$4 million for the local economy annually. Full report can be [downloaded here](#).

The human power behind the SLO Marathon & Half fitness festival weekend includes over 1,200 local volunteers and 40 local staff members. The event is also supported by over 35 local sponsors and suppliers. Since its inception, the event has helped to raise and donate over \$265,000 to local beneficiaries, including Jack's Helping Hand, Land Conservancy of SLO, Grizzly Youth Academy, Special Olympics, Challenged Athletes Foundation, Team Red, White and Blue, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Team, among others.

After two years of steadily increasing traffic control and course permit costs, the race faced too many hurdles out of the organizers control. These added pain points forced the organizers to make the difficult decision to leave the City of San Luis Obispo, according to Pruitt. First, the event's long term race venue, the Madonna Inn, decided not to renew its contract. The City of San Luis Obispo generously offered a new venue location across town. Unfortunately, they could not commit to a specific race course and could not grant a long term/multi-year commitment to the venue or the event date, which made future planning and stability of the event impossible to manage. Finally, Visit SLO CAL, the countywide destination marketing and management organization responsible for bringing tourism to the county, granted

significant monetary sponsorship funds to a non-local race brand Spartan, bringing a new competing endurance sporting event to San Luis Obispo area for Spring 2020. This new SLO CAL Presenting Sponsored running event will directly compete with RaceSLO's annual Spring SLO Marathon & Half fitness festival weekend, as well as compete with the 5th annual Fall trail running and obstacle race they produce, the SLO ULTRA & SLO ULTRA Games.

San Luis Obispo City Manager Derek Johnson said in a written statement, "The City of San Luis Obispo has worked closely with Race SLO organizers on the SLO Marathon & Half since its inception to ensure a safe and attractive event for participants and spectators, and to maximize the event's reach and benefits for the community while minimizing the impacts on our residents and businesses. Our community is grateful for the positive impacts that can be attributed to the event's success; however, we recognize the changing preferences from race participants and ultimately the hard decision made by RaceSLO to discontinue the SLO Marathon & Half Event in the city of San Luis Obispo."

"Our company's mission remains true; to use endurance sports and human experiences to create social and economic impact," said Pruitt. "The loyalty of our local business sponsors, suppliers, volunteers and athlete customers mean the world to us and for them, we will proudly forge onward and upward in a new location."

RaceSLO's world-class sporting events include the October SLO Ultra trail running festival, along with the SLO Ultra Games hosted annually by Visit Arroyo Grande at Lopez Lake in partnership with SLO County Parks. RaceSLO also produces the popular Endurance Town USA podcast and blog. The company also host free training runs and community events in collaboration with a variety of fitness, health and outdoor active local businesses and clubs year round.

About RaceSLO

Established in 2007 to bring world class fitness events to the beautiful California Central Coast, the [RaceSLO](#) current family of events includes the SLO Half Marathon, Half Relay and Family 5K & Kids Races plus SLO YogaMusic Fest (Spring) as well as the NEW SLO Ultra Games & the SLO Ultra Trail Races (Fall). Past owned events include the SLO GranFondo, the SLO MTB and the Central Coast Cancer Challenge. RaceSLO also supports other event producers to launch, market and produce events all over the USA. RaceSLO sponsors community run & fitness training programs, produces a health & fitness blog, plus hosts the popular Endurance Town USA Podcast, all while raising funds for local nonprofits: Over the last 13 years, RaceSLO has helped raise and donated over \$265,000 to nonprofits in our community. We invite anyone sharing our values to join us today by volunteering, participating or sponsoring our powerful efforts.