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For Immediate Release

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Village of Wheeling to Dedicate Phyllis Harmon Path

Wheeling, Illinois – On Friday, October 11, the Village of Wheeling will dedicate a newly-constructed path along Dundee Road between the Des Plaines River and the overpass of the Tri-State Tollway.

The path addresses a critical gap in the area's pedestrian network: a three-quarter-mile section of Dundee Road that pedestrians could only traverse along a well-worn six-inch-wide dirt path. Cyclists passing through this stretch had to choose between riding in the mud and braving the 50-mile-per-hour traffic on the road.

The new path is being named in honor of Phyllis Harmon, a nationally-prominent bicyclist and former Wheeling resident credited with helping to renew the status of cycling as a sport, a social activity, and a practical means of transportation.

The completion of the Phyllis Harmon Path closes the only remaining gap in a 12.5-mile pedestrian thoroughfare that runs along the south side of Dundee Road from Illinois Route 53 in Arlington Heights to Green Bay Road in Glencoe. Dundee Road is now the only street south of Half Day Road that permits a direct and uninterrupted pedestrian crossing of the full Des Plaines River area, which includes Milwaukee Avenue / River Road, the river itself, adjacent Forest Preserve lands, and the tollway.

The Phyllis Harmon Path also helps realize Dundee Road's long-recognized potential as a critical east-west corridor that will allow pedestrians and bicyclists throughout northwest Chicagoland greatly improved access to regional amenities such as the Skokie Lagoons, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and the Green Bay Trail.

Notably, the path also provides a connection to the 53-mile Des Plaines River Trail, which runs from North Avenue in River Grove to the Wisconsin border, and is popularly used for hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and other recreational activities.

The Phyllis Harmon Path is one of the few entry points to the Des Plaines River Trail that can be accessed by bicycle, and is the southern entry point to the longest stretch of the trail with no difficult street crossings (32 miles). The path will soon connect to a new pedestrian crossing

signal at Portwine Road that will extend the segment of trail without a difficult street crossing an additional four miles south to Milwaukee Avenue.

Engineering and construction costs for the path are approximately \$600,000, substantially below the initial estimate of \$1.26 million. Eighty percent of project expenses were federally funded through an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant awarded in October of 2010 and administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The length of the path totals 1.16 miles: 4,550 feet on the south side of Dundee Road, as well as 1,550 feet on the north side, extending from the Potawatomi Woods access road to Portwine Road. Project construction began in late July of 2013, and completion is anticipated by the end of September.

“This is a terrific example of the Village using a creative approach to identify and solve a problem,” Wheeling Village President Dean Argiris said. “It’s a little stretch of pavement built at a small expense, and it’s going to make a real difference in the quality of people’s lives. Beyond the recreational benefit, this path will provide a lot of people on both sides of the river with another practical transportation option. And that benefits everybody who commutes along Dundee, whether on foot, on a bike, or in a car.”

The path will be dedicated in honor of Phyllis Harmon in observance her many distinguished contributions to the sport and pastime of cycling. Harmon has been widely credited with reestablishing the League of American Wheelmen (now the League of American Bicyclists) in the years following World War II. Through her advisory role with the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (now the Active Transportation Alliance) and her service on the Illinois Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee, she has helped to reshape transportation policy and transform streetscapes throughout Illinois.

In recognition of her efforts Ms. Harmon has received the Paul Dudley White Award from the American Heart Association, and has been inducted into both the Chicagoland Bicycling Federation Hall of Fame and the United States Bicycling Hall of Fame.

Although currently living in Florida, where she still bicycles regularly at the age of 96, Ms. Harmon is a native Chicagoan and a longtime resident of Northern Illinois who moved to Wheeling in 1969. In 1970 Ms. Harmon founded the Wheeling Wheelmen cycling club, which remains active as a social, recreational, and advocacy organization.

“Phyllis Harmon has spent a lifetime making connections and removing barriers to promote the health and civic engagement of people here in Wheeling and throughout the country,” Argiris said. “It’s the Village’s privilege to name this path in her honor as a fitting commemoration of her achievements.”

The Village has scheduled a dedication ceremony for 10:30 a.m. on Friday, October 11, to be held at the Potawatomi Woods picnic shelter just north of Dundee Road and east of Milwaukee Avenue. Ms. Harmon will be in attendance.

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