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For more information, please contact:

Dawn Caldwell, Village Manager

(815) 886-0279 | dcaldwell@romeoville.org

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Romeoville, Lockport, Forest Preserve, and CITGO Break Ground on Trail Connection

A groundbreaking ceremony for the upgraded trail connection that will link the 3.26 mile Centennial Trail and the 11 mile I&M Canal Trail took place this week. The project was made possible by a generous grant from CITGO.

Announced back in November, this new connection will effectively create a link of 14.5 miles of continuous, scenic pathway, allowing someone to travel from Lemont to Joliet. While the project itself is in Romeoville, the grant money donated by CITGO will cooperatively be used by the Village of Romeoville, the City of Lockport, and the Forest Preserve District of Will County to develop and maintain the connection.



The master plan for the project includes new walkways and curbs, street graphics, a parking area, benches, a bike repair station, directional signage, new landscaping, and a mural under the bridge. The plan also calls for a branch of the path to connect to the Romeoville Metra station.

"This is truly a regional project and we are happy to be sharing this event with the many partners on this project: the Forest Preserve District of Will County, the City of Lockport, and of course CITGO," said Romeoville Mayor John Noak. "This is a beautiful area and we hope the revamped trail connection will showcase it to even more people."

Mayor Steven Streit of Lockport, Executive Director Ralph Schultz of the Forest Preserve, and Jim Cristman, Vice President and General Manager of CITGO's Lemont Refinery also spoke at the ceremony.

"I think it's really important for our region to connect Joliet, Lockport, Romeoville and Lemont," said Mayor Streit. "It's such a great connection with the I&M Canal Trail and one of the confusing points on the trail has been this very spot. I've actually seen people come down here and do circles and ask 'Do you know where the trail picks up?' I'm really excited about working with Romeoville, CITGO, and the Forest Preserve to get this connection better way finding and to help make that corridor stronger."

The Forest Preserve District has worked with the City of Lockport and the Village of Romeoville on a number of trail projects. "With CITGO's assistance, this new addition helps to expand the bicycle and pedestrian network we've all been working toward," explained Meta Mueller, Forest Preserve Board President. "We look forward to the completion of this project and to future partnerships that will allow even more trail connections within our communities."

“We are excited to contribute to the improvement of the I&M Canal Trail with our partners,” said Jim Cristman, Vice President and General Manager of CITGO Lemont Refinery. “The new enhanced scenic pathway will include a bike repair station, seating and information kiosks, while also providing a safer connection between the Lockport and Romeoville communities.”

The trail connection is anticipated to be completed this fall.