



© Copyright 2018 \ All Rights Reserved

Trek Up the Tower offers new challenge for climbers

By KELSEY STEWART

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Trek Up the Tower is back this year with something new for those who find that climbing the stairwells of a 40-story building once isn't enough.

Now, climbers can tackle a vertical mile challenge, which means they'll be stomping up the First National Bank Tower's 870 steps a total of 10 2/3 times.

Organizers expect the event, in its 12th year, to draw about 2,000 participants Saturday. That's about standard for the event, which typically sells out. While aspects like the vertical mile challenge may appeal to more elite climbers, the standard trek is suited to average athletes, said race director Justin Holes.

"We really do this event for anyone," Holes said. "Anyone who attends or climbs will have a really fun time."

About 30 people are registered for the vertical mile challenge.

A third option allows participants to climb the tower as many



RYAN SODERLIN/THE WORLD-HERALD

People run up the stairs of the First National Bank Tower during 2016's Trek Up the Tower. This year's event offers a new challenge: a vertical mile climb. Participants in that category will tackle the 40 stories 10 2/3 times.

times as they like. The record number of trips up the tower belongs to Ned Green, a Lincoln man. The 72-year-old climbed the tower 14 times last year, the first year that challenge was offered.

Some climbers complete the event in honor or memory of a loved one, while others complete it as a personal fitness goal.

Winners typically finish between 4 and 5 minutes. The aver-

age climber finishes in 12 minutes, organizers said.

As an added finishing perk, the First National Tower — the city's tallest building — offers sweeping views of the city. Climbers who finish early enough can catch the sunrise.

Firefighters from Omaha, Papillion, Bellevue, Waterloo and Bennington and police officers from Omaha will kick off the climb. Elite climbers and vertical mile challengers will follow.

After those groups are off, climbers will be released into the stairwell every five to six seconds to avoid clogging the stairwells.

Some spaces are still available. Cost is \$60 for a standard trek. The vertical mile challenge is \$125. Unlimited climbs also cost \$125. Registration closes Thursday at 5 p.m.

Trek Up the Tower is a fundraiser for Wellcom, a nonprofit dedicated to improving worksite wellness.

kelsey.stewart@owh.com, 402-444-3100, twitter.com/keis2