



Leadership Lackawanna acts

Bike tour of heritage river trail set for June 5

By Natalie Gelb Solfanelli

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley is noted for its sense of community. We celebrate our diverse ethnic traditions and the unique cultural traditions that are carried from generation to generation. In order to continue those traditions and to keep our heritage alive, it is vital to provide incentives for our young people to stay in the region and to sustain the values that make us unique.

It is equally important to provide a quality of life that encourages young people who attend our many institutions of higher learning to stay in the area to build their lives and careers here. Beyond that we must support all efforts to make Northeastern Pennsylvania a dynamic community so that we can attract people to settle here, even if they have no family or school ties. We must take pride in the special attributes we possess i.e., the people, places and things that make this a good place to live.

When all is said and done, LHVA is a community and economic development entity, always striving to build a better quality of life to attract people and businesses. There is no better partner in that effort than the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce. Not only does the chamber staff work every day to support local business enterprises and to bring new business to the area, but also they provide a training ground the future leaders of our communities through their Leadership Lackawanna program.

LHVA is delighted that this year's Leadership Class has chosen LHVA's signature project, the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail, as the beneficiary of one of its class projects.

A group of Leadership participants has been working for months to organize the Heritage Explorer Bike Tour to be held on June 5 to raise money and awareness for the development of the trail.

This event will be the inaugural of an annual bike tour that will be adopted by LHVA's Ambassadors in Action volunteer group in future years. The Leadership Lackawanna group is doing all the hard work involved with creating a template and standard for the Ambassadors to follow.

The bike tour is for everyone, not only experienced or expert cyclists. It offers four family friendly routes that will meet the needs of all levels of skill and endurance. Starting in Mellow Park in Blakely, there are Bike Tour routes of 5, 10, 20 and 40 miles. The shorter routes are perfect for beginners, seniors and families with small children, while the longer routes will suit more experienced cyclists. All of the routes are "out and back" loops that begin and end in Mellow Park. Each route will have fun stops that showcase the region's coal mining and railroading history, as well as its beautiful natural resources. The shorter routes will use the

Lackawanna River Heritage Trail exclusively, while the longer tours will use a mix of rail-trail and on-road riding.

Thanks to the efforts of LHVA board member, Julia Munley, the law firm of Munley, Munley and Cartwright, has pledged to provide free bike helmets to the first 50 children under age 12 who register for the event.

That challenge grant was matched by the Foley Law Firm for another 50 helmets and then by the Trauma Unit of Community Medical Center for 50 more. This is another example of the generosity and collaborative spirit of the people and organizations of our community!

The excitement will begin on Friday evening, June 4, at the Electric City Trolley Museum in Scranton. Participants can either register that night or pick up their event packets if they are pre-registered. Admission to the party will be \$15 per person for raffle prizes, live entertainment and specialty foods and beverages.

And everyone who attends will have the chance to paint on the Heart to Art Mural that will be created just for the Heritage Explorer Tour. The mural will be transported to the site of the bike tour on Saturday morning.

Go to www.heritageexplorer.org or www.lhva.org for a brochure and registration form. There are registration categories available for individuals, families and teams. Please provide the appropriate size for your complimentary Bike Tour t-shirt. And remember, the event will take place rain or shine!

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