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Press Release

10,000 RUNNERS RUN UNIQUE RACE IN DUBLIN PORT TUNNEL

Sunday 10th December 2006: 10,000 runners will take part in The Dublin Port Tunnel 10k Run (under IAAF/ AAI rules) today, in association with Clonliffe Harriers Athletics Club and the Dublin Port Tunnel Project. This run is a once in a lifetime event, a totally unique experience for 10,000 people, a 10k road run in a 4.5km tunnel 20metres under the streets of Dublin. The Lord Mayor Cllr. Vincent Jackson will start the race.

“This is the one and only opportunity to see the Dublin Port Tunnel on foot, before it is open for business as a designated route for Heavy Good Vehicles to access Dublin Port and the motorway network off the M50”, says Lord Mayor, Cllr Vincent Jackson, whose charity, The Lord Mayor’s Fund will benefit from the race entrance fee. “It’s heartening that 10,000 runners will turn out in the middle of winter, to support a multitude of charities and appreciate this novel piece of infrastructure”.

There are 3037 women and 6683 Men registered with participants coming from Canada, USA, Finland, Germany, Iceland Iraq, Israel, Belgium, England and Northern Ireland. This is an IAAF race and a number of establish runners will make a bid for personal bests in this unique indoor/outdoor event :

Gary O Hanlon of Clonliffe Harriers, winning National Cross Country Team 2006.
Mick Treanor of Raheny European Masters Champion cross-country & 3000m indoor
Eugene O Neill of Crusaders Dublin, 5 times National Steeplechase Champion
Robert Connolly of (Dundrum SD European U 23 medallist, 3 & 5k specialist

The race start will be at 11am at East Wall near the Port area, running the 4.5 km length of one tunnel, popping out at Santry at the north end, before returning through the other tunnel to the finish back at East Wall, near Dublin Port. The winner is expected to complete the course in under 27 minutes.

Registration for the race was €25 and entry to the start area at East Wall is strictly by official event number only. There will be no admission for late entries and a problem desk is available at East Wall Road (near port). There will be no access for spectator, as the road surface is given over entirely to runners.

Prizes sponsored by Dublin Crystal will be awarded to the first six men and women to finish. There will be prizes for the first Master over/35 and first over/65 for both men and women. There will be 12 spot prizes and each finisher will receive a souvenir medallion and a commemorative T-shirt. Thanks to our sponsors East Point Business Park and Kellogg’s.

The run is being held in advance of the Official Opening of the Port Tunnel by An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, T.D. and the Lord Mayor Cllr Vincent Jackson on Wednesday 20th December.

For facts about the Dublin Port Tunnel, see over.

ENDS

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The Lord Mayor's Fund benefits a number of charities in the city, including ALONE, Abbey Presbyterian Church Hamper Fund, Saint Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Rialto Social Centre, SIMON Community, Dublin Parochial Society, Tallaght Community, Little Sisters of the Assumption, Finglas, SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL, Crumlin Social Centre and St Agatha's Parish (Daughters of Charity, North William Street). In addition, a number of other charities have runners running for sponsorship to help them fundraise.

Dublin Port Tunnel

Dublin Port Tunnel provides a dedicated toll free route for trucks between Dublin Port and M50. The twin bore tunnel is 4.5 kilometres long, (5.6 kilometres including access), cuts a direct route under parts of Whitehall, Marino and Fairview in north Dublin, offering the potential of a six minute journey from its entrance at Shantalla to its exit at Dublin Port Toll Plaza in East Wall.

It is the longest urban motorway tunnel in Europe and the largest ever Irish civil engineering project. 5,000 people have been employed over the course of the project, with international teams of 700 at any one time. The project has now passed eight million man-hours without a single serious accident or fatality.

2 million tonnes of rock and clay were removed. The Tunnel has approx 10m rock and 12m boulder clay above it. Much of its route is 21-23 metres (seven storeys) below ground level, through hard limestone. The hard rock tunnel boring machine, (Grainne) weighed 1,800 tonnes, was 156 metres long, used 3.2Mw of electricity, cost €27m and needed 45 tunnellers per shift to operate.

The boulder clay boring machine (Megan), weighed 1,100 tonnes, was 60m long, used 400kw of electricity, cost €10m, and needed 18 tunnellers to take it through its paces. . Dismantling the boring machines - guided by lasers in use - having completed the first tube and reassembling in the return position, took three months for each. During the cut-and-cover construction phase, Fairview Park contained an excavation the size of a cathedral, now reverting to parkland.

Tim Brick, Project Engineer says that, as an urban motorway in a capital city, the tunnel is unusual. In terms of style and/or concept, he compares it to the Southern Link Tunnel in Stockholm, the A5 in Sydney or the Cross Harbour Tunnel in Sydney. Key project challenges in Dublin included the unprecedented scale of the work both in terms of preplanning and underground construction - which in spite of site investigations will always hold an element of entering the unknown. 315 properties were traversed along its length, subjecting householders to noise and vibration.

He is clear about the Tunnel benefits for Dublin. "If you ask yourself what the man in the street is going to experience, the single biggest impact is the removal of port-related traffic from city centre and suburbs, giving rise to an immediate improvement, what Americans call the livability of the environment of the city"

A projected 6,000 HGVs will pass through Dublin Port Tunnel per day, representing 80% of centre city HGV former port-bound traffic. Commercial traffic is toll-free, while cars will pay €12 at peak time and €6 off-peak, a controlling mechanism to deter private motorists. The Tunnel Project operating budget of €751m and was expected to take 43 months to complete. In fact, the work took 66 months. One reason for the slippage was that constructing an underpass under the Dublin-Belfast live railway line took longer than anticipated and was precise and difficult work.