



Volume 29 Issue 1

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

March April 2024

A GLIMMER OF HOPE: POSSIBLE TRAIL AUTHORITY

The tide may be turning or at least shifting a little, we can only hope. In a previous article, "Congratulations, BUT" I wrote how happy we were to see other trails growing and thriving, but we here in Blair County have fantastic trails, but have become very stagnant in connecting or growing our trails. The major factor we lack is support from the county and municipalities in coordinating trail development.

Possible good news; on February 15th of this year the Blair County Commissioners held a special meeting inviting the public's input to see if there was support for creating leadership and coordination for future recreational development. The great news is that over 60 people came, filling the meeting room to show their support while approximately 25 letters were sent in supporting this initiative. There were only three letters written in opposition. The overwhelming support was not only for one type of trail but for ALL trails, (hiking, biking, mountain biking, ATV, snowmobile, trails and river trails etc connecting communities.). The commissioners thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and while they knew, there would probably be an interest, they were very surprised at the overwhelming response.

This meeting is a start. The commissioners made no promises but all three commissioners did show an interest in creating a possible authority or some type of leadership and coordination for future recreational trail development. This type of effort has shown positive results for surrounding counties. We do hope to continue with the efforts of other recreational trails to continue this county-wide push to establish a collective trail authority for planning and development.

We will keep you updated.

RAFFLE



You should have received your fifteen raffle tickets with this newsletter. If you did not, please let us know.

The raffle is our major fundraiser, providing a large percentage of our annual operating budget. It is also a way for you to renew your membership. By returning your ticket stubs and money, you extend your membership by one year. This applies to all memberships. For example, even if yours does not expire until January 2025, by selling the tickets, your expiration

date would move to January 2026. If you do not wish to extend your membership, you may use the ticket sales to give a membership to someone else as a gift.

We understand that not all individuals feel comfortable participating in raffles, let alone fundraisers. If you do not wish to receive tickets, please let us know. If you did receive tickets and do not wish to participate, please accept our apology. You may either return the tickets or destroy them.

We are certainly grateful for every individual's support, either by renewing your membership as it expires, or by participating in this fundraiser. Tickets again this year are \$2.00 apiece. Ticket stubs and checks may be mailed to Rails-to-Trails, PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Vickie Brua at vicbrua@atlanticbb.net or Jennifer Barefoot at 814-695-8521 or by e-mail at jbsunbrook@gmail.com. Thank you!

The drawing will take place Tuesday June 11th prior to the June 11th monthly Board Meeting.

We are blessed to have such wonderful businesses that support Rails to Trails through their donation of prizes and/or gift certificates. It is our hope that you patronize these businesses throughout the year as they are graciously supporting Rails to Trails.

This year's donors are:

SPOKES-n-SKIS: Located at 315 S. Logan Blvd. Altoona, this shop, along with Hoss's, has been the longest sponsor and supporter of the Lower Trail. Bryan and Troy work with each and every customer, no matter how young or old, beginner or expert to make the outdoor experience the best it can be. They have all the gear you will need for cycling (on or off road), skiing and snowboarding. For more information, please visit their website at: www.spokesnskis.com or phone at 814-941-3888

MARTINS GENERAL STORE: Martin Oil Company was founded in 1962 as George O. Martin and Sons, Inc. George O. purchased a small Tidewater distributorship in Bellwood, Pennsylvania. He was soon joined by his three sons, and the business began a long period of expansion. Now in its fourth generation, it's still family owned and operated. In the 1980s, Martin Oil Company ventured into convenience stores. First locations were called MinitMarts. The name "Martin General Stores" was adopted in 1991. They now supply locations

that they own, plus many independent stores and stations. Many retail locations are branded with the blue and gold Martin Gold Star sign. You can visit Martin's General Store near the Williamsburg Trailhead or in Alexandria. To find out more, visit their website www.martinoilco.com.

HOSS'S STEAK AND SEA HOUSE: Hoss's has many locations throughout Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It was founded in 1983 by Willard Campbell with his first location in Altoona. Hoss's, along with Spokes-n-Skis have supported Rails to Trails for well over 20 years. Hoss's is well known for supporting the communities in which they're located. For more information please visit their website at: www.hosss.com

NEW DINER 22: Originally built in 1919 to serve the railroads as a mail car in Pennsylvania at the East Broad Top Railroad. Now with its current and longest standing location in Alexandria, Pennsylvania, it serves the friends and family of Diner 22. Their website, www.diner22.com, states, "Diner 22 is a special place, unlike most restaurants it is a place where everyone knows your name, you can sit with friends and family to make memories while enjoying a home-cooked meal."

