

How We Got Started

Native Madisonian Jim Berbee, founder of Berbee Information Networks Corporation in 1993, is also a veteran runner. Some years back, he came across an article in the Wall Street Journal about Thanksgiving Day runs and learned that 5K and 10K races on this big holiday were common all over the country, and were very successful in both attracting participants and in raising funds. To Jim, it seemed like a no brainer that a strong running community like Madison would support such a race, and that it could potentially raise a good bit of money for a worthy cause.

So Jim and his staff set out to create an event and race that would and run it near the company's headquarters in Fitchburg. Thus the Berbee Derby came to be, with its inaugural year in 2004.

But the big question needed to be answered: what was the worthy cause that the Berbee Derby would support? Eager to find something that would be in line with the company's activities and philosophy, Jim and company CEO Paul Shain hit upon the idea of a cause to help promote the use of technology in classrooms and non-profit organizations – something for both youth and adults.

"Technology changes so quickly, and it's important that people of all ages are exposed to it," Jim explains. "The problem is that it's also expensive, and there really wasn't a good source of private funding dedicated to it in Madison."

And so, the Technology Education Foundation was born, and became the designated beneficiary for 100% of the proceeds from the annual Berbee Derby.

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