

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



Great Plains Trails Network

September 2011

Issue 106

ANTELOPE VALLEY ADDITIONS

UNION PLAZA OVERLOOK LOOMS AS GATHERING POINT

by Roger Hirsch

So you've biked, 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. The

Jayne 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



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

WOLFF WORK

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



Continued Page 6

Printed on recycled paper

For more information,
contact: Elaine Hammer,
477-0242, or
www.gptn.org

The GPTN Newsletter is
published whenever there is
enough news to justify an
issue. It is distributed to
GPTN members and
interested others.

5000 North 7th • Lincoln, NE 68521

Great Plains
Trails Network



PRSRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lincoln, NE
Permit No. 433



GREAT PLAINS TRAILS NETWORK
since 1988

*dedicated to the goal of developing
a network of
commuter and recreational trails
within Lincoln and Lancaster County*

2011

PRESIDENT Gary Bentrup
VICE PRESIDENT Jim Cook
SECRETARY Todd Kellerman
TREASURER Corey Godfrey

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dale Arp Brett Baker
Jason Bakewell Ann Bleed
Jim Carveth Parks Coble
Jim Craig Curt Donaldson
Deb Fisher Marynelle Green
Elaine Hammer Roger Hirsch
Nancy Loftis V.T. Miller
Karen Griffin O'Connor Brendon Polt
Rose Quackenbush Carol Rogers
David Scoby Kris Sonderup
Ray Stevens, Jr. Beth Thacker
Mary Torell Bob Torell
Joyce Vannier Bill Wehrbein

MAILING ADDRESS
5000 NORTH 7th
LINCOLN NE 68521-4010

WEBSITE WWW.GPTN.ORG

Newsletter comments, questions, corrections
vtnjoymil@gmail.com 402-483-2653

A NOTE FROM GARY

Trails: A Rx for Better Health

To 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 Americans 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. This alarming 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 in the broadest spectrum and are a wise public investment in creating a healthier, more productive nation. One step at a time, trails and active transportation can be a part of a much larger solution.

GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

June 21, 2011 – September 13, 2011

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 Mamming, Libby Oliver, Scott, Barb & Stevie Renken, Gary Kreick & Bruce Robbins, Randy & Pat Sanley, Marlene Swanson, Byron & Lisa Sypal, Josh Torell & Jim White.

Thank you to renewing members: Bruce Abernethy, Joanne Allen, Nick Amen, David Armknecht, Lee Anderbery, Charles Arp, Beverly Z.Ashley, M.V. Battelle, Matthew Baxa, Dave Becker, Raymond Bloomquist, Daryl & Kris Bohac, Judy & Perley Boucher, Dick Boyd, Sandy & Rick Borwn, Ruth & Larry Cada, Walter Canney, Ken & Sandy Carlson, Jim & Kim Carveth, Peggy & Eli Chesen, Wes & Carol Christensen, Joann Churley, Pat Clare, Julie Cole, Pam Conover, Jim & Judi Cook, Jim Craig, Larry & Terri Day, Judith DeGraff, Michelle DeRusha & Brad Johnson, Jay & Diane Dirksen, Sharon Doll, Mike Dosskey, Nancy, & Hess Dyas, Al & Vicki Eastman, Stu Essman, Katherine Evans, Amy Fabricus & Kit Minks, Daniel Feingold, Howard Feldman, David Florell, Tom & Sue Guild, Cliff Lemen & Patricia Freeman, James & Sandy Gallentine, George & Barbara Gammel, Mark & Mildred Gardner, Lil Gibson, Pat Gilles, Georgia Glass, Ron & Beth Goble, Richard & Ursula Goodban, Robert & Vanessa Gorman, Ron & Connie Gormley, Nick Gove, John & Jan Gradwohl, Charles & Carolyn Gregorius, William Glover, Pat & Buce Hammond, M Halls.

