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Cardinal Greenway's seven-mile extension now open, links trail to Losantville

By GAIL KOCH
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STORYCHAT:

LOSANTVILLE -- After work began last winter on the newest section of the Cardinal Greenway, director Lenette Freeman heard the same question over and over again: "Is it open yet?"

Anxious trail users need not wait any longer, as greenway officials announced this week that the recent addition to the paved trail system is now ready for public use.

The new section adds another seven paved miles to the Cardinal Greenway; now 27 miles long, the greenway is the longest paved trail in Indiana. The new section picks up the existing trail at Delaware County Road 534-E near Prairie Creek Reservoir and ends a few blocks past U.S. 36 in Losantville.

"We're glad that portion of the trail is finally ours, and we can allow greenway users to benefit from it," Freeman said. "Every day, we'd have five to 10 people call or stop by the (Wysor Street) Depot to ask when the new section would officially open."

Freeman recalls a greenway user who was so impatient to use the new portion of trail that he "blew out his bike tires as he traveled through hot asphalt right up to the paving machine," she said.

Greenway officials were not able to open the new section of trail until its contractor and the Indiana Department of Transportation determined work on the project was complete.

INDOT signed off on the project last week, Freeman said.

Horse riders to benefit

In addition to the seven miles of newly paved trail, horseback riders and hikers can now make use of an additional seven miles of new horse trail.

Before adding the new horse trail, the greenway had two miles of horse trail, beginning at the Medford Trailhead on Delaware County Road 500-S. Volunteers have worked on an additional two miles that will connect the existing horse trail to the new horse trail for a total of 11 miles of horse trail, Freeman said.

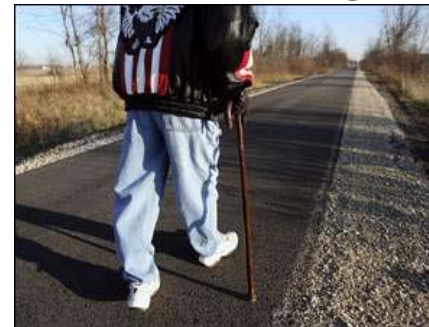
The greenway director said adding the seven miles of new horse trail was not originally planned for the extension. But because the bid on the project came in lower than the \$1.4 million expected, greenway officials chose to add to the existing horse trail as well.

Shonda Kane, a volunteer who heads up the Greenway Giddy-Up, said the new 11-mile trail might now be the longest rail-trail for horses in the state.

"Getting any extra mileage for a horse trail in Indiana is greatly appreciated," added Cheryl Royer, a member of Indiana Trail Riders Association, a statewide group that supports trail riding and equine activities in Indiana and surrounding states.

Royer, Frankfort, edits the association's trail guide and said the added length

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Kurt Hostetter / The Star Press

Howard Ray takes his daily walk on the Cardinal Greenway on Wednesday afternoon. Although Ray and many others have been using the newest section south of the 534 junction near Prairie Creek Reservoir, it was just officially opened. The new section adds seven more miles to the greenway. "I try and cover a little more ground each day," Ray said.

Greenway still open?

East Central Indiana's Cardinal Greenway is open dawn to dusk all year, according to greenway officials. In the winter, the trail is popular with cross-country skiers, said Lenette Freeman, Cardinal Greenway director.

For walkers, runners and bikers, the greenway's maintenance staff does not plow the paved trail system during the winter months, so exercise with caution.

[+ Zoom Photo](#)



Kurt Hostetter / The Star Press

Glen Davidson rides his bike on the Cardinal Greenway on Wednesday afternoon south of Blountsville, where he lives. Although Davidson and many others have been using the newest section, south of the Prairie Creek Reservoir, it was just officially opened. The new section adds seven more miles to the greenway.

to Cardinal Greenway's horse trail will greatly benefit horse enthusiasts who live in the northern half of the state.

"You have Brown County, but that's pretty far south for a lot of people," she said. "This is going to be nice because we've been really limited with extended trails up north."

Ribbon-cutting to come

Freeman said a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new section of the greenway will take place this spring in Losantville.

The extension already has received enthusiastic support from residents of Losantville. The town's fire department plans to host a 2007 dinner to raise funds that would help connect the greenway to Losantville's park, Freeman said.

With this stage of the greenway now complete, Freeman said the focus will now turn to extending the White River Greenway, which greenway officials hope to soon connect with the Cardinal Greenway.

For now, the greenway director says she will enjoy knowing that thousands of people who use the greenway can now extend their walks, jogs and bike rides a little farther into southern East Central Indiana.

When the weather gets warmer, one of those users will be bicycling enthusiast Layne Cameron, who describes the greenway as "awesome." Cameron said he recently pedaled to the "new" end of the greenway after work.

On the way back, "I had to ride home with my lights on." Now, he said, "I can't wait to ride the entire trail in the daytime!"

Contact news reporter Gail Koch at 213-5827.

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