

Change in Length For Brown Co Relay For Life

(KNZA)--Citing a lack of overnight participation, despite attempts to remedy that issue, organizers for the annual Relay for Life of Brown County have decided to cut the event's time in half for 2014.

Despite the lack of overnight participation, organizers cite last year's more than \$50,000 dollar outcome as a sign that support for the overall event, which raises funds for cancer research, remains strong.

Event volunteer Lora Brobst says the planning committee has tried several avenues to up the appeal of overnight participation, including the addition of a variety of activities, food and prizes, but the turnout has remained low.

The American Cancer Society, which oversees relays across the nation, has recognized the low late night turnout trend, and has modified their guidelines to allow local organizers to make needed changes.

The Relay For Life of Brown County will be held from 6:01 on the evening of Friday, June 6th through 12:01 on the morning of Saturday, June 7th at the Hiawatha High School Track, under the theme "Relay for a New Day...A New Beginning." Brobst says the specific minute after the hour start and stop times were chosen to support the new theme and timeline, putting the event into the new day to signify a new beginning. That symbolism has long been a key to the hours relays were held.

An organizers' meeting, focused on the upcoming relay, is planned for Thursday evening at 5:30 at the Fisher Center in Hiawatha.

See the full statement on the decision to make the change below:

Organizers for the annual Relay For Life of Brown County event report that monetary support for cancer research is strong, as evidenced by over \$50,000 brought in by the event in 2013. The event has traditionally been held overnight, with the event starting at dusk and ending at the next day's morning, with the light and darkness of the day and night paralleling the physical effects, emotions and mental state of a cancer patient while undergoing treatment. While funds raised have shown generous increases, overnight participation has remained low. Organizers do not want to diminish the sensitive reasoning behind this original overnight timeline, but felt it was time to reevaluate.

Lora Brobst, a volunteer that has helped with the event for several years, reports that the planning committee has tried several avenues for upping the appeal for overnight participation, including a variety of activities, food and prizes. Weather is also an uncontrollable factor that affects participation. In 2013, despite beautiful weather and fresh plans in place such as the addition of the Night Owl Café, overnight participant numbers were still low. The American Cancer Society has recognized this trend with many events held across the nation, and has consequently modified their guidelines to allow local organizers to make changes to the length of their events.

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Brown County will take place from 6:01 PM on Friday, June 6 until 12:01 AM on June 7, 2014 at the Hiawatha High School Track. This year's

theme is “RELAY FOR A NEW DAY... A NEW BEGINNING”. Brobst said the planning committee chose the specific start/end times to be a minute after the hour to support the new theme and timeline, and truly put the event into the new day to signify a new beginning. This event will continue to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost, and raise money for the fight against cancer. The Relay unites friends, families, businesses, hospitals, schools and churches...people from all walks of life. Last May, the American Cancer Society celebrated 100 years of progress in their effort to help create a world with less cancer and more birthdays!

Organizers will be meeting on Thursday, Feb. 27th at the Fisher Center in Hiawatha at 5:30 p.m. For information on how to be involved as a volunteer or survivor, visit the website at www.relayforlife.org/browncoks, or call Lora Brobst at 742-2385. For more information on cancer, call the ACS 24-hour help line at 1-800-227-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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