



trailNEWS



WORKING TO CONNECT PITTSBURGH TO WASHINGTON, D.C.—THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, NOT OVER THEM

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

and member organizations of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

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Fall/Winter 2008



TrailBook

**D.C. TO
THE POINT
IN 23:22!**
(SEE INSIDE)

Legacy Ride coordinator Seth Gernot of Venture Outdoors leads PNC Legacy Riders and Sojourn riders on the final leg from McKeesport to Point State Park.

Legacy Relay Riders Mark 250th

The first-ever 24-hour relay trail ride between Washington D.C. and Pittsburgh highlighted the year-long Pittsburgh 250 celebration.

The 130 riders in the PNC Legacy Ride carried a Congressional proclamation over 18 legs of about 20 miles each, much of it in the dark, and delivered it to Mayor Luke Ravenstahl during festivities at Point

State Park on October 4.

Completion of the Passage to the Forks of the Ohio is a signature project of Pittsburgh 250, and significant progress was made during the year toward that end. Just four miles ("The Final Four") remain to complete the 335-mile, non-motorized trail that includes the 184.5-mile C&O Canal Towpath. The combined trail is recognized as the best of its kind in North America, if not the world.

Relay riders gathered in McKeesport and rode the last leg into the city together, joined by riders of the week-long Venture Outdoors Sojourn that covered the complete distance. The day ended with a 30-minute barrage of Zambelli fireworks launched from 17 positions in one of the region's largest pyrotechnic displays ever.

Big Savage Tunnel to Close for Winter

Big Savage Tunnel is closed each December to protect against damage from freezing. Date is weather-dependent; please check www.GAPtrail.org for status. The tunnel will be reopened next spring near the beginning of April.



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Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, left, receives the Congressional proclamation carried by Bob Lowry of PNC, right, and GAP Trail Coordinator Jack Paulik, captains of the first and last legs, respectively, of the PNC Legacy Ride.



Dan Onorato does the honors, flanked by (left) U.S. Steel's John Surma, ATA's Linda McKenna Boxx, Allegheny County Councilman Bob Macey, and (right) McKeesport Mayor Jim Brewster, American Bridge's Bob Luffy (hardhat), P.J. Dick/Trumbull's Tom Carey, and Hannah Hardy of the Steel Valley Trail Council.

'Some Day' Is Almost Here – John Surma

Riverton Bridge Opens; 'Final Four' Remains

The elegant Riverton Bridge has been added to the structures of the Great Allegheny Passage. At 1,200 feet, it is second in length on the Passage to the 1,908-foot Salisbury Viaduct in Somerset County.

Besides being beautiful and dramatic, the bridge is a significant improvement to the safety of the alignment. It allows trail traffic to stay off the roads, crossing the Monongahela River between McKeesport and Duquesne.

The bridge was carrying rail traffic as recently as May, yet was opened for trail traffic on Oct 4.

In transferring ownership of the bridge to Allegheny County, U.S. Steel President John Surma told of using the C&O Towpath while in D.C. years ago and asking a cyclist how far the trail went.

"Some day it will go all the way to Pittsburgh," he was astounded to hear.

"Some day" is almost here," Surma told the gathering in McKeesport, and he praised the efforts of American Bridge, PJ Dick/Trumble, and Snavelly Forest Products as part of the team that tackled the bridge, ramp and trail.

