



CITY OF ANNISTON, ALABAMA

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CHIEF LADIGA TRAIL GROUNDBREAKING: APRIL 12, 2024

ANNISTON, AL -- The City of Anniston warmly extends an invitation for you to join us in making history on **Friday, April 12, 2024, at 5:00 PM CT**, as we commemorate the **groundbreaking ceremony for the Chief Ladiga Trail Extension** at Michael Tucker Park, situated at 6514 Weaver Road in Anniston, Alabama.

Anniston’s trail extension will stretch an additional 6.5 miles, bringing the Chief Ladiga Trail’s total length to approximately 39.5 miles. The Chief Ladiga will then seamlessly connect Anniston’s Multimodal Amtrak Station to the state of Georgia’s Silver Comet Trail, forming the longest paved pedestrian pathway in the United States by becoming an expansive 105+/- mile paved trail. This visionary initiative opens up exciting prospects for trail bike enthusiasts and commuters, providing seamless access to convenient train services.

At this time, city leadership would like the public to know that **access to the trail will be restricted until the project is completed**. It is estimated that the trail extension will take 14 months to complete, with a projected completion date in Summer 2025. Periodic construction updates will be provided to the public as the project progresses.

About the Project:

The Chief Ladiga Trail stands as Alabama’s inaugural extended rails-to-trails endeavor, interlinking the cities of Anniston, Weaver, Jacksonville, and Piedmont as it traverses Calhoun and Cleburne Counties. Offering a safe, motor-free avenue for travel, exercise, and leisure amidst the great outdoors, this trail showcases a scenic journey through streams, wetlands, forests, and mountains, catering to families and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Research from Jacksonville State University’s Center for Economic Development and Business Research anticipates that the trail's construction will stimulate an economic output of \$11.9 million. Upon completion, the center estimates an annual economic impact exceeding \$1.3 million, based on the trail's substantial visitation rate of over 34,000 visitors in 2023.

History of the Chief Ladiga Trail:

The Ladiga Trail came into being in 1990 with the approval of a grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The trail is named after a Creek Indian leader who signed the Cusseta Treaty in 1832. In 1994, additional grants to the cities of Jacksonville and Piedmont, and the Cleburne County Commission, continued the project. In 1997, Jacksonville and Anniston were awarded National Recreational Trails Fund (NRTF) grants to build their connecting trailways. In 1998, the City of Weaver built their 2.5-mile section of the trail through grant funding as well.

A decade later, in 2008, the Chief Ladiga Trail and the Silver Comet Trail were connected, with a new gateway marking the connecting point at the Alabama-Georgia state line. In 2022 Anniston purchased the final 1.4 miles needed from Norfolk Southern Railway for the trail’s final extension. On February 20, 2024, the Anniston City Council awarded the construction bid for the Chief Ladiga Trail to B&B Developers in the amount of \$7,267,263.39.

