

VIDEO INTERVIEW – DAVE MANKAMEYER

Paul G. Wiegman: ...some time out of your busy and schedule to talk about a subject that I know is dear to your heart, The Great Allegheny Passage.

[Crosstalk]

Dave Mankameyer: As you say, it's a part of my life I'm very proud of and proud to be associated with. It was a good project.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, it continues to be a good project.

Dave Mankameyer: Right.

Paul G. Wiegman: Let's see what we – can get. Well, first of all, you're Dave Mankameyer. And, at the time you were really involved, you were a county commissioner for Somerset County.

Dave Mankameyer: Yes, I was. But, the initial study in 1989 – I was chairman of this conservation district.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Dave Mankameyer: Can I tell you a little bit how it got started?

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah, that's exactly what we want to hear.

Dave Mankameyer: In the mid-'80s, we were in a severe recession in this area because of the industrial revolution moving out on us. And, Congressman Murtha wanted to put something together to try and bring jobs back to the region because of the loss of our steel jobs.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Dave Mankameyer: Well, he started a thing called the "American Industrial Heritage Project." And, when he called on Somerset County – he called all his local reps in and asked what projects they would like to do. And, we had a representative, the state legislative representative named Bill Lloyd. And, Bill Lloyd said, "Well, I have two projects I'd like for you to consider on your appropriation." He said, "One is a Somerset Historical Center," which was an agricultural museum. And, he said, "There's some folks down there want to build a trail from Maryland into Confluence." And he said, "I think that'd be a

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good project.” So, the congressman said, “Okay.” So, he put some money allocated to this.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Dave Mankameyer: And then, the Chamber of Commerce picked up on it and said, “Well, how do we get this done?” And, I happened to be serving on Chamber of Commerce at the time. And I said, “Let me take it to the conservation district.”

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Dave Mankameyer: And, I took it out to the board here in the conservation district. And they said, “Well, do a feasibility study.” And, the national park service, which was Bob Gift out of Philadelphia, and that region, said, “Yeah, we’ll allocate you \$10,000 for the feasibility study.” And, that’s how we got started.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Dave Mankameyer: In 1989, we did a feasibility study and it was deemed feasible. And, we had a budget. And so, the conservation district actually constructed the first two sections – number one being from Rockwood to Markleton, because it had no bridges and no obstructions. It was the easiest one to do.

Paul G. Wiegman: It was the easiest one to do, right.

Dave Mankameyer: We wanted to pick the low-hanging fruit.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: And, we did that section. Then we did a section from Rockwood to Garrett. And again, had no...

Paul G. Wiegman: No bridges.

Dave Mankameyer: ...no structures.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right – no structures.

Dave Mankameyer: And, we did that and then we come to the point where that program started to fade away and they said, “How are we going to get this done?” So, the conservation district put

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together what they call a “trail summit”. We had it at Hidden Valley. And, Linda Boxx came to that summit.

Paul G. Wiegman: Was that the first time you had met Linda?

Dave Mankameyer: Yep. Mm-hmm.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. Do you know what year that was?

Dave Mankameyer: No, I would say it would be about '91.

Paul G. Wiegman: About '91, okay. And, at that point, the two sections had already been built?

Dave Mankameyer: Right. And, we were mystified at where we were going to get the money to do the rest of it. And, also in '92, I was elected to be a county commissioner.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Dave Mankameyer: I said, “The only thing that’s going to make this thing work,” I said, “We can buy the land and right-of-way, but it’s going to be outside influences that would bring that money into the county to finish this project.” So, we had a trail summit at Hidden Valley. And, that’s when the five or seven different trail groups between here and Pittsburgh said, “Okay. We all want to do this.”

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay, okay.

Dave Mankameyer: And, that’s when we formed the...

Paul G. Wiegman: ATA.

Dave Mankameyer: ...the ATA.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, so people know in 20 years – that’s the Allegheny Trail Alliance.

