

Keeping Up with Kerrville

News and Views from the City of Kerrville

By Mark McDaniel

CELEBRATING THE RIVER

At 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 28, 2012, the City of Kerrville broke ground on the first phase of an ambitious new project – the construction of a River Trail along the cypress-shaded banks of the Guadalupe River. Fulfilling the visionary ideas of forward-thinking city leaders like Malcolm Matthews, Todd Parton, David Wampler and Larry Howard, the first segment of that trail opened just eight months later, extending from the Riverside Nature Center at 150 Francisco Lemos Street through Tranquility Island to the west end of Louise Hays Park. The 10-foot-wide, half-mile long concrete trail, paid for entirely by Economic Improvement Corporation funds, ushered in a new era in Kerrville that offered easy hike-and-bike access to the river and its surrounding beauty.

As impressive as that first stretch of trail was, it's hard now to imagine that the River Trail was ever that small. In the eight years since the ribbon cutting on the trail's initial phase in December 2012, Kerrville has added approximately 5-1/2 more miles of trail access. Citizens and visitors alike can now enjoy a leisurely walk or ride from Kerrville Schreiner Park on the southeast end of town to just past the Dietert Center, where the trail currently ends with a stunning shallow-water view of the Guadalupe's limestone riverbed. In between are a myriad of attractions, from informative, educational signs and numerous shade structures and resting benches to a dog park and the interactive fountain plaza, playgrounds and Centennial stage at Louise Hays Park.

This week, Kerrville celebrated the most recent addition in the River Trail's short history, opening a new segment of trail that runs from G Street to Schreiner University. The significance of



this latest expansion is twofold: it adds another spur for public use, and it provides Schreiner University students and surrounding neighborhood residents with direct trail access – a stated goal in the Kerrville 2050 plan.

In addition, Schreiner University has partnered with the city to further enhance the River Trail project for community enjoyment. Exciting improvements being completed on Schreiner's campus that complement the trail include a new perimeter campus trail with public access that connects to the River Trail, new public restrooms, a "Trailhead Beer Garden" facility that will serve as a new establishment for food, drinks and entertainment, and improvements to the public disc golf course on campus.

As stated earlier, Kerrville's ever-expanding River Trail represents the best in creative civic cooperation. Plans to build a multi-purpose public use river trail along the Guadalupe River first began in the 1970s, and in 2002 voters approved \$500,000 in bond funds to complete master planning and initiate the first phase of the River Trail project. Master planning for the River Trail's full length (Kerrville-Schreiner Park to Spur 98 Bridge) was completed in 2009.

For centuries, the Guadalupe River has provided life-sustaining and therapeutic support to Hill Country inhabitants, and today the River Trail offers an outstanding opportunity for area citizens and visitors alike to celebrate the river and enjoy its endless charms.