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For Immediate Release

### **Oak Leaf Trail Extension Bike-Chain-Cutting Ceremony Celebrates Milwaukee Lakefront to Ozaukee Interurban Trail Connection**

Milwaukee, WI (Nov. 11, 2015) – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele and Parks Director John Dargle, Jr. will celebrate the completion of a 6.6-mile extension of the Oak Leaf Trail from the Milwaukee Lakefront to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail in a bike-chain-cutting ceremony Monday, Nov. 16 at 4 p.m., on the Oak Leaf Trail at 4927 N. Lydell Ave, just north of Hampton Avenue.

The uninterrupted route, more than 10 years in the making, provides connectivity between Milwaukee County’s paved, multi-use Oak Leaf Trail, municipal trails in the Village of Brown Deer and City of Glendale, and the Hank Aaron State Trail.

Key to the project’s success was the recent acquisition of a 3.1-mile segment of unused railway corridor and its conversion into non-motorized, multiple-use trail, as part of the Oak Leaf Trail System. In December 2008, the Union Pacific Railroad began formal proceedings to abandon the corridor, and in 2010, the Parks Department secured a federal transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program grant to acquire the segment. A second federal transportation grant, for development of a bikeway within the corridor, was also awarded in 2010. Additional support for the acquisition and development of the trail was provided through two Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program grants in 2013 and 2014. Transfer of ownership was completed in June 2015.

Bridges along the corridor were instrumental in providing unimpeded access over I-43, Port Washington Road, Silver Spring Drive, the Milwaukee River Parkway, and the Milwaukee River.

The trail’s four phases of development began in 2006.

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In Phase 1, Milwaukee County partnered with the Village of Brown Deer to take advantage of the Brown Deer Trail's connection to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail. In this phase, the County connected the Brown Deer Trail at Brown Deer Road to the Oak Leaf Trail at the northeast corner of Brown Deer Park near Bradley Road within a WE Energies utility corridor. In addition, an extension of the Oak Leaf Trail between Kohl Park and the Village of Brown Deer Trail was completed.

In Phase 2, access to the Oak Leaf Trail was achieved through an off-road connection within the utility corridor between Mill Road and Sydney Place. This phase was constructed by the City of Glendale.

In Phase 3, also within the utility corridor, a connection was made between Mill and Bradley roads.

Phase 4 of the project was the completion of the 3.1-mile segment, mentioned earlier, that connects the East Side Bike Trail at Estabrook Park to the Oak Leaf Trail at Mill Road near Sydney Place, in the City of Glendale.

The completed project is expected to benefit the community by providing not only trail-related recreational opportunities but also an alternative commuting route. Connectivity between trail systems will expand opportunities for bicycling, running, walking, roller-skating, and skate-boarding. Ramps on both sides of the Milwaukee River will improve access to support shore fishing and canoe and kayak launching and landing. Alternative commuting routes to employment (industrial and commercial), educational, and residential centers are also possible with the interconnectivity of these trails.

Positive impacts on tourism are also expected due to accessibility of attractions such as the City of Mequon Nature Preserve, other popular destinations in Ozaukee County, Milwaukee's downtown area, the Lake Michigan lakefront, the Milwaukee Art Museum, Summerfest grounds, Miller Park, and State Fair Park.

In 2015, a Milwaukee County Trails Map and Park Guide was developed. The maps are available through the Park People of Milwaukee County at <http://parkpeoplemke.org/Trails%20Map>.

For more information on Milwaukee County Parks Trails, visit <http://county.milwaukee.gov/Trails8084.htm>.

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