Dave Mankameyer: Right. The county, then, was in just a procurer of the right-of-way and a keeper of the coins, you might say.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** And, the ATA helped to push this thing through by DCNR and the DEP at the time – bringing the state money in to finish it. And, they brought, also, federal money through the Federal Transportation Act.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** This was done in 1989.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah, right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** When was the first section of trail built?
- Dave Mankameyer:** I can't tell you. Right around '90, '91.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, it was very quickly after this was done.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yes, right. Yeah. And, once this was deemed feasible, it also- then the American Industrial Heritage Project gave us, like, \$80,000 to do the first section. And, that went pretty quick. And, then we did the next section the year after.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. What was the trail like at that point? What was there? Were there tracks there, or...?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Part of it was- track was there. It was used as a coal siding for coal trains.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Well, we'll get to that.
- [Crosstalk]
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah. I don't want to expound too heavy on that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No. But, I think we need to talk. This is a historical document. So, we need to talk about that a little bit. So, in 1990, '91, Rockwood to Markleton – Pinkerton Tunnel, we'll say.
- Dave Mankameyer:** No. Well, yeah, we didn't go all the way to Pinkerton. We stopped at Markleton.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** You stopped at Markleton. And then, it was '93 or '94 to Garrett?
- Dave Mankameyer:** I think it was '92. I think we did a section every year.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Ninety-two – up to Garrett.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** And, then the third year, we did the section – the short stubs – between Markleton and the Pinkerton Tunnel. And then, we got hung up in the tunnel so we had to go around the tunnel. That took another year. And then, we got on down to Fort Hill. But, at that point, the state pretty well took over and the ATA, with the program. Our planning commission got involved in moving the funds and the construction, but the conservation district more or less just bowed out at that point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. That's when the conservation district felt that it was just too much work for...?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah. It really wasn't in-line that strongly with our mission. We're mostly agriculture and land use resources. But, we had the board that wanted to do it, so we just kind of stepped out of the mold a little bit to do the first three sections there.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That was a very visionary board at that time.
- Dave Mankameyer:** It was. It still is. Yeah. It was a very good board.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Did the conservation district do the engineering on the trail?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yes. Uh-huh. They're the guys sitting over here – did the first design. And, we did that with the Soil Conservation Service. They helped provide engineering and design.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. And, the work – the actual building of the trail – was it contracted?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Contracted out – it was bid out.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** To local contractors that built the ballast in and so forth and so on.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Right. Mm-hmm.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, let me get this clear...
- Dave Mankameyer:** But, there was also another factor. Between Garrett and Rockwood, we hauled almost 100 tons of garbage off the trail – of junk and trash. It was a seven-mile trash heap.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Really?

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Dave Mankameyer: People were running down the trail and just dumping off their garbage. We had to haul all that out. A couple of tractor trailer loads of old tires...

Paul G. Wiegman: And, I understand you had help from, again, local contractors that supplied cranes and that sort of thing to pull it out of...

Dave Mankameyer: Right. Exactly. Community really got behind it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Good, good. Now, at some point, there was a sale from CSX to the county. When did that take place?

Dave Mankameyer: There were several of them. The first section was the Rockwood to Markleton section that we wanted to construct. We bought that.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: And then, we had to buy the rest of it. And, when I became a commissioner in '92 and made it a priority, we took the county solicitor. And, the county commissioners agreed with the board this was a good project. So, we flew to Jacksonville because there was bartering back and forth as to what this was worth and how it should be transferred.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: And, it also had some of that active siding track on there. And, when they sold us the first section, they didn't realize that they had sold us some of their active track. We were willing to give it back. You know, we knew we didn't buy it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: But, we wanted a good price on the balance that we were going to buy. And, they said you just keep the track and give us a good price for what you want to buy. So, that's what we did. We kept the track and sold it for scrap, and utilized that money to buy the track from Rockwood to the Maryland line.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Dave Mankameyer: So, actually, in CSX we had, I think, three different purchase agreements.

