

Insider

For July 28, 2010

By Kim Burger

Wow! Have you noticed all the great new signage out on the trails? Prairie Pathways signage is currently being installed throughout the entire Cedar Valley Trails System, and just in time to welcome our very special RAGBRAI guests! The fact that our 100+ miles of trails are configured in a series of loops makes them unique and provides for pleasant excursions, but it also increases the chances that our visitors can get quite lost out there! We have been in need of way finding assistance and the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) has been working with a number of local organizations like Silos and Smokestacks, the Grout Museum District, the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureaus, George Wyth Park, the Black Hawk County Conservation Board, Cedar Falls Parks and Waterloo Leisure Services to provide this innovative approach to trail enhancement. The project is called Prairie Pathways and its purpose, in addition to providing way finding and orientation, is to interpret the historical significance of certain areas throughout the Cedar Valley through a mix of kiosks, interpretive panels and map panels. Trail users will gain a thorough understanding of how the Cedar Falls and Waterloo area developed, the people who shaped it, and the forces and influences that impacted this development.

The project consists of 8 kiosks, 42 interpretive panels and 28 map panels. It's been in the planning and fundraising stages for several years and costs approximately \$160,000. Metropolitan enhancement funds through the Black Hawk County Area Metropolitan Transportation Policy Board (MPO) have covered a majority of the costs with additional funding provided by the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, the Young Family Foundation of Waterloo, the Cedar Trails Partnership, and participating jurisdictions. The original Prairie Pathways Master Plan was developed by Confluence, formally know as Brian Clark and Associates. Craig Ritland Landscape Architects provided construction management services, with the text and photos supplied by the Grout Museum District. Nagel Signs Inc. provided graphic layout, fabrication and installation of the exhibits. This exciting project is sure to bring further positive notoriety to the Cedar Valley Trails and serve as a model for other communities, just as the emergency response signage system that was installed a number of years ago has.

Another exciting project regarding trails is Liza. Have you seen her? Have you heard her? Check out Liza's CV Trails Adventures! She's exploring all the great offerings along the Cedar Valley Trails and inviting riders to come and pay us a visit through a series tweets and videos on You Tube. Visit www.youtube.com and search visitcf to check it out!