

# Wet yet festive celebration of trail progress

A festive 'chain-cutting' celebrating the latest addition to the Grinnell Area Recreation Trail as well as the inaugural Second Saturdays event of 2008 drew more than 40 people to Lion's Park on a drizzly Saturday morning May 10.

Melissa Strovers, executive director of Imagine Grinnell – a local foundation which has long partnered with the city on building trails in the area – thanked all of the trail's many supporters and told those assembled that the stretch paved in the fall of 2007 was a "critical" piece of the puzzle.

While measuring just 350 yards, Strovers noted that the section of trail from Lion's Park to Iowa Valley Community College allows students to pass safely between the community college and Grinnell High School campuses without using Hwy. 6.

"The completion of this section of trail leaves us well posed to continue to pursue safe passage across Hwy. 6 – and to continue to expand the trail south of town," Strovers remarked, noting the trail now runs a full 6.25 miles from Iowa Valley Community College to Rock Creek State Park in Jasper County.

She said the city hopes to break ground on the next phase of the trail, from Arbor Lake south to Industrial Ave., in the fall of 2009.

"This will connect residential Grinnell to major employers and retailers south of town, providing a safe route for the substantial number of workers, students and other shoppers who now walk or bicycle to these destinations," Strovers noted.

She thanked donors to this section of trail, including the city of Grinnell, Grinnell College, the Poweshiek County Alliance, Iowa Valley Community College, the Claude W. and Dolly Ahrens Foundation and Rock Creek Industries, and the many individuals who purchased 'yards' of trail in the Imagine Grinnell-backed 'yard sale' fundraiser as well long-time supporters of the foundation.

"Without you all, we can't 'Imagine Grinnell,'" Strovers said.

Grinnell Mayor Gordon Canfield was on hand to do the honors of cutting the chain, and he and Sen. Tom Rielly both spoke about the importance of trails to Iowa communities. Representatives of the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, the Grinnell Lions Club and Iowa Valley Community College were also present to join in the celebration.



Rob Clower (above, left) prepares to launch the first Second Saturday event of 2008, with a field of participants including (from left) Drew Cooper, David Clower, Tommy Clower, Clayton Francis, Joseph Lang, Kyle Moorehead and Jennifer Dysart; participants not pictured included Roland Eckhart and Austin Jones. Joining for a photo at the official Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors ribbon-cutting were (right, from left) Lonn Lease, Wendy Ramsey, Chamber President Lynn Budding, Rob Clower, Mayor Gordon Canfield, Sharon Poush, Craig Cooper, Ambassadors Chair Dorothy Spriggs, Dustin Smith, Imagine Grinnell Executive Director Melissa Strovers, Sen. Tom Rielly, Tom Marshall and City Councilmember Shannon McNaul.



Craig Cooper, a member of the Imagine Grinnell board and owner of Bikes to You, spoke to the crowd about the Bike to Work Week initiative kicked off with the event, and Wendy Ramsey, co-chair of committee working to raise funds for a new aquatic center which will join the bike trail and Lion's Park in a sort of community recreational hub, gave the crowd an update on that healthy initiative.

Rob Clower, who also serves on the Imagine Grinnell board, then did the honors of kicking off this year's Second Saturdays program—starting the May 10 event, and inviting community

members to join for fun and fitness on the trail on the second Saturday of each month through fall. Mark June 14, July 12, Aug. 9 and Sept. 13 on your calendars to take part in a 5k run/walk or your choice of a 5k, 10k or 20k bike ride (cyclists must wear helmets, please). Registration starts at 8:15 a.m. each day, and all events begin at 9 a.m. at Sunset and Eighth, just south of the high school.

Drawings for prizes will be held each month, and the season finale in September will also feature a hog-dog

cookout and a giveaway of a \$150 gift certificate to Bikes to You, among other great prizes. A nominal entry fee is charged for the event, with all proceeds going toward expanding Grinnell's recreational trail system.

Imagine Grinnell's co-sponsors on the Second Saturdays program include Grinnell College, Bikes to You and Grinnell Regional Medical Center, as well as McNally's, Hy-Vee, Saints Rest Coffee House, Total Home Service, Lonnskis' Pub and Deli, Headquarters, and Brown's Shoe Fit.