

Bridging Paths - Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club hopes to connect local bike trails

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – When work is completed on the joining of the Sam A. Vadalabene Bicycle Trail and the Confluence Greenway Trail, it will be possible for bicyclists to journey from Pere Marquette State Park to the Gateway Arch.

Currently, the Sam A. Vadalabene Bicycle Trail ends in Downtown Alton, and the Confluence Greenway Trail ends abruptly near the Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater and the Argosy Casino. In fact, it ends in some grass by the railroad tracks after coming

from St. Louis by way of the Chain O Rocks Route 66 Bridge and the levee system along the Mississippi River. With the help of the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club in partnership with the City of Alton, a connecting trail will join the two existing trails by way of Riverfront Park.

According to a release from the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club, work on connecting the trails began on May 31, 2018. The work is being done through the assistance of Rotary International's Clubs Grant Program, which is funded by the Rotary Foundation. The Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club received a grant for \$2,000 for the connector trail. It applied for the grant, which was consistent with one of Rotary's Areas of Focus, as the connector trail will serve as a local economic development supporting Alton's tourist attractions.

Local couple, Mike Quinn and Allyssa Conroy, use the Confluence Greenway Trail and Sam A. Vadalabene Trail frequently, with each bicycling several days a week. They were enthused by this news.

“It's about time,” Quinn said. “They've been needing to do it for a while.”

“Yeah, this city needs to be safer and better for bicycles,” Conroy agreed. “In Edwardsville, it's super great. Alton should get their stuff together and be more like that.”

In the release from the Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club, it is stated the completion of the amphitheater's construction in 2009 resulted in only a portion of the connector trail being rerouted around the structure. Its ending, which the release even described as “sudden,” is 431 feet from the casino parking lot.

That lot was further improved in the interest of casino customers, and the re-striping of the parking lot did not include the bike lanes or directions to the Sam A. Vadalabene Trail. Some relics of the former trail remain in the casino lot, including three small signs and some striping near the railroad crossing. A full-paved trail does exist in front of Ardent Mills, the release stated, but even it does not include striping.