



Creating Opportunities Along the Nation's Trails

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Trail Town Program® Continues to Maximize Opportunities

Greensburg, PA – Trail season is in full swing across western Pennsylvania, and nearby communities are looking to connect with the growing number of trails users. The Progress Fund's Trail Town Program® is working to maximize business opportunities in the Trail Town communities by providing ongoing technical assistance towards revitalization. Recently the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Community Development Initiative awarded a \$140,000 grant to implement the Trail Town Program®'s Six Services over the next two years. These Six Services include:

1. Business Assistance and Development
2. Marketing
3. Economic Research
4. Community Connections
5. Real Estate Development
6. Small Business Loans

This recent grant enables the Trail Town Program® to apply these Six Services to 19 rural communities across the "Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition" region to network and leverage resources in trail tourism and revitalization. These communities include:

- **Great Allegheny Passage:** West Homestead, Homestead, McKeesport, Boston (Elizabeth Township), West Newton, Connellsville, Ohio, Confluence, Rockwood, and Meyersdale¹
- **Erie to Pittsburgh Trail:** Titusville, Oil City, Franklin, Emlenton, and Foxburg
- **Trans-Allegheny Trails:** Saltsburg and Ebensburg
- **Sheepskin Trail:** Dunbar and Point Marion

Trail Town Program® works with municipalities, businesses, and other local, regional, and national organizations, so that trail development is matched side by side with economic development encouraging business growth.

These communities have taken the initial steps by completing their Trail Town Assessments. The City of Franklin has already seen an impact. Ronnie Beith, City of Franklin Events Coordinator, says "Franklin has been striving to be more bicycle friendly for years, and now the Trail Town Program has helped us to refocus and refine our efforts... (There has been) an increase in traffic from the trail head to our downtown, and we look forward to welcoming more new visitors as we continue to increase accessibility for cyclists."

In Meyersdale along the Great Allegheny Passage, "the community has come together to accomplish many large and small projects... Trail Town Program is dedicated to create an atmosphere where businesses can flourish." says Sharon K. Ackerman, Board of Directors of the Meyersdale Merchants' Association.

¹ Trail Town Program® is also established in the South Side of Pittsburgh, Frostburg, and Cumberland, Maryland