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Three different purchase agreements in the Rockwood and then, was it...?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Well, I think we went from Rockwood all the way to the viaduct – the Salisbury Viaduct. And then, we got from the viaduct on into Maryland. And, we got from Markleton into Confluence.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Into Confluence, okay. And, there was a point at which that another party – the Conservancy – was expected to pick that up. When we talked to Hank Parke, he was saying that he had negotiated with the Conservancy. And, then suddenly found out that the Conservancy wasn't going to buy it.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah, the Conservancy board felt it was too much liability with the tunnels and the bridges. And, they didn't think that it fit their mission that well.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** But, the Somerset County commissioners then bought it?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Right, uh-huh.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That's almost a story in itself.
- Dave Mankameyer:** That's sticking our neck out, isn't it? Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. Was it a good thing to stick your neck at that time?
- Dave Mankameyer:** It was for me. They didn't have any trouble convincing me, but I had two counterparts I had to convince. But, they were very good about it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Were one of the commissioners at that time?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah. When we took on those sections – yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** When you took on those sections.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And, when we initiated this project, the commissioners, at first glance, said, "No, we don't want to get into that." I said, "Well, let's go down to Ohiopyle and ride it." So, the two commissioners were in there at the time, took their bicycles and their kids and we went down and rode that trail. And, when we come out the trail, why, their kids said, "Daddy, you've got to do this. So, that made it work."

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[Chuckle]

Paul G. Wiegman: That's the way to get things done is to get the kids to want to use it.

Dave Mankameyer: Show and tell, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: Show and tell. And, they went down on a family picnic.

Dave Mankameyer: On a Sunday afternoon we went down and they rode it.

Paul G. Wiegman: What section did you ride at Ohiopyle?

Dave Mankameyer: In Ohiopyle – in the park. First section that Larry had talked to you about. Yes.

Paul G. Wiegman: The first section that was built – yeah. From Ramcat to...

Dave Mankameyer: Right. We went to Ramcat and rode down to this train station and back.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. And, at that point, then, you had three people on the commissioners that were ready to buy the land?

Dave Mankameyer: Right. Uh-huh. And, one of the commissioner's, at the time, was the head of the Chamber of Commerce – the executive director. And, he went into the commissioner's office. So, he wasn't a hard sell either.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Dave Mankameyer: Chamber of Commerce realized from day one that this was a good program. And, they support this thing even today. You know, they put a lot of time and effort into it.

Paul G. Wiegman: They certainly have, they certainly have. Now, when you say that you were sticking your neck out a little bit – were there some people that didn't think this was a good idea?

Dave Mankameyer: Oh, when we did a feasibility study and we had our public meetings, I was literally called a Communist, yeah. The people down that lived down in that area didn't want any change in their life. And, they were sure that this trail was going to be inhabited by derelicts and people who wanted to do them harm, you know?

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Paul G. Wiegman: What was your answer to them?

Dave Mankameyer: We tried – best we can – to reason the ones we couldn't. And fortunately, there was enough that agreed with us that it was not going to be that way. And, once we built to Rockwood's Markleton section and people seen what it was and started using it, that kind of slanted the public opinion back our way. And, there was some landowners along the way that we had some property rights issues to settle.

Paul G. Wiegman: Did you get people using that section right away?

Dave Mankameyer: Oh, yeah, yeah. When we had the grand opening, we had a good turnout.

Paul G. Wiegman: Local people?

Dave Mankameyer: Local people, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: How about from the rest of the county?

Dave Mankameyer: Yeah, a fair amount. But, we are a rural county. And, we're not hurting for a place to ride a bicycle, you know. So, it's probably not as much enthusiasm as it is from the – what I call the professional riders. The guy that live in the more suburban areas and want to get out and get away – it's a good place.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: And so, we get probably a good mixture. We still have some local people. The interesting thing is the farmers that came to the planning meetings that didn't want this thing. One of the landowners – they absolutely didn't want this thing. The day we had it opened, this dump truck pulled up with a whole load of bicycles on it. All his grandkids come down, wanted to ride this trail. I said, "Your grandpa didn't want this trail." "Well, we want it."

[Laughter]

So, that turned him around, too.

