



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL • P.O. BOX 11866 • PITTSBURGH, PA 15228-0866

THE TRAIL-LETTER

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
VOLUME #1 ***WINTER*****ISSUE #6**

FUND DEVELOPMENT SURPASSES QUARTER MILLION DOLLAR MARK

FUND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS CONTINUE

by Tom Dougherty

Over 35 charitable trusts, foundations, and corporations have been contacted by the Fund Development Committee in an effort to raise the capital necessary to purchase the abandoned Montour Railroad right-of-way. During the late summer months, the committee developed a list of potential benefactors and made initial contact with each of them. Grant requests were written and submitted to the organizations that expressed interest in the Montour Trail Project. Personal presentations have also been made to many of these organizations and follow up efforts are being conducted on an on-going basis.

Although many requests are still pending, response to date has been positive. The Vira Heinz Foundation has committed \$200,000 for right-of-way acquisition. The Laurel Foundation has contributed \$40,000 and Pittsburgh National Bank \$7500. *(SEE FUNDS PAGE 2)*

STATE OF THE TRAIL AT THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARIZED

by Stan Sattinger

The approximately 95 attendees of the first Annual Meeting of the Montour Trail Council membership at the Airport Howard Johnson's on November 18 heard President Stan Sattinger explain that the present strength of our organization is the result of voluntary contributions by many individuals and groups. He cited a number of key accomplishments in our initial year of existence, including the following:

- Membership size has expanded from approximately 50 to 325 (350 as the newsletter goes to print).
- A coalition of approximately 40 special interest groups and firms that have issued letters of endorsement.
- Production of a well-designed brochure and Concept Plan document and a promotional video.
- Presentation of our slide show to the governing councils of 12 municipalities and three boroughs.
- Manning of our display booth at approximately 10 public gatherings.
- Supportive feature articles in the Pittsburgh Press and Post Gazette and other local newspapers.
- Appraisal and title search of the right-of-way property

(SEE STATE PAGE 2)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The Montour Trail Council will be asking you during the coming year to renew your membership. During the month that you joined the MTC last year (January for those of you who joined in November and December of 1989), you will be receiving a renewal application. As you have seen in this newsletter, the reality of this project is becoming ever closer and your support is needed now more than ever to see the trail completed.

With your renewal application, you will receive a bumper sticker with the Montour Trail Logo. Display this logo with pride and show your support for the Trail. Additional stickers can be obtained for fifty cents (\$.50).

VIDEO TO BE SHOWN ON CABLE

The MTC has given permission to Peters Township to show their promotional video on their monthly community affairs program. The video will be seen during January in Peters. They may make the video available to neighboring communities to show on their cable programming.

TRAIL REPRESENTATIVES SOUGHT

The Montour Trail Council Board of Directors have initiated a search for approximately 20 individuals to represent the Trail Council and to function as liaisons to the citizens and governing bodies of local municipalities. Preferably these individuals will be residents of the municipalities through which the Trail will pass, and they will either acquire MTC membership or already be members.

The Trail Representatives will develop working relationships with the municipal governments and will become involved in local issues of zoning, compliance with ordinances, etc. They will also establish contacts with landowners adjacent to the right-of-way and will help in the process of addressing landowner concerns. The Trail is to be subdivided into approximately 10 sections with the tasks of representing each section shared by two Trail Representatives.

The Representatives will need to possess organizational and leadership skills and be able to devote considerable amounts of volunteer time to Trail business. The experience of seeing each section of the Trail come into being should be very satisfying. If you are interested in the prospect of becoming a Trail Representative for your municipality or know of someone you could recommend for that position, please call Stan Sattinger, Trail Council President, at 561-5056 .

FUNDS

(continued from page 1)

In addition to private funding efforts, Allegheny County has applied for a \$150,000 RIRA (Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This grant, if approved by the State Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, would be used to purchase the Allegheny County portion of the right-of-way in conjunction with the Montour Trail Council.

Aggressive fund raising efforts for trail acquisition and development will continue into 1991.

Remember the meeting on January 28, 1991

See enclose flier with newsletter !!!

STATE

(continued from page 1)

and preparations of cost estimates for trail construction.

- Testimony before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission urging the preservation of the bridges for Trail use.

- Research on liability issues and identification of an insurer.

- Production of foundation grant proposal volumes which have generated \$247,500 in grants as of this printing, not counting \$26,500 of legislative funding and \$5000 in seed money granted earlier.

Stan proceeded to predict that the following activities are likely to get underway in the coming year:

- Details of property acquisition - terms of purchase, financing, memoranda of understanding, etc.

- Local involvements in which a sense of project ownership begins to develop on a local scale.

- Development of preliminary designs.

- Historic preservation plans.

- Continued fund development activity, including a campaign for corporate support.

He concluded with the observation that thus far, doors seem to have been meant to open for the Montour Trail Project and he thanked the entire membership for the collective efforts of one and all, which are, in fact, opening them.

RAILS TO TRAILS ACT PASSED

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has passed the Rails to Trails Act. This act authorizes the Department of Environmental Resources to acquire available railroad rights-of-way for public recreational trail use. It also requires the Department of Transportation to coordinate certain acquisitions of rights-of-way with DER and the Public Utility Commission. Importantly, it provides for a limitation on the liability of persons who provide property for public trail use. This act will benefit the Montour Trail Council when it becomes the custodian of the trail.

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