Thanks to additional renewing members, George & Sandi Hansen, Butch & Debey Haws, Jason Hayes, Craig & Jean Hellman, Steve Heinrichsen, Steve Heusel, Alica Helink, Highlands Animal Hospital & Dick Hudson, Al Jensen, Glenn & Elaine Johnson, Con & Barbara Keating, Victor Kirriloff, Jodi Kocher, Darrell, Julie & Sarah Knight, Dottie Ladman, Alice Lane, Joe Laughlin, Linda Lowe, Jerry Luedtke, Linda Mahloch, Joy & Julie Marshall, Christine Marvin, Chris & Erin Masada, David & Jan McChesney, Thomas McGinty, Michael McCoy, Craig MacPhee, Susan Melcher, Alan Meyer, Rick & Sharon Michaelsen, Mark C. Miller, Terry & Jan Monk, Rosalind Morris, Francis Moul, Ruth Nahorny, James Nau, Ann & John Neal, Tom Nider, D.W.Niemann, James J. Nora, Jr., David & Gisele Oseka, Scott Patterson, Don & Joanne Pepperl, Dean & Darlene Petersen, Jon Peterson, Dick & Jody Pitsch, Richard Powell, Dan & Catahy Pudenz, Rose Quackenbush, Stephen Ramsay, Bob & Lisa Rauner, Claudia & John Reinhardt, Judy Garlock & Tex Richters, Craig Roper, James & Janet Rose, Linda Ross, David Rutz, Pam & Terry Schoonover, Alisa & Bruce Sandahl, Jay Schluckebier, David Schoenmaker, Frank Sidles, Charles Shambarger, Nadine Skupa, Paul Smith, Chris & Vicki Sommerich, Cliff & Jan Sorensen, Dick & Susan Spangler, Faye Stevens, Martha Stoddard, Clay Streich, John & Cloria Strope, Jr., Dave Swartz, Don & Sue Sylwester, Mark Taylor, Sherry Taylor, John A. Thacker, Ginny Schnabel & Mike Thew, Kris Thoms, Hendrik & Barbara Van Den Berg, Tom Vandenack, Ken & Jane Vice, Stephen & Donna Vontassel, Lois Wenzl, Dean Wertz & Kate Adams, John Whitmer, Oak Williams,

John & Cyndi Woollam, Craig & Norma Williams, Gary Zellweger, Paul & Janet Zillig, and Chris Zygielbaum.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 1 MARKET TO MARKET RELAY
ENTRYS CLOSED--JUST OBSERVE AND ENJOY

ANGRY COW ADVENTURES

OCT.8-USARA NATIONALS
OCT.8-MOOSE'S TOOTH URBAN
OCT.20-23-CHECKPOINT TRACKER NATIONAL ADV. RACE-KENTUCKY
OCT.28-PANAMA HALLOWEEN NIGHT RUN

FEB 19, 2012 GPTN ANNUAL MEETING

PIONEERS PARK TRAILS IMPROVEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Dept. is in the process of seeking funds to begin the replacement of the aging (1972) asphalt trails in Pioneers 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.

EAGLE RUN BENEFITS 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 10K and 5K utilize the trail. 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 great 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.

SURVIVOR PEDALS CROSS-COUNTRY SUPPORTING TBI TREATMENT

by Bob Brown

Bob and Ann Brown are local bicyclists and strong proponents of helmet use. Ann suffered a life-threatening accident, while cycling near Lincoln a year after she cycled coast-to-coast.

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 Lincoln on a sweltering Sunday, July 25th. His mission was to spread the word about TBI across the country and meet with TBI support groups. Whenever possible he visited TBI survivors all along his bike route.

Doug was originally going to bike to Omaha, but heard about Ann and decided he wanted to meet her and came through Lincoln instead. Ann and I and a few others biked to meet him on HW 34 west of Lincoln and led him into Lincoln and up the city trails to our house. He only had two days off since leaving the coast so it didn't take much to talk him into staying in Lincoln for a rest day, which he did. On Monday he had interviews with Channels 8 and 10/11, which played on their 5 PM and 6 PM newscasts. Unfortunately, the newspaper press did not cover his visit, as did newspapers along the way in Nebraska and through the rest of his trek east.

