

Plans coming together for Ohio River Trail

By: Michael Pound
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MONACA — Plans to build a trail that eventually would link Lake Erie with Washington, D.C., via Beaver County have progressed to the point that organizers are ready to show off their work so far.

Members of the Ohio River Trail Council will host two public events in and around Midland Thursday evening to outline their plans for the trail and push for public support.

“The big thing we want to accomplish is to raise the public’s awareness of the project,” said Monaca businessman Vince Troia, the council’s chairman. “We’re at the point where things are going to start to happen, so this is a good time to let everyone know what’s going on.”

The group has plans for two trails — one starting in Monaca and running along the south shore of the Ohio River until it meets up with the Montour Trail in Robinson Township, and one running from Bridgewater to East Liverpool, where it will connect with a series of trails in Ohio. The two Beaver County trails would be connected by existing bridges.

At Thursday’s event, much of the focus will be on the North Shore Trail, which Troia said will use an abandoned trolley line that used to run between Rochester and Steubenville, Ohio.

“We’ve walked part of the right of way to get a feel for what the trail will be like,” Troia said. “We’re still a long way from getting started on that side of the river, but it should be beautiful.”

Things are moving a little more quickly for the South Shore Trail, said Mario Leone Jr., Monaca borough manager and the council’s vice chairman. The council will issue specifications for a feasibility study on that portion of the trail Sept. 25 and hopes to award a contract for the study by the end of October.

“I think we’re looking at an eight-month period for the study,” Leone said. “We’ll see what it says and hopefully be in a position to act on its recommendations.”

That will require money, which is why Leone said he’s happy the council is close to receiving nonprofit status from the Internal Revenue Service, a certification that should give the council access to grant funds.

“That will open a number of fundraising venues to us, ones we can’t access right now,” he said.

TRAIL MIXER

The Ohio River Trail Council will host two events Thursday night to promote its plans for a rail-to-trail project along the Ohio River in Beaver County:

1 6 p.m., Lock 57 Community Park, Ohioville — Public event to hear details about the trail plans, including a presentation by local historian Wayne Cole on the rail lines to be used.

1 7 p.m., Midland Borough Building, 936 Midland Ave. — Ohio River Trail Council meeting.