

# Relay

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dertaken individually or as a team. The race is scheduled for Sept. 17 and cost is \$100 per individual, or \$180 per three-person team, before July 1.

The race builds on a growing trend of outdoor recreation events in the capital city, especially downtown. The first triathlon in downtown Salem's history is scheduled for Oct. 1, and will highlight the city's three soon-to-be-connected parks: Minto-Brown Island, Riverfront and Wallace Marine.

This event looks to capture the popularity of relay events, such as Central Oregon's Pole Pedal Paddle (ski, bike, kayak and run from Mount Bachelor to Bend).

"I do believe it's a growing trend," Morris said. "This region is well-positioned for multi-disciplinary events. The new (Peter Courtney Minto Island Bridge) will create mileage for marathons and open a lot of options. We're aggressively perusing more of these."

The River 2 Ridge — which will return in 2018 and 2019 as well — is an ambitious undertaking. Its genesis can be traced to a trip former Salem Mayor Anna Peterson and Morris took to Japan in 2015. The two took part in the country's famed Sea to Summit events, which

## Race route

» Run from Riverfront Park to Wallace Marine Park, 0.5 mile

» Kayak or boat from Wallace Marine Park to Spong's Landing, 6.2 miles

» Bicycle paved roads from Spong's Landing to Silver Falls State Park, 47.8 miles

» Hike or run segment of Silver Falls State Park trails, 5.8 miles

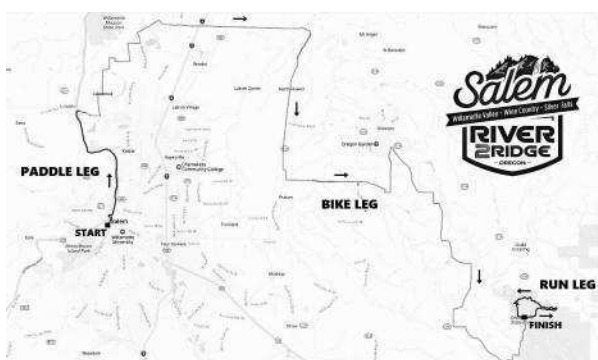
features kayaking across the sea, biking through the countryside and hiking up a mountain.

"We wanted to learn how we'd replicate it here," Morris said.

The Salem edition will replace the sea with the Willamette River, and the mountain with waterfalls, but the idea remains the same.

Redmond-based Breakaway Promotions is running the event and designed the course. They received \$20,000 in seed money this year and \$10,000 for next year to put on the event. That money came from Salem's transient occupancy tax on hotels, which is typically used for tourism, promotion and heritage events, Morris said.

"The primary focus of this event is to give people a reason to come to Salem, not just to visit, but to truly engross themselves in an area they might have only seen from I-5," said Chad Sperry, co-owner of Breakaway Promotions. "A lot of people — myself



This map shows the route of the "Salem River 2 Ridge" race, which will take place Sept. 17.

included — might come to Salem for a meeting but don't necessarily take the time to experience the area. We want, through this event, to almost force people to see these beautiful farm roads, this amazing stretch of river and the world-class hiking at Silver Falls."

## From Riverfront Park to Silver Falls

The atmosphere of the race will be laid-back, said Morris and Sperry. While teams will be timed, and there will be prizes for the top places, the idea is more about having fun. There's a post-race party at Silver Falls.

"We're expecting some people to be highly competitive, and others to just have fun and be dressed up in costumes," Sperry said.

The route starts at Riverfront Park, with participants running a half mile across the Union Street Railroad Pedestrian Bridge to the kayak stag-

ing area at Wallace Marine Park.

From that point, the river section gets underway with 6.2 miles of paddling down part of the river buffered largely by greenways, with a few minor riffles.

"Honestly, I expected the Willamette to be going through residential, commercial and industrial areas," Sperry said. "But it's one long greenway almost the whole way. It feels like you're out in the wilderness. I remember being really excited about putting the course together after experiencing it for the first time."

The paddle section ends at Spong's Landing County Park north of Keizer. That's when the toughest section begins.

The bike ride is by far the longest and most challenging part of the race, covering 47.8 miles and climbing over 2,000 feet to Silver Falls. It follows low-traffic farm roads for the most part.

"Finding the right net-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BREAKAWAY PROMOTIONS  
The "Salem River 2 Ridge Relay" will take racers from downtown Salem to Silver Falls State Park.

## Environmental symposium

work of roads — and finding the right place to cross I-5 — was the biggest challenge by far," Sperry said. "The real gem was the discovery of Drift Creek Road, which brings you fairly close to the entrance to Silver Falls but also has little to no traffic and amazing views of Mount Hood, St. Helens and sweeping views of the valley and Coast Range."

The third and final leg is a run or hike of 5.8 miles at Silver Falls State Park. Because it's still a popular time of year, the route will feature the less-traveled section of waterfalls in the North Falls area.

"This is definitely a challenging course and anyone that does it individually will take a beating," Sperry said.

## Environmental symposium

On the day before the race, event organizers will host an environmental symposium from noon to 4 p.m. at Salem's Riverfront Park Amphitheatre.

The symposium will highlight some of the environmental, agricultural and cultural aspects of the River to Ridge route, including the Willamette River and Silver Falls State Park. Keynote speakers will be Jim Bernau, founder of Willamette Valley Vineyards; Travis Williams, executive director of Willamette Riverkeeper; and Matt Palmquist, interpretive park ranger with Silver Falls State Park. The symposium is free and open to the public.

# Knodel

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professionals, said Josh's dad, Bob. The college needed proof that he has real skill and interest in rebuilding cars.

