

New trail takes shape

By **ALGIS J. LAUKAITIS** / **Lincoln Journal Star**

Work on the Jamaica North Trail in southwest Lincoln is nearing completion, but bicyclists and hikers won't be able to use the new recreational corridor until late October.

A crushed limestone surface has been poured on a half-mile section south of Saltillo Road and north of Saltillo Road to about 14th Street, said Terry Genrich, natural resources and greenways manager for the City Parks and Recreation Department.

The 6.5-mile long trail, which borders Wilderness Park and was once an abandoned Union Pacific Railroad line, will eventually end near Calvert Street.

"Several things still need to be done before it is open to the public," Genrich said.

Workers have to install signs at intersections, bridge decking and railings. Most of that work should be completed by the end of October.

Volunteers from the Great Plains Trails Network and several businesses, including Pfizer Inc. and Aquila, will do some of the bridge work, Genrich said. Then the trail will be turned over to Lancaster County before it can be opened for public use. A dedication ceremony will be held to thank all of the participants in the project.

GPTN, for example, raised about \$280,000 toward the project and Lancaster County contributed up to \$100,000. Genrich said the exact amounts of their contributions won't be known until the project is completed.

He estimated the total cost of the Jamaica North Trail at about \$483,769 but that does not include design and construction management fees.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Jamaica North Trail was held in mid-June.

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District is working on a trail project that will connect with the southern end of the trail. Called the Homestead Trail, the district is seeking bids — for the second time — on a 14-mile section to Cortland.

Dan Schulz, resources coordinator for the Lincoln-based NRD, said earlier bids surpassed the grants and budget for the project. He said work could still start this year if the second round of bidding is successful.

The Homestead Trail, which extends into Kansas, is a work in progress and will take years to complete, officials say. Beatrice already has completed a section of the trail near the community. The Nebraska Trails Foundation owns other sections of the trail.

When the Homestead Trail is finished, it will extend about 72 miles from Lincoln's Haymarket District to Marysville, Kan.

In other trail-related news, the Parks and Recreation Department, is almost finished re-doing a short trail in Tierra Park near Tierra Drive and 27th Street.

Genrich said the asphalt trail was in bad shape. The \$62,000 project was paid for through federal trail funds administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and city money.

What's in a name?

The Jamaica North Trail is named after the historic Jamaica townsite south of Saltillo Road. It was once located on the Union Pacific Railroad line, which is now the corridor for the 6.5-mile trail. The townsite was probably named for Jamaica, N.Y., according to "Perkey's Nebraska Place Names."

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