



# Breaking Ground

Construction of the Pottawattamie County Trails system will soon begin with its first phase from Council Bluffs to Neola. It will be a 15-mile, 10' wide poured concrete trail with parallel soft trail that will follow along Railroad Highway and will consist of grades typically less than 2%. This will be a very flat easy route for users of all ages. The trail will provide an alternative safe place to ride that will connect Underwood and Neola to the City of Council Bluffs' trail system and the greater Omaha Metro Area.

Phase 1 is expected to begin in Spring of 2016 and will go from the Smith Wildlife Refuge to the L34 intersection. Phase 2 shall begin after the completion of phase 1 and proceed toward Underwood.

Nearly \$4,000,000 have been secured to date through grants, contributions and fund raising. An additional \$1,100,000 is needed to complete the 15 miles. The Pottawattamie County Trails Committee is working hard to raise the remainder of the funds through grants and private donations. Please contact the committee if you are interested in donating or being a committee member.

As more trails develop, it is anticipated that our local communities will experience an increase in visitors. In return, these visitors will spend their money on food, gas, lodging and other items bringing an increase to our communities' economy and by creating jobs and businesses.

These trails will provide families of all ages in every community, opportunities for healthy recreation, safe places to exercise, safe routes to school, and opportunities for our schools to get kids out into nature for education and connections from community to community.

Trails in general can create jobs and new businesses, increase tax revenues in local economies, improve community health and lower healthcare costs, provide safe places for people to recreate and experience nature. Biking in Iowa generates nearly \$364,000,000 annually to the state's economy.

This trail system will be the first step to connecting all Pottawattamie County Communities and surrounding counties to a regional trail system. Connections to the Wabash Trace, the Omaha/Council Bluffs metro area, the American Discovery Trail and even the Central Iowa Trails system around Des Moines are all planned as part of this trail development.

This trail development, along with existing trails in Western Iowa, is the beginning of the Frontier Iowa Trails System (FIT). FIT is a regional trails system that is being planned to link all of the Western Iowa counties together as well as linking them to the surrounding states of Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas. These regional connections will increase national awareness for our trails and further improve our local economy.

The  
**POTTAWATTAMIE  
COUNTY TRAILS  
ASSOCIATION**  
is Inviting  
Anyone and Everyone  
with Interest in  
**Trail Construction**  
to Join Us for An  
Informational Meeting  
**Monday, February 15th,**  
at 7pm  
in the UMBA Hall  
in Downtown  
Underwood, Iowa  
*For information, contact  
Brian Shea at 402-968-7432*

**For More Information**  
on how you can get involved or  
contribute to the trails system,  
please contact Mark Shoemaker at  
the Pott. Co. Conservation office:

**712-328-5638.**

For updates on our progress,



Pottawattamie County  
Trails Association.

# Allow Us to Introduce Ourselves

In this first issue, we'd like you to meet a few of the dedicated members of our committee.



**Joe Munch...**I heard the concept of the county wide trail system and thought it would be an interesting idea to bring people to Neola. My first experience with the board was in Avoca where one of the listening meetings were held. There were large maps there and the public was asked to highlight their preferred routes. It became clear that Neola was going to be a critical point on the trail and I felt compelled to represent my fellow citizens on the board. This group is dedicated to the idea of an integrated county trail. It's goal is to create a safe, fun and healthy alternative to navigating the highway system.

## More Than a Bike Trail It's a Multi-Use Trail!

*Local snow mobile groups will be excited to know the trails committee is doing everything possible to keep trails next to the paved trails. The rules on some grants will not allow any motorized machines on the paved part of the trails, so our intentions are to run parallel in the grasses for equestrian and snow machines. The more people that use trails the better it is to police each other to respect the private property along all trails!—Brian Shea*



**Brian Shea, Chair, Pott. County Trails Association...**The reason I got involved in the trail is economic development for our small town of Crescent. At the first meeting at Council Bluffs public library there were approx. 63 people gathered and very excited about county trails. The next time we met there were about 12 people. At the next several meetings there were only 5. We kept meeting and started formulating a trail plan. Many people were asking why we didn't have a trail in place already. We kept moving forward, the group of about 9-12 people, and slowly formed our Pott. County Trail Association. We had listening and map drawing meetings throughout the county, got peoples ideas, and formulated a plan to go up the middle of the county on highway 191 to Underwood and then Neola for the first link.

Our group went before the Pottawattamie County Board and got them to adopt our plan. In the mean time we had people asking us why we weren't having trails built now. Then we started looking for money to build trails. At the same time we were trying to sell the county, small towns, bicyclists, and anyone that thought of giving us money. At the same time we had people asking us why we weren't done with the trails. Keep in mind a lot of these people were at the first meeting and thought that's all that was needed to make trails happen, just show up to one meeting. This has been a long and difficult, but fun process. I have learned a lot, I have made some very good friends, we share the same goals for trails, (bike, hiking equestrian, snow mobiles), health, quality of life in our small towns, and my most favored; economic development. We live in one of the most beautiful states and the people here are the best this nation has! And people kept asking, where are the trails?

We have come a long way from the first meeting, we have had some obstacles, and we need to keep talking trails to anyone that will listen. The Crescent section of the trail is not coming for a time so I believe it shows I am in this for the long haul! And still they ask, where are the trails.

## Angela Stanford...

I am an avid cyclist. In 2015 alone, I have logged over 4000 miles on my bike, most of which have been spent on Pottawattamie County highways. While most drivers are careful and considerate, cyclists and pedestrians are at risk every time we share the roadways. Having a trail system in place will separate us from traffic, making travel - whether in a vehicle, on a bike, or on foot - safer. It will also connect our communities, drawing in visitors from out of town, driving economic growth, and encouraging health and well-being. Supporting our trail system is a win for all of Pottawattamie County!