Doug and Ann had great talks about their hospital horror stories and common experiences about biking across the country. He was here 36 hours and we feel like he is a member of the family. What a great, committed young man!

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.

Continued page 5

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

by Dave Swartz

I am a 73-year old bike rider who finally returned to bike riding in 2006 at the age of 68.

My wife and I live in south Lincoln in the townhome part of Williamsburg. Our townhome backs onto the Williamsburg hike/bike trail which connects nearby to the Tierra and SouthPointe Trails. I love the Lincoln Trail System and regret not getting started riding earlier after moving to Lincoln from Columbus (NB) in 1990.

I have always been interested in numbers so part of my bike riding motivation involves an Excel spreadsheet. Since May 2006: Total number of rides/total miles ridden: 609/12,443; Average miles per ride/average MPH: 23.39/12.41. .

Now, I know these aren't great numbers but maybe not so bad for my age group. Biking opened a new world for me, changed my life and gave me a deep appreciation not only of the Lincoln trail system but also for the greater Lincoln community. I have biked in and around all four corners of Lincoln as well as the highways and limestone trails west, south and east of Lincoln.

My point for this article is: Stay Alive - Wear a Helmet. Noted earlier I have over 600 rides and 12K miles on my bikes. I have had a total of two serious crashes. One on the 4th of July 2006 and the second one on Fathers Day 2011. I suffered a separated shoulder in July 2006 and broken ribs, blood clots on my lung and fluid collecting outside my lung on Fathers Day 2011. 2 crashes in 609 rides. On both rides, I cracked my helmet up the side with the collision of my head with concrete. After each ride, Doctors told me they have seen deaths caused by head trauma similar to mine.

Maybe it isn't cool to wear a helmet, maybe you don't like to be told what to do, maybe you get all sweaty, maybe you have helmet hair afterward. But isn't all that worth it to keep enjoying your family, to continue loving our beautiful city and to keep living life to its fullest. Please wear a good helmet and have your children and loved ones wear one also.



LPSNRD 2012 PROPOSED BUDGET

Doug Markgraf Continued....

In announcing the Lower Platte South's proposed budget for fiscal 2012 Director Johnson said that the NRD board was committed to working with the same amount (\$8.7 million) as was raised in 2011. The rest of the district's money comes from federal, state and municipal sources as well as private funds and grants.

Included was \$1.2 million for recreation and conservation corridors, including a new restroom at Walton and a trailhead near Roca; completing the Salt Creek Levee Trail from Haymarket Park to North 14th Street and a new crossing under the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway tracks; plus the design of an equestrian route on Homestead Trail.

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. From his blog, we sense that 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.

Though Doug's ride is complete, you will have fun and be enlightened, if you check out his web site/blog and take a few minutes to scroll back to his first day and follow his trek from San Francisco to Lincoln (his halfway point) and then on to New Jersey. His site is: www.Dougtrails.wordpress.com. It will inspire you and increase your faith in today's younger generation.

