

Jack A. Markell Trail Connecting Wilmington to New Castle Opens

Delaware's Congressional delegation, Governor John Carney, former Governor Jack Markell, State Representative Valerie Longhurst, DelDOT Secretary Jennifer Cohan, DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin, and other state and local officials gathered on Wednesday at the DuPont Environmental Education Center at the Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge in Wilmington, to open the new 7.9-mile trail named after former Governor Jack Markell.

The new trail links Wilmington's Riverfront to historic Old New Castle, and connects to a 3,000 mile East Coast Greenway that traverses Maine to Florida. The trail includes a 300 foot-long pedestrian/bicycle crossing over the Christiana River and an elevated 2,300 foot-long boardwalk through the Peterson Wildlife Refuge with paved pathways. The elevated boardwalk section is the largest pedestrian/bicycle bridge in the state.

The trail was dedicated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony as the "Jack A. Markell Trail," in honor of the former First State's Governor, who spearheaded the dramatic expansion of bicycle and pedestrian trails and pathways throughout Delaware during his two terms in office.

"Today's groundbreaking on the final phase of this trail that connects the beautiful Wilmington Riverfront to Historic Old New Castle is a part of a national trail that reaches across more than 3,000 miles of our country," **said U.S. Senator Tom Carper**. "Governor Markell's hard work and dedication to creating a more walkable, bikeable Delaware can be seen in the great trails we have that span our state from Wilmington to

the Bayshore. It's a lasting legacy that will be enjoyed for generations to come."

"I am proud to have had a small part in establishing this track, when I served as New Castle County Executive, and I am equally pleased this trail will be named for Governor Markell, recognizing his championing of accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians, and his vision for connecting all of Delaware through trails and greenways," **said U.S. Senator Chris Coons.**

"This exciting project further connects the communities of Wilmington and New Castle," **said Governor John Carney.** "It provides more opportunities for walkers and cyclists to enjoy a beautiful part of our state. It gives those living near the trail another option for their morning commute. And, it finalizes a critical link that incorporates Delaware into a vast network of trails in our region and along the East Coast. None of this would have been possible without the vision and leadership of Governor Markell and his Trails and Pathways Initiative. Naming this trail in his honor is a fitting recognition of his efforts to promote healthier living, increase tourism, and bring together towns and communities in our state. I'm looking forward to its opening, and I know the Governor will be one of the first ones out here to ride it."

"I'm thrilled that we're opening this trail, which establishes a critical new link within our state's trail network and the East Coast greenway," **said former Governor Jack Markell.** "Dozens of miles of new trails and pathways have been constructed to more fully integrate our hundreds of miles of existing routes into a world-class regional trail network. Doing so strengthens the quality of life of people in our state, while helping attract more people to live and work here."

"Governor Markell has done more to advance the idea of a walkable, bikeable Delaware than any other elected official, and that's not hyperbole, that's simply a fact," **said House**

Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst, an avid cyclist who has biked with the Governor on several occasions. “During his time in office, Governor Markell has proposed, fought for, and helped secure tens of millions of dollars in funding for Delaware to invest in cycling and pedestrian trails up and down the state. As a result of many of these improvements, we’ve seen Delaware’s ranking by the League of American Bicyclists climb from 31st in 2008, to 18th in 2011, all the way up to 3rd last year. Thanks to Governor Markell, Delawareans and visitors to our state have an unprecedented opportunity to see our state as never before.”

“Thanks to Governor Markell, this trail – and many others already completed under his visionary First State Trails and Pathways Initiative – will continue to link people with opportunities for health, education, recreation and employment for decades to come,” **said Secretary of Transportation Jennifer Cohan.**

“It is appropriate that we name our newest trail in Delaware after Governor Jack Markell,” **said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin.** “We continue to realize his vision to build a world-class trail network across the state that enhances recreational options for residents and visitors, provides alternative transportation routes, and benefits the environment. We are connecting more residents and visitors to the outdoors, and it is a wonderful legacy for our current and future generations.”

The \$22.5 million project was completed by JJID Inc. of Bear.

For further information visit www.delDOT.gov, or contact DelDOT Community Relations at 1-800-652-5600 or 302-760-2080, or contact DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902.