



An estimated 1,500 runners will be among the first to use the Fort Hamer Bridge on Aug. 26. **Provided photo**

## 1,500 expected for Fort Hamer Bridge run

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### MANATEE

There could be as many as 1,500 runners taking part in the inaugural Fort Hamer Bridge 5K and 10K runs.

The event, scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Aug. 26 prior to the grand opening of the bridge to vehicle traffic, is stirring excitement in the running community.

“It’s unbelievable,” event planner Doug Schiller said of the 125 who signed up for the race in the first five days of registration. “I have never seen so many registrations. Fliers haven’t even hit the street yet.”

Corey Peyerk, a board member of the Bradenton Runners Club, said the excitement is real.

“We are looking for 1,500 on race day. The field should be similar to Robinson 5K/10K, which is one of the biggest races in the area,” Peyerk said. “Anything new gets a lot of attention, but also being on a new bridge before it opens and beautiful route make it a decent race.”

Runners are being invited to be a part of history and receive a Fort Hamer Bridge Run commemorative medal. Finisher medals will also be awarded to children.

Registration opens at 6 a.m. the day of the race. A kid's race is planned for 6:45 a.m. in four age brackets, followed by the 5K and 10K dual start at 7:35 a.m., and the one-mile walk run at 7:35 a.m. Runners with strollers are welcome.

The race, timed by Lakeshore Athletic Service, will begin near the Fort Hamer rowing facility, head south over the bridge, and then return to finish in the Islands on the Manatee River subdivision north of the river.

Proceeds from the race will be equally shared by the Parrish Y Branch Scholarship Fund, The Parrish Foundation, and Manatee County Youth Rowing.

Construction of the Fort Hamer Bridge started in March of 2015 to provide a new north-south connector between Parrish and Lakewood Ranch.

Cost of the bridge, which curves 2,300 across the Manatee River, and associated improvements to Fort Hamer Road and Upper Manatee River Road totals \$32.69 million.

Manatee County is planning a ceremonial ribbon cutting for the opening of the bridge, project spokeswoman Trudy Gerena said.

To register for any of the running events set for Aug. 26, visit [forthamerbridgerun.com](http://forthamerbridgerun.com) or call Doug Schiller at 941-932-6147.

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One of the features of the Fort Hamer Bridge is this overlook where walkers and runners may pause to take in the scenery. **James A. Jones Jr.** [jajones1@bradenton.com](mailto:jajones1@bradenton.com)