

AARP: Rochester bike trail kiosk proposal wins Small Dollar, Big Impact grant

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 7, 2020

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ROCHESTER, WISCONSIN – A proposal to install a trailhead kiosk for the Seven Waters Bike Trail has been selected to receive one of AARP Wisconsin's

"Small Dollar, Big Impact" grants. These grants are being awarded monthly in 2020 to projects in communities across Wisconsin that are designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age.

The Village of Rochester Park Committee applied for the \$1,000 grant to kick off its goal to implement a community signage project which both identifies and encourages the use of over 1,500 acres of park and recreational sites scattered throughout the community which provide numerous recreational opportunities to its visitors and residents.

"The committee has identified way-finding signs as the most prominent way to increase awareness of these opportunities by pointing the way to our parks, trails, and other natural resource areas," said Betty Novy, administrator-treasurer for the Village of Rochester.

The park committee will use the grant to purchase and install a trailhead kiosk for the Seven Waters Bike Trail near a parking and rest area in Case Eagle Park. The kiosk will be used to post a map of the bike trail with a mileage log showing distances between key destinations and features; to post information on other nearby outdoor recreational opportunities; and to post information on community events.

The kiosk will kick-start the way-finding sign project which serves the committee's even greater goal of encouraging people to get outdoors and get moving, Novy said.

"The Village of Rochester Parks Committee is very excited about being chosen to receive the Small Dollar, Big Impact grant," Novy said. "The committee hopes the kiosk will further its goal to increase public awareness of all the opportunities the village has for people to get out, be active, and share the community's love of its many natural resources. Thank you AARP!"

Novy said the park committee believes many people see the trail intersection points throughout the village, but are hesitant to start down the trail. Signage will inform them where trails go, what distances are in play, where opportunities exist for sightseeing, and where rest areas are available.

This will allow people to plan reasonable destinations and turn around points for their excursions, she said. "The kiosk will be prominently positioned adjacent to restrooms and youth baseball fields that get many visitors during the summer season and has the potential to reach many people who might not realize the full potential of the trail."

The kiosk will encourage people to make use of Rochester's publicly-owned natural resource areas and inform them of their ability to utilize the bike trail as alternate transportation in the area. It will also encourage people to seek out, stop, and enjoy natural resource areas in the area. These features include a pedestrian bridge placed over a scenic bend in the Fox River; hardwood and pine forests; bird watching; wildlife sightings; and many other natural wonders.

AARP Wisconsin's "Small Dollar, Big Impact" grants are being awarded once a month from June through November. Judges selected this project after receiving dozens of proposals. All projects must be completed within 60 days from winner announcement.

The Rochester project fits perfectly with the spirit and intent of our grant program, said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. "Our goal is to support communities as they make positive changes that inspire long-term progress on livable issues. This project hits that nail right on the head."

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities,” said Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin.

“There are so many great ideas and proposals for making life better in communities across Wisconsin. We know how impactful \$1,000 can be. This is our way of extending some seed money to get these projects off the ground.”

The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. Other organizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A full listing of requirements, expectations, deadlines, as well as a link to apply for the next round of grants can be found at www.aarp.org/wi