

Prairie City Hometown Pride June 2017 Update

1. The group of us working on the Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a design and engineering firm for the first phase of the rail trail construction (Monroe to Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge) have finalized a document satisfactory to Jasper County Conservation Department Director Keri Van Zante. Keri has asked me to help her present it to the Jasper County Conservation Board for approval, and we will be doing that at the Board's meeting on July 13. If any of you can attend to show your support we would appreciate that; 3:30 pm at the Conservation Department office in Newton across from Maytag Park. Following approval we will circulate it to engineering firms and hopefully conduct interviews in August. We are still shooting for late summer/fall 2018 construction.
2. There is a difference of opinion on the name for the trail! You will recall Prairie City Hometown Pride voted to endorse the name "Tallgrass Prairie Trail". Monroe Hometown Pride prefers the name "Red Rock Trail". Let's discuss at the July meeting how to resolve this impasse. We could have a re-vote with just those 2 names as the candidates, or have a subcommittee meet with representatives from both committees. Or go to an entirely different third name. Remember, we will be presenting our recommended name to the Jasper County Conservation Department who will make the official designation. There is no big hurry, but it would be nice to get it named.
3. If you want to see first hand what a festival on the trail can be, plan to partake in Pedaler's Jamboree Iowa, August 26-27 on the Chichaqua Valley Trail between Baxter and Bondurant. Biking, music, and beer. I think you can register already on the Pedaler's Jamboree website.
4. The Mayor and I met with a local property owner about subdividing his agricultural property for residential development. The property is already in the Corporate Limits of Prairie City.
5. There continue to be discussions about a new Fire/EMS building in Prairie City.
6. On July 14 there is a celebration for Prairie Meadows Community Betterment grant recipients at the casino in Altoona. Jasper County Hometown Pride worked on four grant applications that were approved, including two in Prairie City, one for Police and one for the Library. We hope to have a full table from Jasper County at the reception.
7. On July 12 I am meeting with representatives from the Iowa Finance Authority to hear about opportunities for smaller towns to access their grant programs for building new housing. Their programs are oriented to senior, workforce, and low income housing projects, and generally go to larger towns that can sustain projects of at least 40-45 units.
8. We are looking for volunteers for the Keep Iowa Beautiful booth at the State Fair again this year. It's kind of pandemonium at our booth in the Varied Industries Building; but it is air conditioned, you get a free Keep Iowa Beautiful t-shirt, and free admission to the fair. Let me know if you are interested.
9. We are adding 5 new counties to the Hometown Pride program this year. We have hired one new community coach already and will be adding two more shortly.

Have a great summer— see you on July 24!