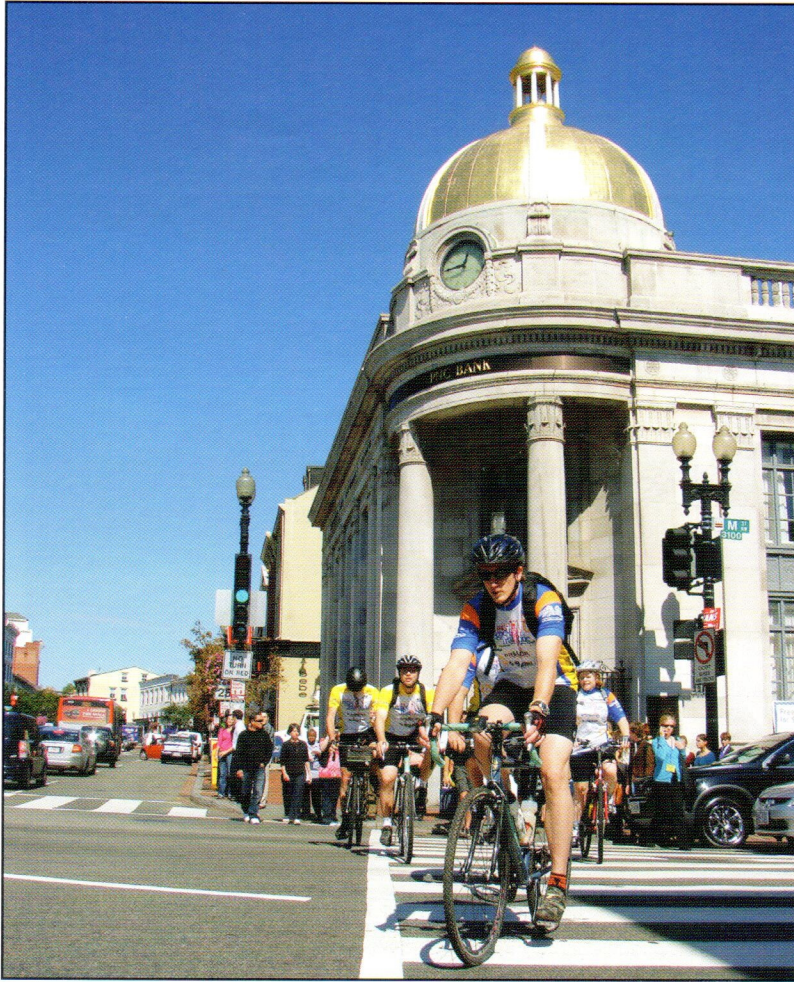
NOTE: The Riverton Bridge is open, but the trail on the

Duquesne side is still under construction. Therefore, you can ride onto the bridge only from McKeesport, and must turn around at the other end.

Just four miles remain to be built to complete the Passage. "The Final Four" will include several sections of trail and the construction of two bridges.



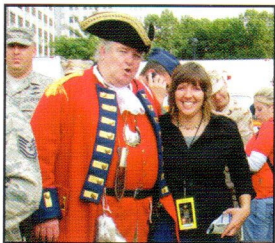
The Riverton Bridge this past summer before the decking was finished.



They're off! First Leg relay riders cross M Street in Georgetown.



George Washington on Grant Street, about to lead dignitaries.



250 years of history.

Steel Valley Trail Council board member Laura Jenkins and ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx share the jubilation of the moment.



Tim Inglis, left, President of the Colcom Foundation, a major supporter of the Passage, and fellow relay riders after riding Leg 2 from Seneca to Monocacy aqueducts.



First handoff at Seneca.



James E. Rohr, chairman and chief executive officer, PNC Financial Services Group, and outgoing chairman of the Allegheny Conference, praises the Passage.



Bill Flanagan, executive director of Pittsburgh 250, rallies riders d

All photos by TrailBook unless otherwise indicated

lay riders, and sojourners through downtown Pittsburgh to Point State Park.



Gathering near the marina in McKeesport for the final leg.



The celebration on October 4th climaxed with a Zambelli In



All the way from D.C. to the 'Burgh.



DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis presents a check representing \$500K toward completion of "The Final Four."

Laurie Anderson



PNC Legacy Riders and Venture Outdoors Sojourners listen at Point State Park.



Joshua Franzos photo

national fireworks extravaganza launched from 17 sites around The Point in one of the largest pyrotechnic displays the region has ever witnessed.

Art Program, Kiosks Brighten Trail Towns

By AMY CAMP, Trail Town Program

Mural artist Carolyn Quinn fell in love with Meyersdale this summer. And how couldn't she have?

Pit Stop Kremery brought her ice cream on hot days. Residents packed her lunches. Several community members and trail users stopped to talk with her about her work and to offer local insight.

"It was more than we ever expected," said Main Street Manager Kathy Koscianski. "Every day, residents and visitors watched and waited as the mural progressed. Dozens of individuals from all walks of life provided Carolyn with input and suggestions that helped to shape the final design. What emerged is the integrated product of artistic talent and community engagement."

