

April
2017

NEWSLETTER



On February 28th members of the River District Development Foundation, with the help of Art Lersch from the Lincoln County Extension, met to plan goals for 2017. In addition to the ongoing effort of recruiting new board and advisory committee members and provided enough funding is available these are some committee hopes and plans for the next year.

Construction Committee

Committee co-chairmen are Eric Malm and Larry Hampel. In 2017 the committee will facilitate construction of the trailhead pavilion with Agra. Lincoln Wood has donated windows and doors. The committee will work to complete engineering and construct the Park St. to Cooper St. segment of the trail. Overlooks and river access areas at various points along the trail will be planned. The Rotary Park landscape and a recognition sign will be finalized.

Construction Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 12:00 pm at City Hall.

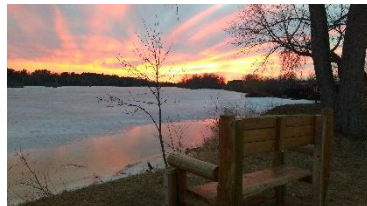


Real Estate Committee

Jim Wedemeyer is chairman of Real Estate. They will be securing the right-of-way from Cooper St. to Walmart by working with the DNR to determine the feasibility of that route. Work will be done to obtain an extension of the Thrivent Trail going west. Properties adjoining the D & L property for trail easements are being negotiated.

Real Estate meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the New Pine Ridge.

Visit our website
Riverbendtrail.org to find
out more about the trail.



Capital Campaign Committee

Mike Willman, Brenda and Tom Mueller are co-chairs. The committee will be working with other trail committees and the community to develop a concept plan for the pavilion interior. Fund raising efforts will be coordinated and begun for the Cooper St. to Bluebird Lane segment of the trail. Other fundraising priorities will be determined. Donor recognition/mile markers will be placed on the trail this spring.

Capital Campaign meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Chamber.

Notes

April 1st – booth at the Children's Festival at the MARC

April 6th – Annual Friends Meeting at the Eagles Club 6:30 pm

May 6th – United Way Kolor Run on the trail

The River District Development Foundation Board

meets the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm at the Chamber.

Friends and Marketing

The Friends Group and Marketing Committees have merged into one. Chad Travis and Sarah Williams will be co-chairs. In 2017 they will be working to reinvigorate the Friends group, provide Friends with more active roles, promote the trail going east, circulate a quarterly newsletter, provide media coverage of trail events and raise funds for trail amenities and pavilion furnishing. Gavin Dinges, an Eagle Scout, will be installing a bike repair station on the trail with help from the Friends group. Two interpretive signs have been installed on the trail. There will be more ready this spring.

The Friends/Marketing Committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:00 pm in the Lower Level of Johnson's.



[Friends of the River Bend Trail](#)

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River Bend Trail – Continued Progress

Despite some delays in 2016, the River Bend Trail is continuing on the road to expansion. Future plans are in the works to extend the trail east along the Wisconsin River to Cooper Street and beyond.

The River District Development Foundation has worked to raise money through donations and secured grants to make this possible in 2017. This board of directors consists of persistent, hard-working individuals who give of their time and talents to support the mission of the Foundation:

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Members of the board for 2017 are Gene Bebel, president, James Wedemeyer, vice-president, Shelley Hersil, secretary, and Jim Richardson, treasurer. Other Board members include Dr. Mark Crapster-Pregont, Dr. Steve Dahm, Mike Grunenwald, Larry Hampel, Debbe Kinsey, Jon Krohn, Art Lersch, Eric Malm, Brenda Mamer, Brenda Mueller, Tom Mueller, Sue Weith, Sarah Williams, Mike Willman, and Judy Woller. In addition to the board we also have a group of approximately 48 ex-officio members who are kept informed of all meetings and assist the board when needed. Our Friends of the River Bend Trail Group consists of community minded individuals who support the trail through fund raisers and work projects.

In the spring of 2017 the City of Merrill will be working on a Park Street project to include parking access for the trail, a cul-de-sac and an overlook where the original Park Street Bridge was located. Agra Construction will be reworking the pavilion at the trailhead and the Rotary Club of Merrill has donated funds to be used on landscaping a park across from the pavilion. Many donations by businesses and individuals have been received to make the trail possible and have provided lights, benches and other amenities for the trail. Support has been overwhelming. This is truly a community project that will benefit all residents of Merrill and the surrounding area. Use of the trail by walkers and bikers since the ribbon cutting in August of 2015 has increased substantially.

The trail can be accessed from the south end of Park Street on the east side of town, from Polk Street behind Weinbrenner or on West Main Street by the bridge on the west side. The Thrivent Way trail is a scenic walking loop off the paved section of the trail and features a historical marker and sign commemorating the flood of July 24, 1912. Other historical and informational signs are planned for the trail including a hobo camp marker and Merrill's first cemetery marker.

For more information about the trail, to make a donation or to become a friend of the trail contact the Merrill Chamber Office at 715-536-9474 or e-mail

Sarah Williams, sarahj724@gmail.com or Gene Bebel, kgb607@charter.net.

