



Port Authority Planning May 9th Ribbon Cutting For Gnadenhutzen Nature Park

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The Tuscarawas County Port Authority is partnering with BP, Secor International Incorporated and the Wildlife Habitat Council to provide an outdoor learning experience for area students and residents. A host of partners and supporters will gather for the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Southern Gateway Nature Park on Tuesday, May 9th, to celebrate the park's official opening.

The park, located on the perimeter of the TCPA's Southern Gateway Business Park in Gnadenhutzen, is comprised of nearly seven acres of land that host a variety of plants and animals native to that area. Indian Valley Local Schools and the Village of Gnadenhutzen have already endorsed the TCPA efforts to provide a recreational setting for students and citizens. Randle Cadle, district superintendent, and David Zimmerman, village mayor, have worked closely with the Tuscarawas County Port Authority throughout the endeavor.

Harry Eadon, Executive Director for the TCPA, is "quite pleased" with the progress of the nature park project. "Each of the partners has worked diligently to make this happen. The Village of Gnadenhutzen and the Indian Valley Local Schools have been incredibly supportive of the entire process. It's truly a community project that has endless potential for area students and citizens."

Marcia Maslonek, Director of Biodiversity and Technical Programs for the Wildlife Habitat Council, has been involved with the Southern Gateway Nature Park project from its inception. "Conservation of greenspace and biodiversity benefits not only nature, but also the community," says Maslonek. "This will be a jewel for young and old alike to learn and play within." Since 2002, Wildlife Habitat Council has planted numerous trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers to compliment the natural habitat. Duck boxes, screech owl boxes and bat box condos have been added to encourage native species to remain in that area.

Eadon noted that the Southern Gateway Nature park site has drawn the attention of state and national agencies as well. "This is a perfect example of how to renovate unused greenspace." Though it is a work in progress, the site has already been hailed as a "poster child" for other areas looking to reconstruct similar types of properties. "We're hoping to see executives from federal and state environmental agencies in attendance at the May 9th ceremony," Eadon said. "It's exciting."

For information on the Tuscarawas County Port Authority, visit them online at www.tuscport.com.

For more information on Wildlife Habitat Council, visit them online at www.wildlifehc.org.

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For verification and additional information: Harry A. Eadon Jr. – headon@tuscport.com – (330) 602-4422