THANK YOU LINCOLN!! YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE MADE OUR EXTENSIVE TRAILS SYSTEM A REALITY.

As the Jayne Snyder Trails Center and several important connecting links are under construction, GPTN is encouraging friends and members to provide support for a comprehensive signage program which would identify trails, provide directions and distances and be an important addition in making our trails system truly user friendly.

Make contributions payable to the Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name___________________________
Address_________________________
City, State, Zip__________________

Mail to GPTN 5000 No. 7th St.
Lincoln NE 68521

ANTELope VAley ADDITIONS

UNION PLAZA OVERLOOK LOOMS AS GATHERING POINT
by Roger Hirsch

So you’ve hiked, hiked, roller-bladed and maybe even walked the baby stroller to the Antelope Valley Project’s new Union Plaza, and it occurs to you—where’s a fella to pause and rest a bit?

Thanks to Assurity Life, a popular spot is likely to be a scenic overlook currently under construction next to Assurity Center, the company’s new headquarters at 21st and Que Sts. A $250,000 gift from Assurity to the Lincoln Parks Foundation sponsors not only construction of the overlook, but also establishes an endowment fund to defray future major repair and maintenance expenses of the area.

The overlook will feature a spiral-paved walkway that will end at a shade-covered area overlooking the plaza. The shade will be made of recycled steel, and will be easily visible from the plaza and surrounding blocks. Rising 12-15 feet above the surrounding area, the overlook’s major feature—the shade—will rise about an additional 15 feet higher. Native and naturalized plants will be used to finish the area.

The architectural firm of Clark Enersen Partners designed both the Assurity Center and Union Plaza. The overlook is one of several architectural and artistic projects integrated into the park’s design. The overlook will help anchor the northern end of Union Plaza and provide a panoramic view of the three-block plaza and its maze of paved trails, Antelope Creek, fountains and other attractions.

Janye Snyder Trails Center will be across Q Street to the south of the overlook.

“We are very excited to sponsor this unique feature in the new Union Plaza,” Assurity President and CEO Tom Henning said. “Because of the overlook’s proximity to the Assurity Center, we were able to design our campus as an extension of the park, so our site and the overlook provide one continuous, park-like environment.” Assurity plans to move to the new facility in December.

The park was identified by Vision 2015, a group of Lincoln business and civic leaders, as one of the 10 Pillars to Lincoln’s future.

Snyder TRAILS CENTER GOING UP

The new bridge across Antelope Creek (about halfway between the 27th Street underpass and Lincoln High) moves the Rock Island/Billy Wolff trail to the east side of the creek.

WOLFF WORK

Steel beams and some of the walls are in place. Interest in the retail space is being sought (See page 5.)

Continued Page 6
A NOTE FROM GARY

T
e promote healthy lifestyles and combat the rising trend of obesity and inactivity in the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days a week. However, less than one third of Americans meet the CDC’s recommendation for physical activity, and 40 percent of adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all. The disheartening trend of inactivity holds true for our nation’s children and adolescents as well. Daily walking and biking used to be an integral part of young people’s lives. Today, a mere 14 percent of children walk to school, which is a drastic fall from 50 percent in 1969.

As my wife pursues her Master’s Degree in Public Health, we often find ourselves discussing how a community’s physical design and layout plays an important role in the health of its citizens. Although individuals must choose to be active, the way a community develops its built environment can ease or impede the desire to be active. Lack of time or access to convenient outlets for human-powered transportation and recreation opportunities, are reasons commonly cited by all populations as barriers to regular exercise.

Planning and constructing trails within a neighborhood makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether it is for recreation or non-motorized transportation. This is particularly true if the trail is developed and designed so that it connects people to places they want to go, such as schools, businesses and locations throughout the community. In Lincoln, the goal of linking these places together remains a top priority and we are fortunate to have a well-connected trail system, yet there is always room for improvement.

A number of studies have shown that individuals living in a closer physical proximity to trails had an increased likelihood of being active. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine revealed this in a recent article, showing that people who reported using trails at least once a week were twice as likely to meet physical activity recommendations than people who reported rarely or never using trails. Likewise, a recent cost-benefit analysis of Lincoln’s trails showed a cost-benefit ratio of 2.94, which means that every $1 invested in trails led to $2.94 in direct medical benefit.