Paul G. Wiegman: Seems like the children had a lot of bearing on building it.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** Right. Kids had a lot of bearing and building support for this trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. You were commissioner from...?
- Dave Mankameyer:** '92 to 2000.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** '92 to 2000. So, you saw, really, up to almost the opening in the connection with Confluence?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Oh, yes. Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That was 2001.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Well, let's go to the Salisbury – any interesting things with the Salisbury Viaduct?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Viaduct?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah. It was a challenge because the bids came in, I think, \$1.1 million.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And, we just absolutely didn't have the money in the county to do that. But, the Transportation Efficiency Act had some of the money. But, it was a mix and match. But, the state came through for us on helping us out, and the county. In reality, the county owns the property, built the trail and maintains the trail, but it's all federal and state money that built the trail. So, it was cash into the county to make a substantial improvement. The county taxpayers did not have to lay out a substantial amount of funds to build this trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Dave Mankameyer:** We put a lot of support time into it, the staff time – stuff like that. But, the actual construction money was furnished by the state and the federal government.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** At that time, somewhere along in there, John Oliver became the Secretary of the DCNR.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** The DCNR, yeah. And, that accelerated the whole program.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Because...?
- Dave Mankameyer:** He was convinced it was a good thing.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** He thought it was a good idea?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, of course, he goes all the way back to 1975.
- Dave Mankameyer:** He rode the train that made the final trip.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That made the final trip.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah. And, I think John always did think it was a good idea. But, his board – it seemed to be, at that time, didn't want to take the risk of all these structures and maintaining these structures – which is a sizable risk.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Absolutely is.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And, without a public entity, if there's a certain amount of the immunity that a public county or municipal unit of government has on lawsuits that you don't have as a private conservancy.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Dave Mankameyer:** So, it's very understandable that they would be a little shy of that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. That's a good point. That explains some of the points there. The bridges are what were the real concern.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Right, right, exactly.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Going the other direction – you ran into some landowner problems. What was their concern?
- Dave Mankameyer:** We had landowner problems on the whole thing. There were certain landowners that owned land on both sides of the trail – really thought strongly that the land should be reverted back to them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** And, that they should have it and own it. And, they were, of course, opposed to end of the trail, mainly because they didn't want to give up the rights to that ownership. But, fortunately for us, the biggest part of it was bought on fee simple deeds. It wasn't a right-of-way, it was a deed...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Actually owned the property.
- Dave Mankameyer:** ...actual acquisition by the railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I've seen numbers of 90% of the Western Maryland was fee simple.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah, right. And, that really helped us along. But, those few that did not take a lot of negotiating and a lot of trade-offs.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** What were the trade-offs? How did you negotiate with them?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Well, some of the places we had to restrict the right-of-way down to 15 feet – just enough to get a bicycle through, because there was some timber growing on both sides.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And, there's some places they wanted to use the trail for access, for timber removal on the property they had on the other side.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, you allowed that?
- Dave Mankameyer:** We had to give and take a lot of things. Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And, as long as we could run a trail that was safe and accessible to the public, it was okay. But, we didn't want any obstruction – that somebody could obstruct the trail or do damage to it and not repair it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I see.
- Dave Mankameyer:** So, we had to come out with cooperative agreements. At no time, the county had eminent domain power. We never used it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** You never used it?

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Dave Mankameyer: No, I think we came close a couple times, but we never did.

[Chuckle]

Paul G. Wiegman: I understand that as you neared Confluence, you came into some...

Dave Mankameyer: Yeah, there was some property owners down that way that we had to do some serious negotiating with.

Paul G. Wiegman: You want to explain a little bit about that?

Dave Mankameyer: No, I really wouldn't want to name any names or...

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, don't name any names. But, we can just talk about...

Dave Mankameyer: There was some people who had bought some land there from the railroad company for \$75 an acre before we got ahold of it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: And, we had to buy that back and we paid some serious money to get that back. And, there was a significant landowner there that absolutely didn't want this trail in there and we had to make some concessions there and do some trade-offs.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. But, they weren't serious trade-offs?

Dave Mankameyer: No, no. no. And, I think, should we run into problems – the advantage of, having it in county ownership is if there's serious problems down the road, the law of eminent domain is still there. If there was an impediment put up, we could go in and just take what we have to have to maintain the public facility. And, that would be legitimate. And, of course, nobody in public office wants to use eminent domain.

Paul G. Wiegman: No. No.

