



Media Advisory For: Sept.26 - 28, 2023

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Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to Showcase Regional Impact of Great American Rail-Trail Over Three Days of Trail Riding and Events in Quad Cities Area

Media Will Learn About Economic and Tourism Benefits of Significant Efforts Underway to Close Critical Gap in Region's Trail System, Connecting Hennepin Canal and I&M Canal State Trails

DAVENPORT, IOWA—Media are invited to take part in a lineup of events, hosted by [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy \(RTC\)](#), the nation's largest trails advocacy organization, and partners from across the Quad Cities region to learn about the impact, potential and progress of the [Great American Rail-Trail®](#) in Iowa and Illinois. A focus will be on significant efforts underway to connect the Hennepin Canal and the I&M Canal State Trails, closing a gap that will generate new economic and tourism opportunity for the small towns along the route and putting the "buckle on the belt" of the cross-country Great American.

The Quad Cities is where the Great American Rail-Trail—which stretches 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State—crosses over the Mississippi River and between Iowa and Illinois. This crossing underscores the importance of the relationships, partnerships and collaboration that are needed across state lines to complete a trail of this scale. The region is the perfect example of the economic and local potential of the trail in similar communities across the country. In Illinois alone, the Great American is expected to generate annually \$2.3 million in new tax revenue and over \$18 million in visitor spending—also adding 200 new jobs and \$9.6 million in labor income.

Media are invited to attend key events which are the highlights of the 100-mile VIP bike tour departing from Davenport, Iowa, on Sept. 26 and ending in Ottawa, Illinois, on September 28.

For interviews and to RSVP, contact Patricia Brooks at patricia@matchmapmedia.com. Interested media are also welcome to join portions of the bike tour.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

SEPT. 26—DAVENPORT, IOWA, TO GENESEO, ILLINOIS

11:30 a.m. @ Union Station Visitors Center, 102 S Harrison Street, Davenport, Iowa

Join staff from RTC's national and Midwest offices, and leaders from across the Quad Cities for a press event and kickoff of the Great American Rail-Trail tour, celebrating the progress that's been made to connect the region by trail, the role of the Great American in helping to advance the regional vision rooted in mobility, and opportunities to unlock the economic development, outdoor recreation and quality of life benefits that the trail promises. Speakers include RTC, Visit Quad Cities, Ride Illinois and local officials.

1:00 p.m.: Photo opportunity at the Oculus on the I-74 Trail Bridge as the Quad Cities Bicycle Club leads tour across the Mississippi River.

6:30 p.m. @ Central Schoolhouse Inn, 115 E North Street, Geneseo, Illinois

Join RTC and the Friends of the Hennepin Canal for an exploration of what it takes to leverage a cross-country trail for small-town impact. The dinner event will focus on the potential for a town like Geneseo to be located along the route of an accessible cross-country trail, as well as ways to increase the town's appeal for trail users—from those out for a simple afternoon to those on an epic adventure. Speakers include the Geneseo Chamber of Commerce, local business owners and staff from Senator Win Stoller's office.

SEPT. 27—GENESEO TO PERU, ILLINOIS

6:30 P.M. @ Riverfront Bar & Grill, 1525 Water Street, Peru

RTC, Canal Trail Connector, Inc., the Starved Rock Country Community Foundation, the Marquis Foundation and regional and statewide leaders will discuss the opportunity to connect the state's iconic Hennepin Canal and the I&M Canal State Trails. Speakers include Illinois Department of Transportation Secretary Omer Osman, former Illinois Congressman and U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and other regional leaders.

SEPT. 28— LA SALLE TO OTTAWA, ILLINOIS

Riders will begin the day at the I&M Canal National Heritage Site for breakfast and discussion of the historical significance of the region's canal system. Riders will also arrive at Starved Rock State Park and experience the canyons that make this area distinct.

RTC is hosting this series of events in Iowa and Illinois in partnership with Visit Quad Cities, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Ride Illinois, Friends of the Hennepin Canal, Heritage Corridor Destinations, the Hennepin Canal State Park Foundation, Canal Trail Connector Inc., Wheel & Sprocket and other regional partners to bring focus to the opportunity, leadership and momentum driving the trail forward across the region.

The Great American Rail-Trail will be the nation's first cross-country multiuse trail—a route that is entirely bikeable and separated from vehicle traffic across 3,700 miles between Washington State and Washington, D.C. For more information about the Great American Rail-Trail and its regional impact on Iowa and Illinois, [visit RTC's website](#).

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong. RTC is dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).