Quinn was one of 12 artists selected this past summer to participate in the Trail Town Public Art Program, managed by Cathy McCollom and Christina Lee. The program was one of 12 Regional Connections projects selected from a field of 235 applicants by Pittsburgh 250 Community Connections and The Sprout Fund. In total, 14 works of public art have been added to seven communities along the Great Allegheny Passage.

Meyersdale is not the only town with stories of community resolve and engagement:

In **Rockwood**, neighbors Gene and Betty Kelly welcomed artist Diane Adams in for dinner and coffee every day at 4:30 p.m. Diane said that their daily call for dinner was how she tracked time left in the work day. Also in Rockwood, Scott Hostettler, owner of 4:13 Industries, and Bill Gurzenda, owner of Rockwood Manufacturing, collaborated to create a second piece of art, a metal sculpture of a steam locomotive that incorporates used bike and train parts. The sculpture was completed as a donation to Somerset County.

In **Confluence**, the committee wouldn't settle for just one piece of art. Instead, it stretched its resources and worked to install six pieces, including a stone etched with a design by



Carolyn Quinn with Meyersdale residents.

Trail Town Program



Maynard Sembower checks his watch in front of the mural that bears his likeness.

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local school teacher Mack Beal.

In **Ohiopyle**, the committee assisted artist Laura DeFazio in placing a four-piece sandstone sculpture in the town park. To further take advantage of local resources, the committee sought Ohiopyle artist Colby Love to paint a mural depicting the silhouettes of bikers and hikers on a bridge abutment near the town's entrance.

City employees in **Connellsville** worked through the night on the eve of the dedication to help artist Steve Fiscus to install a stone and glass arch across the trail near the town's northern entrance. On the other end of town, a mural on the silos of Youghiogheny

Glass Factory incorporates factory glass pieces.

In **West Newton**, a six foot sculpture made entirely of railroad spikes was unloaded under cover to the intense curiosity of dozens of community residents. Public Art Chair Ben Markle personally trucked in three loads of dirt and together with local landscaper Joanne Hall created a lovely garden and rock pedestal for West Newton's newest addition, a pioneer representing the town's original settlers.

KIOSKS INSTALLED IN THREE TOWNS

The Trail Town Program offers a very special thanks to Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania. Not only was public art dedicated along the trail on Celebration Saturday, September 27, but informational kiosks were also installed in West Newton, Connellsville and Meyersdale. The kiosks include maps, business directories, and information on nearby points of interest and were made possible through a generous grant from Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania.

The Trail Town Program is an economic development initiative along the Great Allegheny Passage. The Trail Town concept was developed by the Allegheny Trail Alliance in conjunction with The Progress Fund and other key partners to realize the economic potential of trail-based tourism and recreation.

Check "What's New" at <http://www.trailtowns.org>



Meeghan Triggs installs pieces of Youghiogheny glass on "Four Seasons" in Connellsville.

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New Kiosk in West Newton.

Trail Town Program



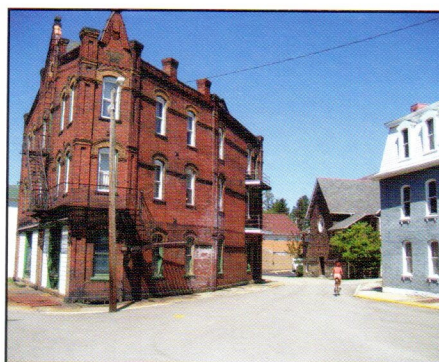
The Sheepskin Trail (left) where it connects to the Great Allegheny Passage (right) at Bowest near Connellsville.

Sheepskin Trail Connects Dunbar to Passage

The Sheepskin Trail became the first connector to the Great Allegheny Passage when it officially opened on May 29, 2008.

The 2.1-mile trail connects at Wheeler Bottom (Bowest) near Connellsville and enters Dunbar Borough next to the Dunbar Historical Society. There is a comfort station on Railroad Street and trail parking one block from the Historical Society.

This part of the Sheepskin Trail is the first leg of the 32-mile-long trail that will continue through the center of Fayette



Riding in Dunbar

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County via Uniontown and on to Point Marion and the West Virginia border.

The Dunbar Historical Society's Education Center is open on Saturdays. A coke oven is being built at the DHS park across the street from the trail entrance.

