Trail Trek 2012 Kicks It Up A Notch!

by Roger Hirsch

It was Trail Trek's 10th anniversary, and participants' T-shirts celebrated the milestone in a silk-screen antique depiction of a bicycle-built-for -10. The shirts were emblazoned with “Biking Is More Fun With Friends.”

Apparently everyone's friends showed up too. Riders could have filled up dozens of 10-seat bikes.

There were about 1,400 entrants who pulled on those blue t-shirts and rode bikes on five routes of 10, 13, 24, 31 and 40 miles—an increase of nearly 40% over last year. Registration volunteers quickly adjusted to easily accommodate the surge in numbers.

And how about those volunteers? Decked out in orange T-shirts designed like the blue ones, nearly 100 volunteers registered participants, rendered aid, manned relief stations, drove trucks, monitored trails and the riders, handed out water, bananas and granola bars and picked up the discarded bottles, peels and wrappers. The volunteer increase was about 80% over last year.

One of the event sponsors, Hy-Vee, served over 1,500 meals as hungry riders coasted back into Haymarket Park's west parking area after a morning on Lincoln's trails and headed straight for the serving lines.

The sudden increase in participation became apparent just the weekend before the June 24th event. The registration cut-off was that weekend, and on the following Monday about 200 registrations came in the mail. Trail Trek just broke through to new levels.

The annual “last-Sunday-in-June” event has an increasing regional appeal. Riders came from such places as Bennett, Grand Island, Gretna, Omaha, Pawnee City, Raymond, Roca and other communities to participate in the Lincoln-based event.


Continued page 2
Trail Trek continued

John Taylor and event sponsor The Lincoln Journal Star created advertising themes, t-shirt designs and other materials and handled registrations. Sponsor Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) distributed materials, including a new Lincoln/Lancaster County trails map. Mike Long of the Lincoln Amateur Radio Club helped coordinate communications between relief stops along the trails and Haymarket Park in an effort to keep the stops supplied with water and food.

Riders took their time at the start to avoid crowding the trails, and make the rides more leisurely and pleasant for everyone. Most of the entrants jammed the plaza along the first-base side of Haymarket Park following the trail rides to participate in the drawing for 20 bicycles donated by The Bike Rack and Cycle Works. Singer and guitarist Chris Sayre once again entertained and helped make welcoming announcements.

Four of the bikes were reserved for participants in the Safari Trek—riders needed to spot special landmarks along the 10- and 13-mile trails and earn the right to participate in the Safari drawing. The Safari Trek is popular with kids, and while an official tally is not available, they were out in record numbers too.

Trail Trek extends its deep gratitude to Jim Carveth of The Bike Rack and Kris Sonderup from Cycle Works for the donation of all the bicycles. Carveth also served as chairperson of 2012 Trail Trek Committee.

“Trail Trek 2012 was the best one ever because of the many different groups of people from eastern Nebraska who came to Lincoln to experience the great trails we have,” said Carveth. “The distance many of them traveled just for that morning’s ride was a neat thing to see.”

Over $12,000 was raised in registration fees, donations and sponsorships, according to event planner and volunteer Elaine Hammer. She said the entire amount would go to the the ongoing Pioneers Park restoration project.

Terry Genrich, Natural Resources Coordinator for Lincoln Parks and Recreation, said “we are constantly trying to improve the existing trails and at the same time, build new trails and facilities.”

He said this year’s event included a new link between Billy Wolff with Antelope Valley/Union Plaza, a renovated portion of Billy Wolff next to the Children's Zoo, and the Jayne Snyder Trails Center.

And what about Trail Trek 2013?

Continued page 3
New Key Trail Segments continued

The Haymarket Ball Park Trail generally follows Salt Creek atop the levee and is simply an extension of the Salt Creek Levee Trail. It goes under the I-180 bridge, the 10th St. bridge and the 14th St. bridge before connecting with the Antelope Valley system.

The Salt Creek Levee Trail begins near Wilderness Park at First and Van Dorn Sts., where it links to the south with a finished segment of Jamaica North. The Antelope Valley system connects to the Billy Wolff Trail, which in turn has a connection to the Rock Island Trail. Plans also call for the Salt Creek Levee Trail to be extended to 27th and Cornhusker to link with yet other trails.

The design work has been completed and construction should begin this fall. The Nebraska Roads Department will use federal trail dollars to pay for 80 percent of the $604,000 project, and the Lower Platte South NRD will pay for the remaining 20 percent.

