
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MCT celebrates Opening of New MCT Yellowhammer Connector Trail with Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony this Morning

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, October 29, 2024 – With Autumn leaves falling and sun peeking through the foliage, Madison County Transit (MCT) held a ribbon cutting this morning and officially opened the MCT Yellowhammer Connector, the newest addition to the 138-mile MCT Trails system. The new trail extends from the MCT Goshen Trail, just south of New Poag Road in Edwardsville to the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) campus. This morning’s event was attended by MCT Board members, SIUE Chancellor Dr. James T. Minor, Illinois State Rep. Katie Stuart, Illinois State Rep. Amy Elik, Illinois State Senator Erica Conway Harriss, neighbors, contractors, IDOT officials, Agency for Community Transit (ACT) staff, and community members.

The 2,400-foot-long, 10-foot-wide asphalt trail is constructed on the northeastern edge of the SIUE campus and extends through MCT-owned property north of Edwardsville’s Lincoln Knolls Subdivision. Linking SIUE’s Delyte Morris Trail to the MCT Goshen Trail, this connector creates new opportunities for students, faculty, staff and visitors to access the SIUE campus directly on bicycle or foot.

The \$2.95 million MCT Yellowhammer Connector project was funded entirely by a State of Illinois Re-Build Illinois Grant. The funds covered the cost of land acquisition, design engineering, and trail construction. The project includes a 200-foot-long “bowstring truss” concrete-deck bridge spanning the Delaplain Branch creek valley. Designed by Oates Associates and constructed by Keller Construction Co., the trail not only expands and enhances the MCT Trails, a picturesque, tree-lined valley was created east of the SIUE campus.

“Without the Re-Build Illinois Grant from the State of Illinois, MCT would not have been able to build the Yellowhammer Connector, so I want to thank our delegation in the General Assembly as well as Gov. Pritzker for these funds,” said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. “And without SIUE’s partnership, this trail project simply wouldn’t have happened. SIUE supported this project from the beginning - granting easements, providing space for a construction staging area, and even donating nearly five acres of land to MCT.”

The MCT Yellowhammer Connector takes its name from the historic “Yellowhammer” streetcar line, which operated electric passenger rail service from Edwardsville to Mitchell from 1905 to 1932. Portions of the new connector trail (and the SIUE Delyte Morris Trail) are constructed on the historic rail line. When the bright yellow train cars sped across the rail joints a loud hammering sound was produced, and locals observed a similarity to the percussive beat of a Yellowhammer woodpecker – and the name stuck.

For more details on the MCT Yellowhammer Connector and the MCT Trails system, please visit mcttrails.org.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Muni. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary door to door service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 138 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region’s FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.

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