



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRANT SUPPORTS FAYETTE COUNTY RECREATION INITIATIVE

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County will soon add a new parks and recreation director to its ranks, thanks to a Peer and Circuit Rider Grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Community Development Specialist Sue Martin of the Fayette County Planning, Zoning and Community Development Office said the grant will be distributed over four years, with the first round of funding totaling \$39,500.

Awarded through DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program, the funding will be used to pay the full, first-year salary for the county's new director of parks, recreation and trails, along with initial training costs. The county will cover the position's annual benefits costs for the duration of the grant.

DCNR's contribution will decrease by 25 percent annually, with the county assuming the full cost of the position by year five, Martin added. The county will work hand-in-hand with DCNR Project Manager James Young on the grant's maintenance.

"We have been working on this since late 2017," Martin said. "We first had to complete a peer-to-peer study, which was also partially grant funded by DCNR. It was just recently finished, and I submitted the Circuit Rider application in July."

Once hired, the parks and recreation director will be responsible for managing the county's three parks, overseeing completion of the Sheepskin Trail project, and promoting recreation throughout Fayette and beyond.

"One of the department's highest priorities is helping to build local government partnerships to provide Pennsylvania's citizens access to high quality recreational activities and park facilities," DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Director Thomas Ford said. "For this reason, we are pleased to support the development of a circuit rider director of parks, recreation and trails to serve Fayette County."

Martin said the director will also be responsible for producing income to be used for park and trail improvements and attracting new activities.

"This is a great thing for Fayette County and its citizens, because we will have a person dedicated to our parks and trails that can make them what the citizens need for recreation," she said.

Commissioner Chairman Vince Vicites said the grant will have a huge impact on Fayette County as a whole.

“Increasing and enhancing recreation will improve the overall quality of life in Fayette County,” Vicites said. “This funding and having a parks and recreation director leading our efforts will take our county trails and parks to the next level.”

Commissioner Dave Lohr said county officials have been looking forward to receiving this grant for a very long time, because the director will have the vision and knowledge to ensure Fayette’s recreational facilities are properly maintained and meeting public needs.

“So many Fayette County residents love the outdoors and all our parks and trails have to offer, but it’s not just our citizens who benefit. It’s also a draw for businesses looking to relocate and seeking local amenities for their employees,” Lohr said. “Our efforts are regularly recognized and valued by state officials and others. Ultimately, everyone benefits from having well-maintained parks and trails with the right amenities.”

Commissioner Scott Dunn said you can’t expect to have first-rate facilities and programming without also having the proper staff to oversee it, which makes the Peer and Circuit Rider Grant so important.

“The impact on Fayette County’s citizens is threefold. First, they’ll benefit by having better-maintained facilities; second, they’ll enjoy additional programming at our parks and trails; and finally, they’ll have these added benefits without any additional county dollars being spent,” Dunn said. “I’m excited about this because it’s just another way we impact quality of life in Fayette County. It’s a win for everyone.”

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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