Visitors can also take a ride on the Fayette Central RR "Sheepskin Line" on Saturdays. The train takes visitors between Uniontown and onto the bridge over the Youghiogheny River at Connellsville. For information visit

www.dunbarhistoricalsociety.com

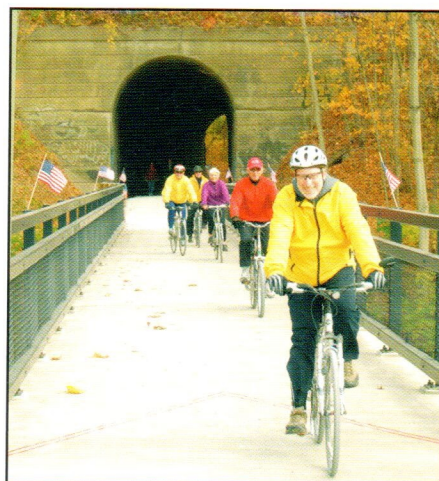
Three Bridges Tie Together Montour Trail Sections

The gate has been lifted opening 1.8 more miles of Montour trail in Peters Township, Washington County. The new section of trail includes three bridges and the Greer Tunnel.

Trail users can now avoid the hilly, busy and narrow roads that comprised the detour between Cecil and Peters. All that separates the two sections now is about 100 yards of an on-road detour along Valleybrook Road until two new bridges can be constructed.

The Montour Trail Council marks its 20th year of existence in 2009, with 48 miles open of the planned 63.2 miles of trail that will eventually connect the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport to the Great Allegheny Passage by way the McKeesport-Clairton Connector. Nearly \$10 million has been invested so far.

In 1992, the Montour Trail Council constructed its first section of trail in Cecil Township and then in 1995, the Cecil Friends roughed out the "Cecil East Section" from Morganza



"First Riders" emerging from Greers Tunnel on the Chartiers Creek Bridge

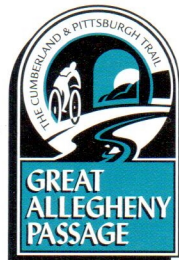
Road to the Chartiers Creek Bridge. Peters Township had already constructed the Arrowhead trail between Maplewood Drive and Brush Run Road when the Montour Trail Council began constructing trail. It would just be a matter of time before the two would connect. The only issues were five bridges and a tunnel, and the huge cost of making this connection.

With the assistance of Congressman Tim Murphy and former Senator Rick Santorum, federal money was appropriated and granted. A grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources was provided and used by energetic volunteers performing hundreds of hours of

work of trail building, and with the federal money the bridges were re-constructed by the professionals of Mingo Creek Construction.

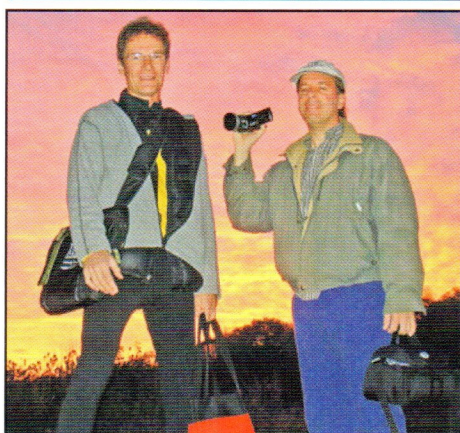
A celebration in October marking the opening of the latest scenic section was 16 years in the making.

Ned Williams



ATA Trail News

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Director/videographer/cyclist John Urman, left, and cameraman Doug Koztoski about to begin another day of filming "On the Passage."

'On the Passage' in Production

Director of a popular video extolling the virtues of riding the C&O Canal Towpath from Georgetown to Cumberland is doing the same for the Great Allegheny Passage.

John Urman, videographer and avid cyclist, and friends have been riding the Passage this fall producing "On the Passage" as a companion piece to the 30-minute video "On the Canal."

The two together will cover the full length of the combined trails from Tidewater in Georgetown to the fountain at Point State Park in Pittsburgh. "On the Canal" is available as a download (\$9) at www.filmbaby.net. Urman recreates the sensation of trail riding in an entertaining and informative manner.

Both videos will be available on CD in the summer of 2009. Watch the ATA website www.GAPtrail.org for details.

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Trail News is published two times a year by the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA). The ATA is a coalition of the seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multiple purpose, non-motorized trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD where it joins the C & O Canal Towpath to Washington, DC. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact ATA:

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