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By: Cathy Spaulding, Phoenix Staff Writer

City residents hit the trail to promote fitness

Muskogee resident Paul Porter came ready for a noon walk with the mayor Friday.

Not only did he have a neon green pair of Nike Air walking shoes, he had a desire to get fit and keep fit.

"I walk three mornings each week and three miles a morning at the First Baptist Church indoor walking trail," Porter said. "I just think it's good to walk, and Bob's a friend of mine."

An estimated 33 people joined Porter and Mayor Bob Coburn for the lunchtime walk Friday. It was one of several events marking Walk, Run or Ride the Trails Week. Most walked one-and-a-half miles, starting at City Hall and turning around on Centennial Trail west of the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame.

Sunshine and not-so-hot temperatures greeted walkers as they headed along the trail. At times, they had to dodge puddles, remnants of cold, rainy weather that canceled walks earlier this week.

"It's not a bad day for it," said Coburn as he strode along the trail. "I love it when we have this many people who are going to walk."

The Muskogee Wellness Initiative, in cooperation with Muskogee County Turning Point sponsor the walks. They are designed to encourage people to walk trails throughout the city. Walks along Centennial Trail are set for today. A walk around Ruby Park is set for 2 p.m. Sunday.

Ace, a toy Yorkshire terrier, leads Tom Martindale and others on a walk to Centennial Trail. About 35 people joined in the walk.



"We have all these great facilities," Coburn said. "If we don't use them, we kind of waste our money, and they just look pretty."

Porter said he walks to maintain his health.

"I had quadruple bypass surgery in 2004. It made me realize it's time to do stuff," Porter said, adding that he's been walking regularly since he had the surgery. He said he also quit smoking.

And the neon green shoes?

"A friend of mine has a bright orange pair," he said. "I was with my daughter last week in Springfield, Mo., and I saw them at a shoe store, so I bought them. They're very comfortable."

Employees from the VA regional Office also hit the trail.

"We started a walking club," said Erin Vernon. "We're following the Couch to 5K Running Plan."



Walkers hit Centennial Trail shortly after noon Friday as part of Walk, Run or Ride the Trails Week. Three other events are set for this weekend.

“I’m pumped,” co-worker Amber Patterson said. “I’m ready to run up the stairs and back to my desk.”

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Schedule

Today

- 8 to 8:45 a.m., Centennial Trailhead at Hatbox, 34th and Arline streets, group run.
- 9 to 11 a.m., Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, Centennial Trailhead, bike ride. Riders who need minor adjustments to their bicycles should arrive between 8 and 8:30 a.m.

Sunday

- 2 to 3 p.m., Ruby Park, Augusta and Gulick streets, family walk.



Muskogee Mayor Bob Coburn, center, joins other Muskogee residents Friday for a walk along Centennial Trail.