



## Creating Opportunities Along the Nation's Trails

425 West Pittsburgh Street | Greensburg, PA 15601 | (724) 216-9160 | [www.trailtowns.org](http://www.trailtowns.org) | [www.progressfund.org](http://www.progressfund.org)

### For Immediate Release

#### Regional Trails Continue to be Economic Drivers in Western Pennsylvania

Greensburg, PA – April 13, 2015 – The Trail Town Program® is an initiative of the Progress Fund, meant to promote economic development along our nation's trails. In the past year the Trail Town Program® has completed economic studies along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and Great Allegheny Passage in Western Pennsylvania. The purpose of these studies is to determine the economic impact these trails have made on the regions that they flow through.

The Great Allegheny Passage is the popular, 150 mile bike trail that links Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD. The trail has grown in usage since its completion in 2013. The trail links to the C&O Towpath in Cumberland, MD and leads to Washington, DC, creating a continuous 335 miles of trail. In 2014 the Trail Town Program® conducted a trail user survey, surveying 562 users of the Great Allegheny Passage between July and October of 2014. From October 2014 until February 2015 surveys were collected from 45 businesses along the trail. Highlights from the surveys include:

- Over half of the trail users surveyed responded that this was their first trip on the trail.
- Roughly 62% were planning an overnight stay
- The overnight spending average was \$124 (Up \$26 since the 2008 Trail User Survey)
- The average day user spends \$18 per day
- Businesses have reported an overall increase in trail user traffic from 34% in 2013 to 41% in 2014
- Businesses reported on average 6% of their trail traffic were international visitors
- 27% of businesses surveyed plan to expand their businesses due to the trail

The Erie-to-Pittsburgh trail is a highly anticipated trail that when complete will link Pittsburgh, PA to Erie, PA. Currently the longest, contiguous, completed section of the trail is from Titusville, PA to Foxburg, PA. The Trail Town Program® from November 2014 to February 2015 conducted a business survey along this completed portion. The purpose of this survey is to complement the 2013 Trail User Survey that was completed by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The survey completed in 2013 estimated trail usage at 159,000 visitors with direct economic impact of \$7.48 million. Twenty-six surveys were collected from businesses from Titusville, PA to Foxburg, PA. Highlights from the survey include:

- The majority of respondents were from lodging and eateries
- In 2013 businesses attributed 10% of their business to the trail and 19.15% in 2014
- 46% of businesses surveyed responded that they plan to expand their business due to the trail
- Businesses reported on average 1.93% of their trail traffic were international visitors

For the complete reports of both of these studies please visit <http://www.trailtowns.org/1studies.aspx> or contact Will Prince at [wprince@progressfund.org](mailto:wprince@progressfund.org) or 724-216-9160 Ext. 318