NEW GPTN TRAILS MAP
by Todd Kellerman

GPTN is pleased to announce the release of our newly expanded trails map. These maps are an effort to create a more usable map that allows trail users to better identify Lincoln’s great trail system as well as other trail and on-street facilities. Since our trails map is one of GPTN’s defining marketing tools, our hope is that the new map will also enhance the community’s awareness of our group and its mission.

Map users will also notice the major trails are colored coded on the new map. These colors correspond to new signs that will be placed along the trails this summer. A tear-off tab is available to solicit new members to GPTN. The back of the map contains smaller maps of nearby rural trails, a detailed map of Wilderness Park trails, an inset map of downtown/UNL, safety information, as well as other resources.

After soliciting bids from local companies, GPTN hired Thought District, a local sales and marketing firm, to create the new map. A GPTN map committee met with their team several times to design the map features and review the work. The process took a better part of 2011 to accomplish the desired product. Patience by Thought District as they worked with our volunteer committee was greatly appreciated.

As the price for printing the full-color new maps was higher than the old maps, GPTN sought sponsors to cover a majority of the printing costs. GPTN would like to thank the following sponsors for their support: ScreenInk, Bike Rack, Cycle Works, Sandhills Publishing, Partnership for Healthy Lincoln, Lincoln Pediatric Group, Lancaster Co. Medical Society, Body Innovations, Scheel’s, and Great Plains Bicycling Club.

Maps are available at local bicycle shops as well as the Lincoln Parks & Rec. office.

LINCOLN AND LANCASTER COUNTY TRAILS MAPS & RESOURCES

GPTN is pleased to announce the release of our newly expanded trails map. These maps are an effort to create a more usable map that allows trail users to better identify Lincoln’s great trail system as well as other trail and on-street facilities. Since our trails map is one of GPTN’s defining marketing tools, our hope is that the new map will also enhance the community’s awareness of our group and its mission.

Map users will also notice the major trails are colored coded on the new map. These colors correspond to new signs that will be placed along the trails this summer. A tear-off tab is available to solicit new members to GPTN. The back of the map contains smaller maps of nearby rural trails, a detailed map of Wilderness Park trails, an inset map of downtown/UNL, safety information, as well as other resources.

After soliciting bids from local companies, GPTN hired Thought District, a local sales and marketing firm, to create the new map. A GPTN map committee met with their team several times to design the map features and review the work. The process took a better part of 2011 to accomplish the desired product. Patience by Thought District as they worked with our volunteer committee was greatly appreciated.

As the price for printing the full-color new maps was higher than the old maps, GPTN sought sponsors to cover a majority of the printing costs. GPTN would like to thank the following sponsors for their support: ScreenInk, Bike Rack, Cycle Works, Sandhills Publishing, Partnership for Healthy Lincoln, Lincoln Pediatric Group, Lancaster Co. Medical Society, Body Innovations, Scheel’s, and Great Plains Bicycling Club.

Maps are available at local bicycle shops as well as the Lincoln Parks & Rec. office.
UNION PLAZA GRAND OPENING

Union Plaza is Lincoln's newest destination attraction and the first of its kind six acre urban park that is located north of "O" Street between 21st and 22nd Streets as part of the Antelope Valley flood and roadway project.

Construction of final park amenities and landscaping touches are nearing completion. Make plans now to join us for a grand opening September 13, 2012. The Jayne Snyder Trails Center is located in the heart of Union Plaza and this celebration is a great time to visit the new center.

The schedule of activities include:

5:00 pm Union Plaza Grand Opening Celebration begins-Free and open to the public
6:30 pm Program --Speakers, performance by local choral groups, and fountain display
7:30 pm Union Plaza Grand Opening Celebration concludes

Union Bank will be hosting a treasure hunt filled with fun activities for children and the whole family. Offerings from snacks to dinner will be available for purchase from local food vendors that typically exhibit at Jazz in June and the Haymarket Farmers Market. Guests are encouraged to ride their bikes to the event and to enjoy the convenience of 'bike valets or bike corrals' to secure your ride during the fun! Parking will also be available.

For more information please contact the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department at 402-441-7847 or event organizer Linda Hubka at linda_hubka@hotmail.com or 402-488-0968.


