

Elgin man plans 2nd run across country

By Christine S. Moyer
STAFF WRITER

ELGIN — Three thousand miles, 105 days and the incessant foot-pounding-pavement cadence — Bruce Johnson is back at it again.

Fueled by a desire to raise more money for the Elgin Crisis Center and to break a world record, Johnson — a local roofing contractor — will embark on his second run across the country on Jan. 3, 2007.

"I'm just some Joe Blow from Elgin," Johnson said.

"Now I'm going one above the people who have run across the country (once), and doing it twice. I'm not ruling out three times, four times, or beating the (world) record. But one at a time."

Johnson's first cross-country trek stretched 2,901 miles from Oceanside, Calif. to Virginia Beach, Va. and peaked after 105 days on May 16 of this year.

Along the way, the roofing contractor raised about \$500 for the Elgin Crisis Center, which provides emergency services to individuals and families dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault and homelessness.

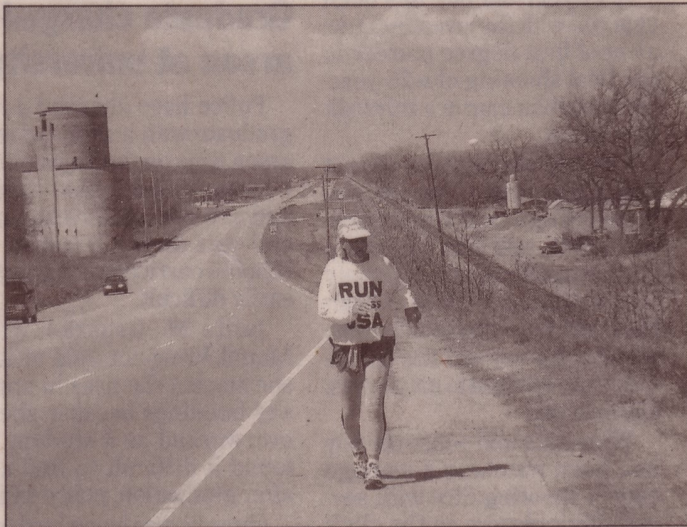
Although only a small donation, it was appreciated by the center, which receives more than half its funds from corporations or individuals, according to Lisa Sampson, the center's resource development coordinator.

"Five hundred dollars is not a great deal ... But he's raising awareness nationwide," she said. "Whether it benefits us or benefits our cause, we all win."

Eyes 'kind of' on record

And include Johnson in that victory.

The 48-year-old runner, with 20 marathons beneath his belt, hopes to write a book about his experiences running across America and to earn a spot in the Guinness Book of World Re-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bruce Johnson is seen during his first cross-country run from the West Coast to the East Coast. Johnson plans to run again starting in January 2007 from the East Coast to the West Coast.

cords.

According to Johnson, six people have run across America two times.

Of those, only two runners crossed the country each time in an opposite direction — east to west and west to east.

The record he is "kind of" eyeing is held by Ed Kelley who ran across the country four times.

Johnson's 2007 cross-country trek will be his second step toward that goal and it will reflect the lessons — some harder than others — that he learned the first time.

He has already purchased 16 pairs of Nike sneakers, eight more than he bought in preparation for his last trip as well as two, 100 percent waterproof jackets.

Other changes include listening to an MP3 player while running, packing lighter and of course the route — from Brunswick Beach, Ga. to Pismo Beach, Calif.

But when it comes to training he is sticking to the old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

"What worked for me the first time worked so well, I'm going to do it again," Johnson said.

And that technique is, stop running shortly before the trek and focus on lifting weights with his legs.

Higher fundraising goal

Johnson's goals for the 2007 cross-country journey include running at least 30 miles every day and raising \$50,000 for the Elgin Crisis Center.

It is a far cry from the roughly \$500 he raised on his first cross-country run, but Johnson is optimistic.

He expects the trip to cost about \$21,000 but said he would not want all the money he raises for the center to go toward his expenditures.

Johnson said, "If I raise double that (\$21,000), we all come out OK."

For more information about Johnson or to volunteer to be his support driver visit his Web site at www.unitedstatesrun.com.

Donations can be made out to the Elgin Crisis Center and should be mailed to P.O. Box 1390, Elgin, IL 60121. Donors should write "U.S. run" in the memo section of the check.