

## News Release: AuTrain Township Heritage Trailhead Development Breaks Ground



The Au Train Heritage Trailhead Development recently broke ground and will include a universal accessible kayak launch and fishing pier, railroad depot pavilion, log cabin interpretive center, picnic tables, restrooms, and trail head for multi-uses such as biking, snowmobiling and ATV use. The intention of the project is to enhance tourism, promote the natural resources, provide a trail head for recreation, promote physical activities and stimulate economic development in the area. This site will also be incorporating the history of the area in the interpretive center and the relationship of natural resources in the development of AuTrain Township. Au Train Township is the recipient of the Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant for 2012. The grant was written by the Alger Country Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of Au Train Township, and the general contracting was awarded to Cross General Contracting of Munising, who incorporated Alger County and Au Train Township subcontractors for the project.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$333,700 with the DNR Trust Fund grant covering \$246,700. The remainder 26% match was commitment by Au Train Township. Currently other grant funding and fundraising efforts are being conducted by the Alger Co. Chamber who is assisting in reducing the costs of the township. So far, additional funding has come from organizations such as UPPCO, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the Alger Regional Community Foundation.

This project will not only enhance the usage and utilization of an area abundant with natural resources, but it will provide the needed economic boost to the area in which it will be developed. There are several small businesses in this area that will benefit such as lodging, retail stores, eateries, other tourism and outdoor commerce. This area has historically been a tourism, resort, fishing, hunting, canoe/ kayaking, hunting, swimming, biking, ATV, snowmobile, and walking area, though there has never been a focal point for many of these activities. It will assist in making this a convenient, attractive, and enjoyable location for outdoor recreation. Kathy Reynolds, the Executive Director of the Alger Co. Chamber of Commerce stated, "The Au Train project is a wonderful addition to an already beautiful and popular area. This site will provide opportunities for not only residents of the area, but also visitors. By incorporating universal access in various forms, this opens up opportunities not found in other areas for those wanting to enjoy some of the area's natural resources". Mary Rogers, Au Train Township Clerk added "that the residents of Au Train Township and the surrounding communities will benefit from such a state-of-the-art facility right outside their back doors. The Au Train Township Board is committed to this project, as it fits right in with their Recreation and Master Plans for the community." Jerry Doucette, Chair of the Alger County Commission commented, "From a County aspect, the DNR Trust Fund Grants that aid these projects such as the Anna River Fishing Pier & Kayak Launch, the Au Train Township Heritage Trailhead, Munising Tourist Park, and the Munising Bay Mountain Bike Trailhead are a blessing to our citizens and a real boost for our tourism and economy. The County is looking forward to continued relationships with the DNR, Federal Park Service, and the Federal Forest Service."