It is located just east of Waterstreet at the eastern end of the Lower Trail. (5094 William Penn Hwy, Alexandria, PA 16611)

BELLY BUSTERS: Belly Busters is located right in Williamsburg, (417 W 2nd St, Williamsburg, PA 16693,) but you may have seen their food truck out and about throughout Blair and Huntingdon County. Belly Busters Food Truck and Catering started with Josh and Walt, who have been cooking their entire lives and wanted to start their own business. Back in 2019, they both lost their jobs and God placed it on their hearts to move forward with their passion for business. They started under a tent with "two grills and some skills" and have been sizzling ever since! To find out more about their delicious food visit their website at: [Bellybusterstruckand catering@gmail.com](mailto:Bellybusterstruckandcatering@gmail.com)

THE DREAM RESTURANT: Located on 1500 Allegheny St, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, The Dream has been bringing families together through mouthwatering meals for over 70 years. Located just off Route 22 as you enter the eastern side of Hollidaysburg. You can enjoy great breakfast, lunch or dinners, but do not forget they always have delicious homemade baked goods. (pies, pastries and cookies).

BEECH TREE CAFÉ: Located on 1411 Blair St, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, just behind The Dream. The café offers specialty coffees, homemade waffles, pastries, sandwiches, and more. The café is open every day except Wednesdays.

BEST WAY PIZZA: Best Way has many locations in Huntingdon, Hollidaysburg, Duncansville, just to name a few. Best Way is in a way related to the trail, somewhat distantly. If you visit their website, you can read a story that begins like this: "The story of our famous square-cut pizza begins in the early 1950s in an unlikely place: The Pennsylvania Railroad. Railroad worker, Gene Caparella, dusted off his grandmother's pizza

recipe one day and started bringing it to work. His fellow railroad workers tried it and loved it, and so the foundations of a pizza business started to form. In 1955, Gene was laid off from the railway and seized the opportunity to open his very first shop, which he named Best Way Pizza. Gene continued to operate his pizza shop in various locations around Altoona for 25 years, until his retirement in 1980." You can read more of the history at, <https://bestwaypizza.com>

US HOTEL: Located at 401 S. Juniata St. Hollidaysburg, 814-695-2624.

This historic US Hotel shares much of the history of the Lower Trail. The Lower Trail is part of the Pennsylvania Canal. John Dougherty built the US Hotel. The building was initially used to accommodate westward canal travelers with lodging, food, and spirits. Strategically positioned along the western end of the Pennsylvania Canal and the Allegheny Portage Railroad. You can learn much more about this historic building by visiting their website, www.ushoteltavern.com

When going to the US Hotel you can enjoy great food while stepping back in time.

FREEDOM EXCURSIONS by Scully LLC, is a privately owned transportation company located in Altoona, Blair County, PA. They began operating as a transportation provider in May of 2005, receiving PUC Authority from the State of Pennsylvania, with one 16-passenger bus. They currently operate (2) Limousine buses, (4) Mini-coaches, and (4) Motor Coaches. Bus seating capacities are 16-55 passengers. They have both PA PUC and Federal DOT Authority.

Owners, Bill and Deborah Scully's goal and mission statement since the company's inception has been to "Exceed our Guest's Expectation". They strive to insure that the personal touch is conveyed with each event that we are a part of. They consider it an honor to be chosen as your professional transportation provider. They are personally involved in every arrangement that is made to insure that you get their company's complete and undivided attention. Their desire is that you find their service to meet and exceed your needs so that your experience with them is not forgotten and that you will share your experience with others! From a single day Corporate Event to a multiple day trip, Freedom Excursions can handle your needs from 1-200 guests. 814-941-8687, <https://www.freedomexcursionsbyscully.com>

ACE FIX-IT HARDWARE: As your local Ace Hardware, the Duncansville store is a member of the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the industry. Every Ace Hardware store is independently owned. PA native Chuck Bickel owns this location as well as stores in Tyrone, Huntingdon, Dillsburg, Oakmont, Grove City, Brookville, Greentree, Mercer, Everett, and DuBois, Pennsylvania. Chuck purchased the Duncansville location in April of 1984. From neighborhood hardware stores to super-size home centers, each Ace Hardware is unique and tailored to meet the needs of its local community. Here, their friendly faces are your friends and neighbors. Starting with their manager, Steve Johncola, they are all committed to being "the Helpful Place" by offering their customers knowledgeable advice, helpful service and quality products. As the helpful hardware

folks in your community, Ace fix-it promises, "helping you is the most important thing we have to do today."

