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# Party time for Kiski Junction bridge; trail project to link 140 miles of trails



MARY ANN THOMAS | Saturday, October 15, 2022 4:01 p.m.



LOUIS B. RUEDIGER | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The Kiski Junction Railroad Bridge in Schenley. Wed Aug 10, 2022.

Armstrong Trails is throwing an outdoor party next Friday to celebrate the acquisition of a 14-mile railroad corridor and a bridge to link 140 miles of trails.

The free public party will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Kiski Junction Railroad train station in Gilpin's Schenley section.

The event will feature speakers, snacks and refreshments, including beer from Pittsburgh Brewing Co.

Visitors are asked to pre-register for the event.

Winning a PennDOT grant specifically for trail development, Armstrong County bought the rail line and railroad bridge, owned by Rosebud Mining, for \$3.5 million earlier this year.

"The Kiski Junction acquisition constitutes the longest rail corridor purchase east of the Mississippi in 2022," said Eric Oberg, Midwest regional director for the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Midwest Regional Office.

Federal, state and local officials are expected to attend, including state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and PennDOT's Secretary for Planning Larry Shifflet.

The 14-mile rail line can be easily be converted into a recreational trail that will link 140 miles of trails from:

- Brookville, Jefferson County, to Butler via the Red Bank Valley Trail;
- to the Armstrong Trails;
- to the Tredway Trail in Allegheny Township;
- and to the Butler-Freeport Community Trail.

The Kiski Junction trail also will fill a critical gap in the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway.

Because of the regional significance of the project and potential economic benefits for trail tourism, the project is attractive to government officials from four counties and numerous communities, said Chris Ziegler, executive director of Armstrong Trails.

The conversion of the rail line, along the Kiski and Allegheny rivers, to a recreational trail and renovation of the railroad bridge is expected to be complete by the end of next year, Ziegler said.

Grants awarded to the county and Armstrong Trails for the project total \$4.2 million so far. They are requesting another \$2.5 million to renovate the 1899 railroad bridge, Ziegler said. Plans are underway for a "flyover" bridge on the Westmoreland side of the Kiski Junction Railroad bridge over a live rail line.

Before the flyover bridge is completed, the new Kiski Junction trail will link about 100 miles of trail from Bagdad in Gilpin to Brookville.

"It's historic to have a trail connector so large and with so much impact in this region," Ziegler said.

The length of the trail is a game changer when it comes to trail tourism, Ziegler said.

"The economic impact is seen at 100 miles or more when trail users stay overnight for multiple-day trips," she said.

The Kiski Junction Train station is located at Schenley Industrial Park, Gilpin, 150 Railroad St. The free outdoor event requires pre-registration for a headcount for refreshments.

## DETAILS

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## Coming up

**Who:** Armstrong Trails

**What:** Kiski Junction Bridge acquisition and trail party

**When:** Friday, Oct. 21 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where:** Train station at Schenley Industrial Park, Gilpin, 150 Railroad St.

**Details:** Free outdoor event but pre-registration is required for a headcount for refreshments. Register at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com). Search for Kiski Junction.

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