Dave Mankameyer: But, by the same token, we have a responsibility to the public for public dollars and public recreation. And, if it had to be used, it could be used. So, I'm a big proponent to having either a township or some unit of a government owning this trail as much as they can.

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Dave Mankameyer:** I think that would allow for land use planning and for things like the viewshed, and access to the river. All these things can be worked out a lot easier if the trail is in public ownership.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Now, I know you feel strongly about the land beside the trail. What do you see in the future?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Well, I'd like to see us do like we're doing with the farmland preservation. I think we should go in and put conservation easements on as much of this land as possible. What I would not like to see is a trail from Pittsburgh to Washington that is nothing but cabins – rural cabins for people. And, that's what we may have if we aren't careful.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Dave Mankameyer:** And so, we've got to have controlled growth. But, if we go in and buy this land – that's in timber and farming now – buy the development rights off these people on a willing buyer, willing seller relationship, the land is protected in perpetuity.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Mm-hmm.
- Dave Mankameyer:** You know, it won't be developed. But, it still can be used. The landowner can go in and take his timber off according to a timber management plan. He can farm it according to a conservation plan. And, it doesn't impair their ability to make revenue off of it, but it protects the viewshed of the people using the trail. And, I think we should also try to acquire the land between the trail and the river as much as possible so the trail users can go down and fish, and utilize the water resources anytime, anywhere they want.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The Casselman River is getting better?
- Dave Mankameyer:** The Casselman River is now, probably, 90% inhabited by fish – when at one time it looked like orange juice.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, yeah.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah, it's getting better as we go. But, it's got a long way to go yet. But, we have fishery, like I say, in 90% of it.

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Paul G. Wiegman: Are there places that the county owns more than just simply the 60-foot right-of-way?

Dave Mankameyer: Oh, yes. That right-of-way varies from 120 feet down to 60-foot, depending on the topography. And, there's some places along the side where there was coal sidings and stuff like that. That also came in with the deed.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, I see. I see.

Dave Mankameyer: Just, for instance, the station at Meyersdale – the old train station?

Paul G. Wiegman: Yes, yes. Right.

Dave Mankameyer: When we were in Jacksonville, we finished up our negotiations and I was going out and one of the ladies in Meyersdale told me before I left – she said, "If there's any way you can get ahold of that station, we would like to have that as a local asset." And, as I was going out, I said, "Oh, by the way," I said, "how about that station in Meyersdale?" And, the guy said, "What about it?" I said, "Well, it doesn't do you no good anymore because we just bought your track, yeah?" And, he said, "Well, what's it worth?" I said, "Well, I'll give you \$10,000 for it." It's about three acres of land there with it in town. And, he said, "You got it."

[Laughter]

So, we spent \$10,000 we didn't have no money for. But, we spent it.

Paul G. Wiegman: But, you spent it.

Dave Mankameyer: And, no regrets, because we got a rehabilitation historic grant for it to rehabilitate it. It's a beautiful situation.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, it's a beautiful... And, the caboose that is there?

Dave Mankameyer: Well, that day, the local historical society acquired that. We can take no credit for that.

Paul G. Wiegman: They brought that one in.

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Dave Mankameyer: They did that locally. The Meyersdale Historical Society – because when we come back, I told the ladies over there, I said, “Now, it’s time for you guys to start a historical society and start a railroad town and start preserving some of this heritage.” Which they did. And, they have – I don’t know – 300-400 members now. And, they’re maintaining the station. We supported them from a county level. We give them a perpetual lease for \$1.00 a year – the station and the property. And, they maintain it and applied for grants.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, putting some educational facilities in and doing some other things?

Dave Mankameyer: It’s a good asset for their group. It’s probably the best bargain we ever made for \$10,000, right?

Paul G. Wiegman: Sure is.

[Laughter]

Paul G. Wiegman: It’s a beautiful station right now. What does this – how are we on time?

Dave Mankameyer: Fifteen more minutes. I’m okay.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. What’s this mean for the towns along the trail?

Dave Mankameyer: I don’t think we’ll really fully realize of where this trail is going to take us until it’s opened.

Paul G. Wiegman: Next spring.

