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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 30, 2026

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## **FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO REOPEN THE NATIONAL TUNNEL**

The nonprofit Montour Trail Council has launched an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise \$2.75 million to repair the National Tunnel and reopen it to trail users.

“This is one of the largest capital projects that the Montour Trail Council has ever undertaken,” says Julian Wolfe, MTC president.

The 113-year-old tunnel, at trail mile marker 25 in Cecil Township, was closed to trail users in November because of a cracked and deteriorating ceiling. With no safe detour available, the closure effectively severs the Montour Trail at about the midpoint of its mainline. The trail council expects the tunnel to remain closed until Fall 2027.

Before the public campaign began, the Pittsburgh-based Richard King Mellon Foundation made a \$500,000 grant to the National Tunnel repair project, providing crucial early support. Additional commitments of about \$100,000 from MTC members, supporters and corporate interests — including an anonymous gift of \$36,000 — have also helped advance the project.

“We are deeply fortunate that the Richard King Mellon Foundation stepped forward with this significant contribution,” says Dave Borrebach, a trail council board member who worked with the foundation on the grant proposal. “With so many grant opportunities requiring matching funds, their early generosity positions us to secure the additional support this project demands.”

The trail council has plans to seek financial support from other area foundations, local businesses, corporate interests, local government, and state agencies, as well as from MTC members and trail users.

Borrebach notes that generous trail supporters are matching all gifts of up to \$1,000 that are received by June 30. “We’ve already had donations from 61 supporters whose gifts, after the match, total over \$15,000,” he says.

“We know how deeply our trail users value the Montour as a welcoming place for walking, cycling, running and enjoying the outdoors,” Wolfe says. “We’re confident they will contribute to our efforts as we work to reopen the National Tunnel.”

For more information about the tunnel renovation project and about donating to the campaign, please visit: [nationaltunnel.org](http://nationaltunnel.org).



Plans call for installing a 295-foot steel liner along the western half of the tunnel. It will be similar to the repair of Greer Tunnel in Peters Township completed two years ago. If sufficient funding is available, the eastern end of the tunnel will be lined and the western portal facade refurbished.

Built by the Montour Railroad in 1913, the 630-foot curved National Tunnel is the longest of the three tunnels on the Montour and one of its most recognizable landmarks.

The Montour Trail is the longest suburban rail trail in the U.S., encompassing more than 60 miles in Allegheny and Washington counties. The Montour Trail Council has been a volunteer-led, 501(c)(3) nonprofit since its founding in 1989. It receives no ongoing government support.

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