PRIME SIRLOIN: Located at 501 Municipal Drive Duncansville, PA. 814-693-8504 <https://primesirloinbuffet.com> , Prime Sirloin Buffet has been serving the Altoona Pennsylvania area for years. As one of the area's largest buffets, Prime Sirloin has a variety of options for you to choose from Prime Sirloin offers Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner!

BIDDLES BREWING: 321 E. 2nd St. Williamsburg PA. Biddle's Brewing was founded in 2021 with a love for coffee and a passion for community. The business started in a 6x12 foot coffee truck with nothing but big dreams and coffee beans. Owners Mike and Britt Biddle work to incorporate their adventurous spirit and competitive nature to build individual customer relationships and always serve the perfect cup. Headquartered in Williamsburg, PA, Biddle's Brewing draws on its small town roots in an effort to spark life within their communities. They prioritize a strong presence in their hometowns of Williamsburg and Loretto, blending a fun and casual coffee shop atmosphere into the lifestyle of rural America. In short, their goal is for you to enjoy *simplicity with an experience.*
coffee@biddlesbrewing.com

BORO COFFEE CO.: Located at 411 S Juniata St, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, 814-317-5166, it is a "Coffee shop, bakery, and event space located in Historic Hollidaysburg in two renovated Canal Workers Houses from the 19th century."

JIMMY JOHN'S: GOURMET SANDWICH AND SUB SHOP: 3420 Pleasant Valley Blvd, Suite 1A; Altoona, PA 16602, Phone: (814) 201-2261. The Jimmy John's gift card was donated also by Freedom Excursions.

BLACK DOG CAFÉ: located at 519 Allegheny Street Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, (814) 695-5700, just next to the post office is a wonderful coffee shop known for its great baked goods and lunch menu. It is open mornings to midafternoon Monday thru Saturday. They also do catering. For more information and hours, visit their website at: www.blackdoghollidaysburg.com or phone, 814-695-5700

2024 ELECTION RESULTS:

Due to inclement weather there was no January meeting, pushing elections to fill the board and slate of officers to the February meeting.

Elections opened with a special election to fill an unexpired term. Long time board member Dr. Bruce Sheehe stepped down from his term. Bruce and his wife are both now retired. They have decided to do more traveling and enjoy retirement. Bruce has been a great asset to the organization and will continue to enjoy the trail and especially the fishing in the Juniata River. Bruce, thank you for all your years of service, we wish you all the best. Filling Bruce's term on the Board is member Joe Cleary of Hollidaysburg. Joe and his family reside in Hollidaysburg and

enjoy the trail. It is Joe's hope to help get the trail extended up and through Hollidaysburg.

Following the special election, the election was held to fill the five expiring terms of Vickie Brua, Tim Gildea, Ethan Imhoff, Mike Panek and Ben Varner. All five of these candidates graciously agreed to up for another three years. The vote was called and unanimously approved.

Elections were then held for the 2024 slate of officers. Ethan Imhoff whom has been a great President since 2018 asked for someone else to fill the position. We are very pleased to welcome Board member Adam Bergstein as the new President. Vice President is Mike Panek, Secretary is Mary Emeigh, Treasurer is Sarah Gonsman and Assistant Secretary/Treasurer is Tim Gildea

We thank all of these individuals for volunteering their time and expertise in helping to keep our organization strong and growing.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____)- _____

E-mail _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal

_____ Individual \$15.00
_____ Family \$20.00
_____ Supporting \$50.00
_____ Group \$75.00

I am interested in:
_____ Horses _____ Hiking
_____ Heritage _____ Bicycling
_____ Nature Study _____ Jogging
_____ Other

I would like to help by volunteering for:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592,
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
www.rtcpa.org





RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.
OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
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Or Current Resident.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 9th 2024,
May 14th 2024
May 13 thru 18
June 11th 2024

Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Hollidaysburg High School Community Days on the Trail
Monthly Board Meeting and Raffle Drawing 7 PM at the Grannas Station

Please check our Calendar of Events page on our website to keep up to date, for other events that may be taking place on the trail hosted by other organizations

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the address below.

Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!

Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.
Post Office Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-0592
814-317-9728
www.rttcpa.org