STEAMBOAT TRACE  NOW OPEN

The flood-damaged Steamboat Trace trail between Nebraska City and Brownville once again is open for its entire 22 miles. Kreifels Conservation and Excavating of Nebraska City repaired the south half of the scoured limestone-surface trail, which has been closed for the past year, the Nemaha Natural Resources District said in a news release.

NRD crews also have been busy working on bridges and other maintenance items along the scenic hiking and biking trail that parallels the Missouri River.

For more information about Steamboat Trace, contact the district at 402-335-3325 or visit:www.nemahanrd.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nacho Ride  Streets Alive!
Tuesdays 5:30 p.m.,  September 9, 2012
84th St. MoPac Trailhead  12:30—5:30 p.m.
http://www.nachoride.com

Union Plaza Grand Opening  Market to Market Relay
September 13, 2012  October 13, 2012
5—7:30 p.m.
October 13, 2012
markettomarketrelay.com

STREETS ALIVE!

On September 9, 2012 from 12:30pm-5:00pm. 3.3 miles of Lincoln’s streets will be closed to motorized vehicles and opened to walkers, runners, bikers, roller-bladers--anybody using human-powered transportation--to come out and Play in the Streets! Streets Alive! is an afternoon of healthy fun and activity for families, kids and seniors on the streets from Woods Park thru Antelope Valley. Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler will be on hand to open Streets Alive! at 12:30 at the Union Plaza Amphitheater at 21st and Q.

Use a StreetsAlive! Passport to win cool prizes

To help you navigate Streets Alive! this year, you can visit different exhibits with your passport, get it signed, turn it in, and win prizes! Passports are available at all the information booths at all four entertainment sites along the route. Visit at least 10 different exhibits from two different sites, obtain signatures, and turn in your passport by 4:30 p.m. to win. Drawings will occur at 5 p.m. at the 22nd and Q streets Main Stage. Prize winners need not be present to win. Everyone who turns in a passport will win a participation prize.

Here are just some of the prizes:

- Free Zumba and Budokan classes
- 1 yr family membership: Lincoln Children's Museum
- Visa gift cards
- Pedometers
- Dufflebags

Streets Alive! is loaded with talent. From polished performers like the Rockerfellers, Coolpoppas The Mighty Magic Pants and Two Gals & a Guitar to rising stars from Academy of Rock, and Harris Academy of Arts, Streets Alive! will be rockin’ and jazzin’ the entire 3.3 mile route.

Performers will be located at Trago Park (near the Malone Center at the north end of the route), Union Plaza (22nd & P), American Legion Park (27th & Randolph) and Woods Park (33rd & O).

http://www.facebook.com/StreetsAliveLincoln
Recently completed Homestead Trail—a 40-mile rural ride between Lincoln and Beatrice—looms as Trail Trek responds to its increasing regional appeal. Parks and Recreation Director Lynn Johnson said the North 14th Street and First Street trails will be completed and on next year’s routes. The event will be June 30th, 2013.

In addition to Carveth, Hammer, Long and Taylor, other Trail Trek committee members included: Dale Arp, Dick Boyd, Ben Cahoon, Don Dingman, Nancy Dyas, Deb Fisher, Tim Hagener, Paul Harrison, and Carol Rogers. Lists of all volunteers and bike winners are nearby.

THANKS TRAIL TREK VOLUNTEERS


NEWSFLASH: Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department is still waiting for approval of permits before construction can begin on the Bison Trail Bridge replacement.

And The Winners Are....!

GPTN suspects that notwithstanding the drought heat of 2012, there were some proud owners of new bicycles out on Lincoln’s trails this summer. Thanks to The Bike Rack and Cycle Works, twenty winners rode away on new two-wheelers at the conclusion of Trail Trek 2012.

Four of them won bikes in a special drawing held as part of Trail Trek’s popular “Safari Trek” on the 10- and 13-mile routes. They were:

Julie Gentleman
Colin and Denise Krierleber
Payton Moore

The rest of the bikes were awarded in a drawing of everyone else. The winners were:

Bobbie Beat
Randy Denniston
Aria Feit

Elliott Hannerman
Monica Marschman
Lowell Irvin

Rusty Lashley
Caleb Krueger

Tim Sealock
Harry Petersen

Aron Schmitz

Lynette Teegerstrom
John Vogel

Jill Wintz
Scott Yank
NEW KEY TRAIL SEGMENTS CONNECT BEATRICE TO DEVANEY!

by Roger Hirsch

With the recent completion of two trail segments a bike rider can now mount up in downtown Beatrice and travel—by trail—to watch Nebraska's fourth-ranked volleyball team at the Devaney Sports Center.

