

Richmond trio develops new app for outdoors enthusiasts

BY RANDY HALLMAN

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You're thinking about a morning run or a bike ride, and you might enjoy it more if you had a friend or three to share the crisp fall air and the invigorating exercise. But you don't have time to round up a group.

Will you have to settle for going solo?

Maybe not, if you sign up for a new app developed by a trio of Richmond-area outdoors enthusiasts.

Outdoorsy, which launched about two weeks ago, is a free iPhone app that connects people to participate in outdoor activities — biking, running, walking, hiking, swimming, surfing, kayaking, skiing, etc.

The three developers are Casey Werderman, who starts work today in public relations for CarMax; Shane Zilinskas, a software engineer for Mobelux; and Matt Klamann, a graphic designer with Capital Results.

Werderman — also known as an advocate for bike-friendly measures and an opponent of tolls on Interstate 95 — said the creation of the app came about as “a creative outlet outside of our 9-to-5 jobs.”

Having often heard friends say they would partake of open-air sports “if I had somebody to do it with,” they combined their knowledge of Web design and mobile-device applications to come up with a solution. It didn't take long to craft the app's slogan, “Get off the couch and get Outdoorsy!”

The app aims to connect friends and allow people to meet new friends who share their interests, Werderman said.

Users can post something as simple as a request for companions on a casual hike or run. They can organize a group to participate in a competition or attend an event. They can put out the word about an event they are organizing.

The app features the practicality of maps that let users focus on a specific geographic area, and users can develop their own friend groups and post only to members of the group.

When posting publically, on the other hand, users are able to apply security features that, for example, give them the ability to allow only approved responders to see an event's location.

In the first two weeks since the launch, Werderman said, the app has picked up more than 300 users. He said businesses and organizations such as Richmond Multisports, Richmond-MORE, Richmond Area Bicycling Association, 3Sports, Richmond BMX, Carytown Bicycle Co. and Richmond Triathlon Club have created group accounts.

The Outdoorsy founders have had conversations with the Richmond 2015 leadership team, Werderman said, considering ways the app can best be part of a bicycle-culture groundswell as the Richmond region prepares to host the international bike race two years from now.

So if the app is free, what's in it for Outdoorsy's three founders?

"We don't expect to become millionaires," Werderman said. "It's important that it remains free. We want to get as many people on board as possible.

"In the future, we may look for sponsorships. ... And as businesses use the app as a business tool, we may charge for business accounts."

Bike bloggers

Before we head indoors, have you seen the bicycling blog "Words to Ride By" on the Richmond 2015 website?

Some area retailers are already participating in "Société 2015" programs that link to the world cycling championships to be held here in two years. The blog is part of the organizers' effort to draw consumers' attention to the event.

One blog contributor is recently retired pro cyclist Matt Crane, who lives in Richmond. Crane rode on several of the top U.S. pro teams, including Team USA at the 2004 World Championships in Verona, Italy.

He writes about all aspects of biking through the lens of a pro cyclist. His post Thursday was about the simple act of sharing a wave to express the bond that bikers share.

Bold about Bland

Richard Bland College of William and Mary, on the occasion of its new mission and strategic plan, has a new website and a new logo developed by Madison+Main.

The Richmond marketing and public relations firm developed two logos to replace the brand the two-year public college in Petersburg had used for the past five years.



One of the new logos combines the letters “R” and “B” above the words “Richard Bland Statesmen.” The other logo employs a more formal look. Laurel branches flank a shield that keeps the image of one of the campus’ signature pecan trees on a field of W&M green.



The college name sits above a new slogan, “Create Your Journey.” That replaces the former slogan, “Explore. Prepare. Grow.”

David Saunders is chief idea officer at Madison+Main, which took over the Richard Bland account early this year. He said the new logo balances the college’s heritage with its crucial role in the future of its students and the commonwealth.