

## **SOUTHWIND RAIL TRAIL**

Volunteers are in the process of replacing mile-marker posts as they rot, with steel posts, PVC board and vinyl lettering. They continue to maintain and manage the trail with limited staffing. It is reported the Lehigh Portland State Park has let out bids for the RV Park and its electrical system. The park is adjacent to the Southwind Rail Trail and as amenities are added, trail usage will increase. Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks has acquired land near the clear, spring-fed lake, and an easement on the West side for access to park facilities. At the Humboldt trailhead end, the Union Brewery is now open for business serving several tastes in brew along with an initial menu of dining offerings

## **REDBUD TRAIL**

The City of Augusta was awarded a \$560,000 federal Transportation Alternatives grant to help pay for a fancy suspension bridge over the Whitewater River for the Redbud Trail. The total cost of the bridge is \$5 million with 0 local match required. The other funds came from state grants. Construction should start in 2026.

Construction on the prefab bridge over busy four-lane US 400/54 in Andover should start before the end of the year and be completed within a year. Dondlinger & Sons Construction placed the low bid of \$1.5 million in Sept. The bid came in substantially lower than expected so that a bond issue by the City of Augusta will not be required for the 20% local match. In 2025 volunteers will cut back the growth between US 400 and the Whitewater River a distance of 3 miles in preparation of grading and screenings.

When the trail is completed in 2-3 years, trail users will be able to travel 22 miles from Augusta to central Wichita. Then if a connecting trail of 8-10 miles can be built to the Prairie Sunset Trail, trail users will be able to go another 15 miles to Garden Plain.

## **SUNFLOWER SANTA FE TRAIL**

Central Kansas Conservancy has been awarded a \$650,000 federal Transportation Alternatives grant administered by KDOT to build two miles of 33-mile Sunflower SF Trail at Canton. The total cost will be \$800,000 which includes the local match. The trail will be paved in town and crushed limestone outside of town. Canton is 14 miles east of McPherson where the Meadowlark Trail begins and is nearing completion. The City of Hillsboro built one mile of the trail using TA funds.

## **MEADOWLARK TRAIL**

Central Kansas Conservancy is currently laying down limestone screenings on the second to the last mile on the trail right now. It is a little more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way complete. There is a contractor who is going to help with moving the 89-foot-long railroad flatcar. It will replace a burned railroad bridge. They cannot put limestone screenings down on that last mile until that flatcar is moved. Once screenings are down on the last mile, the 13-mile trail between Lindsborg and McPherson will be finished.

## **FLINT HILLS TRAIL**

The \$5 million trail bridge over double train tracks west of Ottawa is about complete. This will eliminate a 2.5-mile dusty detour on gravel roads. After this is complete, work will start on a five mile section of trail going west from Vassar (south of Pomona Lake). This will eliminate flat tires from pesky goathead thorns.