The link between healthy people and trail accessibility and use is strong. What we know and love about trails from our personal experience, undoubtedly goes beyond this notion in terms of our community. They provide an indispensable sanctuary for health and experience, undoubtedly goes beyond this notion in terms of our community. They provide an indispensable sanctuary for health and experience.

Welcome to new members Lisa Anderson, Larry Brauer, City of Seward, Denise Drake, Joshua Eickmeier, Steve Ferguson, Eric Holmberg, Todd & Nancy Jarchow, Judith Keller, Jeremie Mannning, Libby Oliver, Scott, Barb & Stevie Renken, Gary Kreckie & Bruce Robbins, Randy & Pat Sanley, Marlene Swanson, Byron & Lisanay, Josh Torell & Jim White.


GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

June 21, 2011 – September 13, 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 1 MARKET TO MARKET RELAY
ENTRY CLOSED–JUST OBSERVE AND ENJOY

ANGRY COW ADVENTURES
OCT 8–USAARA NATIONALS
OCT 8–MOEDEL’S TOOTH URBAN
OCT 20–23 CHECKPOINT TRAINER NATIONAL AID, RACE – KENTUCKY
OCT 28–PANAMA HALLOWEEN NIGHT RUN

EAGLE RUN BENEFIT KIDS

Dear Natural Resource District-

The Parents and Teachers of Eagle (PTE) would like to thank you for allowing us to use the MoPac East Trail for our Third Annual Eagle Elementary Fun Run on April 16, 2011. Our event offers a 10K, a 5K run/walk and a kids one mile. Both the event and trail utilize the Pioneers Park Cheyenne River bed. The number of participants has grown each year, largely because we have access to such a nice, well maintained trail system that runs through our community. We received very positive comments about the trail and how we’ve incorporated it into our race.

The children are the true benefactors of your generosity. The money raised from this event was used to purchase a tire swing for the playground. The swing was installed this summer and has made a great addition to our playground.

Please find enclosed a small donation to the NRD from the PTE, as a thank you for use of the trail and to assist with the trail maintenance expenses. We greatly value your time and efforts keeping the trail in such good condition.

We appreciate your support for the school, our goals as a parent-teacher organization and the community of Eagle. Respectfully Yours,

The Parents & Teachers of Eagle.
Doug Markgraf (25) is a survivor of a hit and run, while biking in Philadelphia five years ago. He was in a coma, suffering a traumatic brain injury (TBI). He has now recovered and teaches robotics at an inner city charter school in Philadelphia. He has become a strong advocate for improving the treatment of TBI patients and to further his cause he biked across the USA this summer. He left San Francisco June 27th, biked into treatment of TBI patients and to further his cause he biked across Philadelphia. He has become a strong advocate for improving the recovered and teaches robotics at an inner city charter school in Tom’s River, New Jersey, accompanied by a dozen friends and family. Now he is back teaching robotics to elementary students.

Also, on Monday he spent most of the afternoon at Madonna, touring their facilities and encouraging TBI patients he visited. It was quite moving to see this young man interact with the patients.

He carried three helmets on the back of his load (about 80 lbs). When I asked, “Why the three helmets?” he said, “I tell bikers, if I can carry three helmets across the country, you can put ONE on your head.” I would love to see that quote in the paper.

Doug has a great web site/blog. He kept it up daily with what was happening and where he was at, with pictures and videos. The Lincoln telecasts are up on his web site. About every other day he discussed the aftereffects of TBI. He is always positive. We also followed his tweets.

Doug remained on schedule, even though he had some tough days in Iowa. His sleeping sites included the edge of cemeteries, backyards, and an occasional home or hotel room provided by a friendly Midwestern. He trekked successfully through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and was clearly happy when he reached his home state of Pennsylvania, finishing the long journey on August 21st in Tom’s River, New Jersey, accompanied by a dozen friends and family. Now he is back teaching robotics to elementary students.

Doug is sorting out what his journey means. We know that he has been an inspiration to us and the many others he met along the way and the ripple effects are far beyond that. He promises to put together the insights he has gained on the medical and service needs of TBI survivors and spread the word.

Doug and Ann Brown are local bicyclists and strong proponents of bikers, if I can carry three helmets across the country, you can put ONE on your head."

Doug Markgraf

Continued page 5
Lincoln Cares, a community donation program, which allows Lincoln Electric System (LES) customers to voluntarily add one dollar to their bill payments each month, has funded $104,700 in trail projects around the city since its inception in 2003.

