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## Muncie beats competition for federal trail dollars

By **SETH SLABAUGH**  
seths@muncie.gannett.com

A state official explains why Muncie is a leading trail builder.

MUNCIE -- Every time Cardinal Greenway Inc. needs another \$1 million in federal transportation enhancement (TE) funds to build another section of trail, it seems to get it, despite serious competition from other communities.

The latest example was a \$955,592 award for White River Greenway phase four announced by the Indiana Department of Transportation on July 19.

▼ ADVERTISEMENT ▼ Currently, work is underway on a \$1.259 million contract to extend Cardinal Greenway from Prairie Creek Reservoir 7.7 miles south through Henry County and into the Randolph County community of Losantville.

When that is completed, Cardinal Greenway will have 39 miles of paved trail passing through five counties.

Why has the Muncie-based non-profit organization been so successful in trail building?

"Cardinal Greenway, in conjunction with the city, has always had good partnerships, a good track record in implementing projects once they are awarded, and a really good plan put together," said Steve Morris, chief of the streams and trails section in the division of outdoor recreation at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

"They meet all the criteria we look at when recommending funding through TE: demonstrating strong community support, coming up with matching



KURT HOSTETLER / THE STAR PRESS

### Trails well funded

Rachel Cain takes advantage of the White River Greenway as she skates Friday just south of Jackson Street in Muncie. The Indiana Department of Transportation in July awarded almost \$1 million for the completion of another segment of the trail.

### Greenway personalities

The current board of directors of the non-profit Cardinal Greenway Inc.:

- Teresa Willman, president, retiree First Merchants Bank.
- Douglas Bakken, vice president, Ball Associates.
- Dave Ferguson, treasurer, Ball State University.
- Marta Moody, secretary, city-county planning commission.
- Janda Combs.
- Roger Gilcrest, retiree, Merchants Trust Co.
- Richard Hughes, attorney.
- John Laverty, Cardinal Health Systems.
- Chris Miller, Chris Miller Consulting.
- Bruce Moore, retiree, Delphi, former Cardinal Greenway director.
- Mike Rost, Muncie Sanitary District.

funds, showing how these projects are going to serve the greater community, and making all the connections we feel are important -- connecting schools and parks and other destinations within the community."

He added: "Compared to other regions of Indiana, I'd say Muncie is in the forefront of trail development, right up there with Indianapolis, Lake County, Porter County, Bloomington, and Columbus."

The lack of financial and human resources, rather than the lack of plans, is holding back some communities interested in building trails, Morris said.

"Transportation enhancement is very competitive," he said.

In July, INDOT announced \$17.5 million in TE awards for 29 different projects in communities throughout the state. Morris said more than \$50 million in grants were applied for during that round.

Successful projects included trails, renovation of historic bridges, street lighting, a museum, downtown landscaping and beautification, rehabilitation of a railroad depot, and streetscapes for historic highways.

The federal funds for TE projects come from the Highway Trust Fund, a repository for the receipts from the federal excise tax on gasoline. TE projects are 80 percent funded by the federal government and 20 percent funded by local communities. INDOT administers the TE program in Indiana.

In the case of Cardinal Greenway and White River Greenway, the 20 percent local match has come mostly from private sources.

The purpose of the multi-billion-dollar TE program is to expand travel choices, strengthen local economies, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.

Phil Tevis, Cardinal Greenway Inc. project director, recently approached county commissioners to request that the 20 percent local match for a bridge project and culvert work on phase three of White River Greenway be paid for out of the county's cumulative bridge fund. Commissioners took the request under advisement.

The project will include widening the bridge carrying McCullough Boulevard over Muncie Creek in McCulloch Park, near where the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks cross over the river and over McCullough. The widening will

- Tom Smith, Ball State University.
- Kerry Wiggerly, Century 21.
- Marjorie Zeigler, White River Corridor Group.

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make the bridge safer for both cars and trail users.

"Having a non-profit organization like Cardinal Greenway dedicated to fund raising, construction inspection and trail management helps our community when we apply for TE funding, which is very competitive," Tevis said.

"Another part of it was having a very clear vision, a master plan. Each project is another component of a larger vision. One thing we do that many other communities don't is to have the local match in place when we apply for TE funds."

Once White River Greenway is completed along the river from one end of Muncie to another, that trail combined with Cardinal Greenway will bring three-fourths of the population of Muncie within a mile of a trail, Tevis said.

**Contact news reporter Seth Slabaugh at 213-5834.**

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