

# INFORMATION RELEASE



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### **AHTD TO PARTNER WITH ARKANSAS PARKS & TOURISM TO CONSTRUCT ADDITION TO DELTA HERITAGE TRAIL**

**LITTLE ROCK (6-9)** – The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) will partner with the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism (ADPT) to extend the Delta Heritage Trail State Park in southeast Arkansas, according to AHTD officials. Plans were approved in a Minute Order passed by the Arkansas State Highway Commission last week.

The Delta Heritage Trail is a “Rails to Trails” conversion of an abandoned railway line and is used by bicyclists, walkers and joggers.

The State of Arkansas, through efforts by the ADPT and AHTD, acquired the abandoned right-of-way corridor in 1992 through a land donation from the Union Pacific Corporation.

Currently, the trail right-of-way extends 73.2 miles from Helena Junction southward to Cypress Bend. To date, approximately 21 miles of trail corridor have been completed from Helena Junction to the community of Elaine.

“The Department of Parks & Tourism extended the trail 14.7 miles on the southern end in 2010,” stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “The new extension will begin at the junction with Highway 1, in the vicinity of Rohwer, and continue southward to Arkansas City. The new partnership with Parks & Tourism means the AHTD will oversee and inspect the construction and be responsible for maintenance, as required by law, once the new extension is completed. Funding for this project is provided by Parks & Tourism.”

“With the terminus in Arkansas City, Parks & Tourism plans include a trailhead facility which will highlight area recreational and historical points of interest as well as restroom facilities for visitors and campers,” commented Arkansas Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr. of Arkansas City. “We thank the Southeast Arkansas Levee Board, the Corp of Engineers and Desha County, all of whom were instrumental in obtaining approval to utilize the Mississippi River levee to accommodate this connection. This is really going to be a great recreational attraction for southeast Arkansas.”

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The extension will follow the Mississippi River levee top, along with a short section of County Road, and provide additional access to recreation facilities, including the Choctaw Island Wildlife Management Area. It will also provide a link to a community (Arkansas City) with historical significance and heritage opportunities.

Upon completion of the new addition, the Delta Heritage Trail State Park will total approximately 84.5 miles.

The mission of the national Rails to Trails program is to create a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to provide recreational opportunities for communities across the country. Currently, there are more than 20,000 miles of rail-trail conversions already completed with 9,000 additional miles waiting to be completed.

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