Retail/Office Condominium Unit available June, 2012

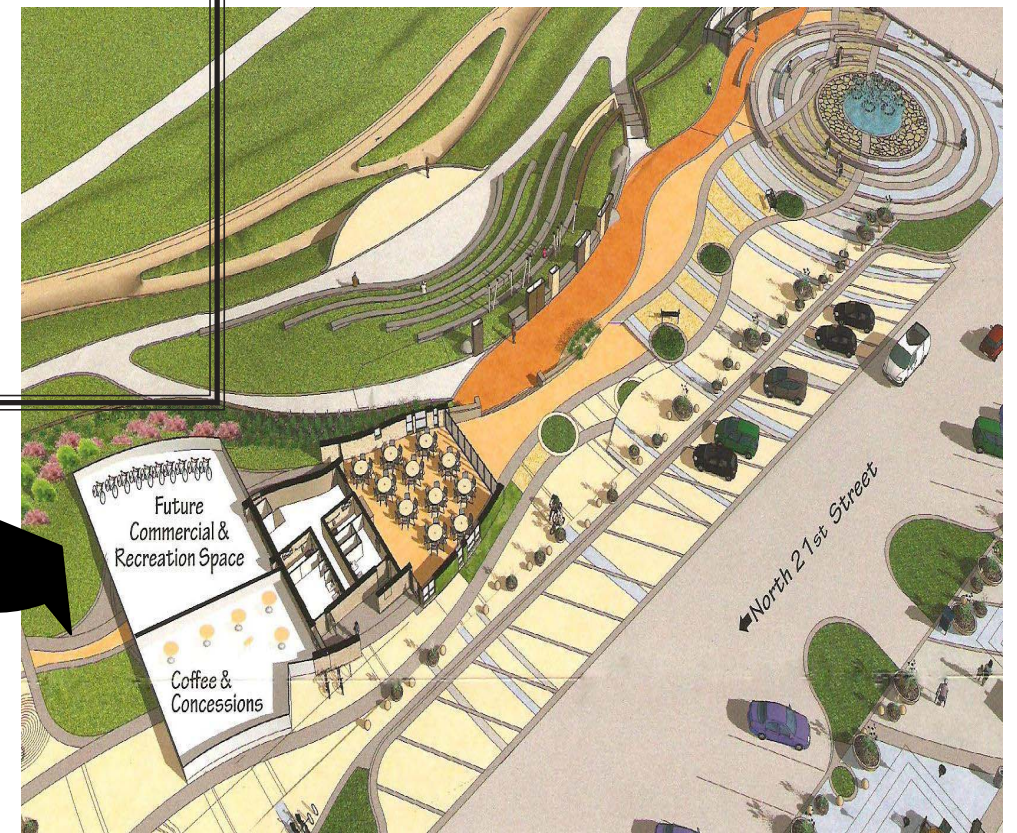
New Construction in Union Plaza, Corner of 21st & Q 2100 Sq. Ft.

Direct Antelope Valley Trail access

Excellent opportunity for fitness, recreation and health oriented businesses

CONTACT
David Schmidt,
[402 476 0086](tel:4024760086)

Nancy Loftis,
[402 476 1111](tel:4024761111)



**"LINCOLN CARES" SUPPORTS TRAILS
\$104,700 SINCE 2003**

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."

Partners in Lincoln Cares have included Tier One Bank Foundation, World's Foremost Bank, Pepsi, Lincoln Benefit Life, Culver's Restaurants, Lincoln Parks Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation's Ken Good Fund, Great Plains Trails Network, Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center, Lincoln Area Retired Teachers, Olsson Associates Community Builders, and Michael Sucha Memorial Fund/Annual Memorial Golf Tournament.

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 \$300,000 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 can add Lincoln Cares to their payments each month by calling LES at 402-475-4211.
- Donations also can be mailed directly to the Lincoln Parks Foundation, 2740 "A" Street, Box 201, Lincoln, NE 68502
- Donations also are accepted online at LincolnCares.org.

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

Wolff Work contiued



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.



The trail just east of the Zoo, between 27th and A Streets is closed while undergoing channel widening. The trail there will be lowered and the underpass ramps at 27th and A Streets reconstructed with more gradual gradients. Work is expected to be completed in November.

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.

**VOLUNTEERS COMPLETE BRIDGE
OVER THE PLATTE RIVER**

by Lynn Lightner

The bridge over the Platte River at Central City, all 1072 feet, has been successfully decked and railed 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 Greathouse, Dale Arp, Albert Maxey, Mike Marsh, Issac Iaquina 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 \$1000 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.

NEBRASKA Home Sales
Rich Rodenburg Partner, Associate Broker
 P.O. Box 6165, Lincoln, NE 68506
 Rich@NebHomeSales.com
 402-440-7570 www.NebHomeSales.com

AtoZ PRINTING
 All Types of Printing
 Personal Service
 Creative Design
 Fast Turnaround
 8230 Cody Drive
 Lincoln, NE 68512
 402.477.0815
 atozprint.com
 Contact us to learn more about how we can help you make sustainable printing choices.

GREAT PLAINS bicycling club
 Come Ride With Us

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.