But you better leave now—it will be a 50-plus mile trip.

Workmen recently completed the two key trail segments in separate projects, and both will greatly extend the riding experience for urban and rural riders.

The big one—Homestead Trail—has been under construction for a decade, and the full 40-mile length connecting Lincoln and Beatrice finally came together with the completion of the nine-mile segment connecting Cortland and Pickrell.

Another 19 miles, and riders will be able to pedal from Beatrice to the Nebraska-Kansas border. That segment is not completed, but the Nebraska Trails Foundation is working with the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District to finish it.

Right now, Lincoln-based riders can pick up the Homestead Trail at about 24th and Saltillo Road and go deep into the City of Beatrice to just south of 2nd and Court Sts. About four blocks to the west of the Beatrice terminus, on the north side of Court St., riders can pick up the trail that connects Beatrice's Riverside and Chautauqua parks.

Homestead follows the old route of the Union Pacific Railroad, which the railroad officially abandoned in 2000. In February, 2001 the Nebraska Trails Foundation picked up the right-of-way for $500,000, with some help from local governments and trail groups.

The trail between Lincoln and Beatrice was finished in segments, and the Cortland-Pickrell segment was completed last. The Foundation, City of Beatrice, and Lower Platte South Natural Resources District have had a hand in building the trail between the Capital City and Beatrice.

The Cortland-Pickrell stretch is characterized by 18 bridges, including a 120-foot steel monster across Indian Creek about a mile north of Pickrell. Much of the segment is lined with shady trees, which is likely to make it one of the more popular segments of the predominantly rural trail.

The entire trail winds through farm country in rural Lancaster and Gage counties, except for the segment between Cortland and the unincorporated community of Princeton—where the railroad line once hugged Hwy. 77 as it serviced the grain elevators in those towns, and Homestead dutifully follows the old right-of-way.

The City of Beatrice has spent about $1 million on its portion of the Homestead Trail, which includes the recently completed segment. Some 80% of the money came from federal funds.

While a future grand celebration may officially dedicate and open the Homestead Trail, bike riders aren't ones to wait for the traditional gun. The crunch of rubber tires on limestone could be heard as soon as trail-building equipment departed. Homestead Trail—finally—begs to be ridden.

There's another, shorter segment that will soon be constructed and will connect major trails in north Lincoln—it's the "knee" bone fulcrum that connects the "shin" and "thigh" bones in Lincoln's still-growing skeleton of bike trails.

The 1.3-mile Haymarket Ball Park Trail will run from the old Charleston Street bridge to 14th St. near the old state fairgrounds. While the trail itself may be short, it will link two major trail systems—the Salt Creek Levee Trail and the Antelope Valley Project trail system.

The Haymarket ball park and Oak Lake are now accessible from the Antelope Valley system, while the Devaney Sports Center, the Jayne Snyder Trails Center and the entire Antelope Valley system are accessible from the Salt Creek Levee Trail.

Continued page 5
GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

June 2012 to August 2012


We actively promote bicycling with weekly rides ranging from 20 to 100 miles. We have ice cream or coffee shop easy-paced rides, hammering training rides, moon-lit rides, trail rides, and show ‘n’ go rides. We sponsor the Spring Fling in April and the Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an application, see our website http://greatplainsbikeclub.org.

$10/person and $15/family.
REPLACING PI0NEER’S PARK TRAILS

The Parks and Recreation Dept. is in the process of seeking funds to begin the replacement of the aging (1972) asphalt trails in Pioneer’s Park. If funding is secured this will be the first step of a long-term, multi-stage project to replace all the existing trails with 8 foot, concrete trails. GPTN has agreed to provide some of the necessary matching funds.

Make contributions payable to the Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: ________________________________
Address: ______________________________
City, State, Zip: _________________________
Donation Amount: ________________________

Mail to: GPTN
5000 North 7th St.
Lincoln, NE 68521

GPTN Newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties. For more information, contact: Elaine Hammen, 402-477-0242, or www.gptn.org

Printed on recycled paper

492.477.0242 or www.gptn.org
For more information, contact: Elaine Hammen, 402-477-0242, or www.gptn.org
The GPTN Newsletter is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties.
5000 North 7th St., Lincoln, NE 68521

Great Plains Trails Network

Great Plains
Trails Network
Great Plains
Trails Network