The projects include the Jamaica North Trail Bridge, the trail connecting Huntington and Leighton between 33rd and 48th; the MoPac Trail Bridge over 27th Street (now called the Elaine Hammer Bridge); the Jayne Snyder Trails Center; the Helen Boosalis Trail along Hwy. 2 and the trail connection between Elliott School and the Antelope Valley project.

“We are happy to partner with the Great Plains Trails Network, which provides matching dollars for many of these projects,” said Lynn Johnson, Director of Lincoln Parks and Recreation. “We thank everyone who has donated to this program over the years, and urge them to continue to add one dollar to their LES bill each month so we can continue to fund these types of projects in the future.”


In addition, all five Lincoln media organizations which for the second consecutive year have provided $30,000 of in-kind advertising and promotion of Lincoln Cares. With last year’s contribution, local media will have provided a total of $380,000 in free promotion for this community donation program. Media sponsors are: KOLN/KGIN-TV, KLKN-TV, Three Eagles Communications; NRG Media - Broadcast House; and the Lincoln Journal Star.

Lincoln Cares offers several donation options:

LES customers can add one dollar to their bill payments each month.

• Those who pay LES through automatic bank billing month.

LES customers can add one dollar to their bill payments each month.

Lincoln Cares offers several donation options:

LES customers can add one dollar to their bill payments each month.

• Donations also are accepted online at LincolnCares.org.

More information on Lincoln Cares is available by visiting: LincolnCares.org

A short northward extension of the trail crosses Randolph St. and joins the Antelope Creek Trail just south of the J St. bridge. Plans call for the addition of lighting between the new bridge and Randolph St.

**HIGH WATER HEADACHES**

According to their website, the Nemaha Natural Resources District has closed the Steamboat Trace until further notice due to flood damage. Constructing trails along rivers or drainage channels has its advantages. Often there is adjacent land available and there is almost always a gentle grade. On the down side, high water can create some problems for users of such trails. Even Antelope Creek can have its problems.

Underpasses at busy streets are great for safety, but require a significant descent—sometimes only a few feet above normal water levels. When water levels are high, trail users must employ alternate routes. The improvements on the Billy Wolff trail just east of the zoo were badly needed but because the trail will be lower, high water will certainly be an occasional problem. Users will, however, be treated to a closer view of the sandstone outcrops where generations have left their marks.

**Wolff Work continued**

The bridge over the Platte River at Central City, all 1072 feet, has been successfully decked and raised with volunteer help.

Sept. 1st a ceremony placing the last of a few railing boards was held and then followed by an awards presentation and picnic type meal at the bridge site.

Chuck Griffith, Administrator of the Merrick County Foundation, along with Pat and Dale Carlson have provided the leadership and directed all of the work. Ross Graushouse, Dale Arp, Albert Maxey, Mike Marsh, Issac Iaquinta and V. T. Miller were there early in the project to help get the work started. Griffith indicated 72 people have contributed their efforts beginning June 10th.

The Central City to Marquette Trail, an abandoned Burlington right-of-way, was divided into 2 phases. The first phase, Central City to Hiway 66, allows access to the river which is the main focal point of the trail. Phase 2, about 7 miles to Marquette, is open for public access, however the surface has not been developed for the planned limestone chips.

Funding for the trail has come from many sources. The principle donors have been Kiewitt Foundation, Merrick County Foundation and the Olivia Lincoln Foundation.

**THOMAS ESTABLISHES MAINTENANCE FUND**

Neal Thomas, a member of the Pedestrian Bicycle Advisory Committee as well as the Great Plains Trails Network, has established a fund in the Lincoln Community Foundation known as the Lincoln Trails Maintenance Endowed Fund.

When the fund balance exceeds $10,000, charitable distributions from this Fund will be made annually to Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, Lincoln, Nebraska. Neal Thomas donated the first $10,000 to this fund. The fund was established in August, 2011.

Neal has long believed that we need to support the maintenance of our trails system. His commitment to a fund in the Lincoln Community Foundation is a gift to see that happen. If anyone wishes to contribute to this Fund, just contact the Lincoln Community Foundation. Your gift will help reach the $10,000 goal to help maintain trails.

**CORRECTION**

In our last issue it was incorrectly reported that matching funding for the replacement of a bridge on the Cowboy Trail would be supplied by the NRD.

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