There's proof in Josh's ongoing "resto-mod" of a 1963 Chevy Nova Wagon. He's transforming it from a shabby original into an upgraded street ride. At the age of 16, he followed his father and grandfather into the business of breathing new life into old cars.

"It's been a project, for sure," Josh said. He's spent hours restoring the Nova, and right now, he's concentrating on its front end.

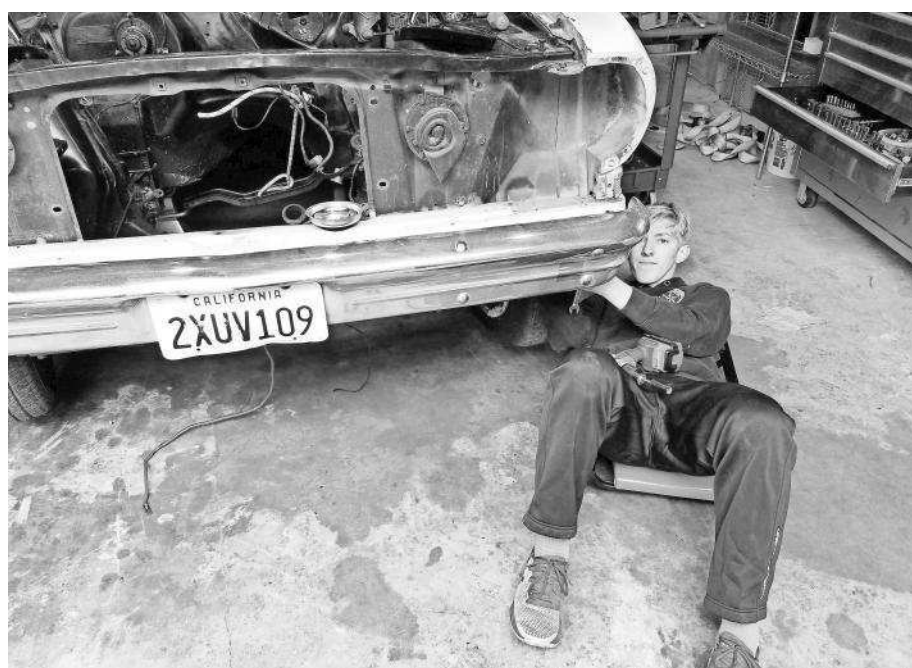


Silverton High School senior Josh Knodel's 1963 Nova Wagon.

Classes he's taken at Silverton High, especially Advanced Welding, have helped. Others include Mechanical Technology 1, 2 and 3, as well as Introduction to Engineering.

He credits his advisory group teacher, Kirsten Barnes, with helping him turn his personal car project into his senior project. For high school seniors, such a specialized project is called the "Design Your Own Extended Application Project," and it requires extra steps and advocacy from a student to gain approval from administrators, Barnes said.

Josh and his parents saw the process through,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE KNODEL FAMILY  
Josh Knodel transforms his 1963 Chevy Nova Wagon into an upgraded street ride.

not knowing it would eventually be the key to unlocking the door at McPherson.

"Josh wants to work," Barnes said. "He has made himself sit in class

and do the book learning, but he loves doing the hands-on work and trying things and taking things apart to see how it works. He isn't afraid to try something. I think McPherson could see his interest and passion to build, create, and restore."

Josh's father and grandfather can take much of the credit for lighting Josh's passion for cars in the first place. His grandpa, Tom Larson, opened Silver Creek Autobody, a collision repair shop on Jefferson Street, in 1993. While that's been the "bread and butter" side of the business, Larson and his son-in-law, Bob, who came on in 2001, have built a restoration business on the side.

"When I was a kid, they were restoring a 1930 Pontiac," Josh said. "I can vividly remember going and sitting in it."

By the time Josh was 12 or 13, he was working for Silver Creek Autobody, detailing cars. As he's grown up, he's worked in the shop while attending school, playing in band and, sometimes, like a normal teenager, escaping into the gaming world of Halo.

"We tried to instill a work ethic in him young," Bob said.

Bob's purchase of his own project — a 1970 Chevy C10 Suburban — got the wheels turning in Josh's head. He watched his dad fabricate parts to bring his design ideas to life and realized he wanted a project of his own. He had a 6-liter motor from his own wrecked 2000 Chevy Silverado pickup and wanted a place to put it.

At first, he planned to restore a 1953 Chevy Step-side but eventually opted for the Nova that he and his dad found in Califor-

nia on Craigslist. Since then, the work's been ongoing, with three generations contributing ideas to the project.

In fact, Sundays have become instruction days for Josh, with his dad and his grandpa passing along the skills they think he needs. Some are obscure; for instance, lately they've focused on wood-working, as joinery skills are required to work on an old car with wooden body-work and panels.

"To succeed in this, you need to get involved in the culture of it," Bob said. "Then you're constantly seeing things that you could do."

In college, Josh will further explore the design side of auto restoration. He'll take drawing and watercolor classes that will augment his existing CAD skills. Art instruction is something for which McPherson College is as famous, as it is for its 13-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio and its Christian roots from being founded by the Church of the Brethren nearly 130 years ago.

"We were very concerned that we would not find a school that would fit both Josh's academic needs and teach him the restoration skills he needs to succeed in this business," Bob said. "Once we found McPherson, though, our worries were lifted and our family has been extremely happy."

Josh's teacher, Kirsten Barnes, is watching her student's "learning journey" with anticipation too. "I like to find out what students are interested in and what gets them excited about life," she said. "If we can find things they are curious about, they are more likely to keep exploring and attach themselves to a focus of study."

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