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## **NEWS RELEASE**

September 20, 2015

***Ribbon Cutting Celebration for Bedford Heritage Trail***  
**Followed by**  
***Government: It's Your Business Luncheon: "Trail Towns"***  
**Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> – at the Bedford Elks Country Club**

**Bedford, PA** – The Bedford County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to participate in a Ribbon Cutting Celebration for the new Bedford Heritage Trail, a multi-use trail linking downtown Bedford to the Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa. The ceremony will take place Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 11am on the trail at the Bedford Elks Country Club near the pavilion. Many stakeholders and contributors to the trail will join the Bedford Joint Municipal Authority in celebrating this significant project, including representatives from the offices of US and PA Legislators, DCNR, PENNDOT, Keller Engineers, LS Fiore, Bedford Elks Country Club, Omni Bedford Springs Resort, Bedford Borough, Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission, as well as additional sponsors, businesses and community supporters. Following the ribbon cutting celebration, all are invited to explore the trail.

Media and the public are welcome to also attend a special **Government: It's Your Business Trail Town Luncheon** after the Ribbon Cutting activities. Presented by the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce and Keller Engineers, the special event will be part of the Chamber's ongoing speaker series exploring important legislative and economic issues relevant to Bedford County and the region. Featured remarks will be provided by Lauren Imgrund, Director of the Bureau of Recreation & Conservation at DCNR. Ms. Imgrund will discuss the business opportunities and economic impact of trails like the one being celebrated on this day. Following her presentation, guests will have a chance to discuss local trail projects, including the Heritage Trail, H&BT Rail Trail, Pike 2 Bike and Mid State Trail with representatives from each organization. LS Fiore is also sponsoring the luncheon.

The Ribbon Cutting is free. Cost to attend the luncheon is \$20 per person; reservations are required. Register by calling the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce at 814-623-2233. Media coverage is welcome, and lunch is provided to working media at no charge. Please contact the Chamber office with questions concerning this event or to RSVP.

*(Please see page two for additional information concerning the Heritage Trail)*

**About the Bedford Heritage Trail:** PA's Department of Community and Economic Development funded the development of this plan under its First Industries Program, Contract C000016958, administered jointly by BC Development Association, BC Chamber of Commerce, and Bedford County Conference and Visitors Bureau. The Bedford Joint Municipal Authority is developing of a hiking and biking trail system that would connect downtown Bedford, PA with surrounding tourist attractions. The trail system is divided into two phases. The first phase is a trail connecting the Omni Bedford Springs Resort to downtown Bedford, which is nearing completion with as Ribbon Cutting scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>. The second phase is a trail connecting the Old Bedford Village and Friendship Village with downtown Bedford. The logic behind a trail system that connects these tourist attractions with downtown is to:

1. Stimulate economic growth in downtown Bedford
2. Increase recreational opportunities for residents of Bedford County
3. Provide educational opportunities for students of Bedford Area School District
4. Provide sustainable forms of travel to downtown Bedford

The trail system that will be created may not be limited to phases 1 and 2 of the project. Other phases of the trail system could include but are not limited to trails connecting downtown Bedford with attractions east and west of Bedford Borough, a connection to the H&BT Rail Trail, as well as a trail extension from Omni Bedford Springs Resort to the C&O Canal in Cumberland, MD and the Great Allegheny Passage.

The vision of the Bedford Joint Municipal Authority is to provide sustained economic growth opportunities for Bedford County in particularly Bedford Borough and Bedford Township. The Bedford Joint Municipal Authority will work diligently to distinguish the County as a regional destination for recreation, cultural heritage, shopping, and as a hub of governmental activity and professional services by providing opportunities for past-time pursuits, employment, and outdoor recreation.

The mission of the Bedford Joint Municipal Authority, established under the auspices of the Bedford Borough Council and Bedford Township, is to create a positive economic impact for the Bedford County by expanding the tourism opportunities of off-road trail activities pertaining to non-motorized vehicle use. Such activities include pedestrian, bicycles and mountain bicycles.

Fundraising continues for the Heritage Trail to support future maintenance. Sponsorship opportunities are still available in support of the trail, including one bridge and several benches as well as informational kiosks and fencing. For more information, visit [www.bedfordheritagetrail.com](http://www.bedfordheritagetrail.com).

~ Project History ~

**The Bedford Heritage Trail:**

- Links a world class resort to a nationally recognized main street program, which encompasses the Bedford Nationally Registered Historic District and includes Fort Bedford Park and the Fort Bedford Museum, via a picturesque trail along a scenic golf course and babbling brook.
- Creates a safe travel corridor for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Provides recreation to locals and tourists.
- A component in the heritage tourism and economic development initiative of the region.

**Trail Project Timeline:**

- 2009
  - Bedford Borough and Bedford Township form the Bedford Joint Municipal Authority to determine how to, and, to build the trail.
  - BJMA begins seeking local backing and support for the trail.
  - Feasibility analysis began.
- 2010
  - Map created of possible trail corridor including Phase 1 to Bedford Springs, and Phase 2 to Old Bedford Village.
  - Website and Facebook page created to build public awareness and support.
  - First Annual Santa Run Walk Roll conducted to raise public awareness and funds.
- 2011
  - Grant application not funded. Other funding sources sought.
- 2012
  - Feasibility Study/Master Site Plan, to determine actual trail corridor and design, funded through state grant, and completed.
- 2013
  - Fort Bedford Park segment completed.
  - Easements signed by the 3 property owners to permit trail construction across their properties.
  - Cost estimate completed, federal, state, regional and local grants secured.
- 2014
  - Construction bids came in too high.
  - Additional funding secured through state and local contributions.
- 2015
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> bid process was successful; construction completed, ahead of schedule!
  - Downtown segment sidewalk refurbishing began
- 2016
  - Phase 2 begins - connecting Fort Bedford Park to Old Bedford Village.

For more information on this event, contact the Chamber Office at 814-623-2233 or visit:

**[www.BedfordCountyChamber.com](http://www.BedfordCountyChamber.com)**

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