Dave Mankameyer: Yeah. If we can drive the Golden Spike to hook us up to Washington, D.C., we’ll have six million people on that end, and you have two to three million people in the Pittsburgh end. And, this will be the link. And, I think that’s when we’ll really start to see the economic benefits of the trail.

Paul G. Wiegman: What will they be?

Dave Mankameyer: Well, they’ll be people who want to make that 400-mile journey in a week or stop off at the restaurants, and the bed and breakfasts, and motels. And, they’ll start using it as a vacation destination. And, I think you’re seeing some of that now, but

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we'll see a lot more of it. Because a boy scout group could jump in anywhere and do 200-300 mile on a week journey.

Paul G. Wiegman: Sure. Mm-hmm.

Dave Mankameyer: And, that's one of the things we should work on as a Chamber of Commerce is trying to make facilities and infrastructure to support the trail.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Dave Mankameyer: And, we've got to have responsible growth on that. And, I think it'll happen. I think it's a plan being developed now as to a vision as to how this should happen.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Dave Mankameyer: And hopefully, the resources will become available to do it. Because, I can honestly say when I became a commissioner – at the state commissioner's conference they have, like, three meetings a year. They had a meeting on Rails-To-Trails.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Dave Mankameyer: The first one I walked into, there was four people sitting in it. And, when I quit as commissioner, I went into one of the same meetings and the room was packed. I couldn't get in the door.

Paul G. Wiegman: Really?

Dave Mankameyer: And so, it went from a casual concern or interest to a fact where now everybody wants in on it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right.

Dave Mankameyer: So, with so many trails on the drawing board, the funds are going to be limited to each trail because you're going to split the pie into much smaller pieces.

Paul G. Wiegman: In smaller pieces.

Dave Mankameyer: So, they're going to have to grow these trails in a planned way, you know? So, I'm glad we got ours on the board. We got a, probably, I would say a decade jump...

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, you sure do.

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- Dave Mankameyer:** ...on the whole situation. And, I'm glad we took advantage of it, you know.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, you have one of the most beautiful trails, too.
- Dave Mankameyer:** Yeah, I think it is. It's going to be a premier trail.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** What was – and this is personally – what's the high point of this whole thing for you?
- Dave Mankameyer:** It hasn't come yet. I think when we have the ceremony – that we open this thing up on either side of the tunnels – the Big Savage Tunnel – that's going to be the high point.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** What will you feel?
- Dave Mankameyer:** Well, I think everybody has to be proud of his heritage. And, we all leave a legacy.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Dave Mankameyer:** You know, and then each one of us has a different legacy and what we want to leave. And, whatever part I've played on this, I'm proud of. And, I hope that'll be part of my legacy that I was here at this point in time, was able to do something and contribute something with a whole bunch of other people.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Dave Mankameyer:** But, those little things that you do add up when other people join on. And, I think the initial – in 1989 we made some decisions that's going to benefit here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Dave Mankameyer:** I mean, we got this thing for perpetuity – I mean, we bought it, we own it. It's going to be there 100 years from now, hopefully, 200 years from now. And, somebody will wonder, well, whose idea was this? And I will say, "Well, it wasn't my idea, but I helped put it together." I did – when we built a county building up here – I was in charge of the time capsule in the old county office building. I put as much things on the trail as I could into the time capsule. So, 100 years from now when they dig that thing out – if they dig it out – they'll know

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that there's some people back here that was concerned and wanted to leave something.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Dave Mankameyer: And, I think we left something here that's going to good. I really do. That, and the time I spent here in the conservation area. We've cleaned up a river. When I come into this organization, they told us nothing could be done. We're fishing the river. And, not only the Casselman River, the Stoneycreek River – we've got fish in there now. We've cleaned up a lot of the coal mining legacy of bad water. And so, we've done some good things in the county.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Dave Mankameyer: And, I think I've played a part in it and proud of the part I did play in it – and looking forward to the future. I'm not done yet. But, it won't be too long. I'm getting to that age.

Paul G. Wiegman: Thank you.

Dave Mankameyer: Thank you for taking...

Paul G. Wiegman: Thank you.

[End 0:29:34.2]

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