

Awards ceremony caps successful inaugural season



By [Darryl G. Smart](#), Brantford Expositor
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When the idea of a local running series was in its early stages, Rick Mannen and the rest of the Brantford Tournament of Races, Road and Trail Series committee really didn't know what to expect.

On Thursday night at its awards ceremony at the Best Western Brant Park Inn, a successful inaugural season officially came to an end.

"We couldn't have asked for a better first year," Mannen said. "We really got what we were looking for. The future really looks bright."

He said the committee was hoping for a couple of things to happen this year.

"First was to have somewhere around 150 participants and we succeeded there," Mannen said. "We were very happy with that."

"We also wanted to provide a local running series so local runners can stay in the area," he said.

"We also wanted to attract participation from out-of-towners. It's always hard to tap into some areas, but we were able to tap into them."

Finally, Mannen said organizers wanted to promote health and fitness with the youth.

"Each event had a fun run for children and families, which really incorporated that," Mannen said. "That's the kind of start we were looking for."

The running series has rejuvenated the local running scene.

"In the mid-1980s to mid-'90s, Brantford had one of most respected running clubs in the province," Mannen said.

"When we went to races, people knew we were there.

"I think this series has done a great job of putting Brantford back on the running map. Not just on a competitive level, but for recreational runners."

He said what has attracted more people to the events is the series' diversity.

People have really enjoyed the trail events," Mannen said.

"It's not only something different, but it showcases the great trails we have. I think we have some of the best trail systems in Canada."

Mannen said there is always room for improvement.

"Overall, I think it was the success we were hoping for, but next year we hope to introduce more," Mannen said.

"We want to add a seventh event to the series, which will include a 10-mile run for people wanting to do that kind of distance. Again, it's something for everyone."

While Mannen and the committee wanted to share their thanks with those in attendance, the evening was also about handing out some hardware.

"It is a great feeling for a first year," Mannen said.

"We're coming up with new ideas for next year's activities and hopefully we can also raise more money."

The 2013 series will begin with the Mayor's New Year's Resolution Run in conjunction with the New Year's Levee on Jan. 1 at the Brantford armouries. The event will benefit the Stedman Community Hospice.

darryl.smart@sunmedia.ca or twitter.com/darrylsmart1