

# State Park planning begins for Rock Island Trail; officials happy with local development interest

**BY ROXIE MURPHY**  
**REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER**  
rmurphy@wardpub.com

Local and state officials from Owensville, Bland, Belle, Rosebud and Gerald were invited to a Jan. 20 Rock Island Trail assessment meeting to visit with Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and State Parks personnel about resources and future partnerships.

Missouri State Parks Director David Kelly began the meeting that took place at Owensville City Hall with 35 people in attendance.

"We are pretty excited about getting



PHOTOS BY DAVE MARNER





**PHOTOS BY DAVE MARNER**

**MISSOURI STATE** Parks staff including Melonie Smith on Thursday presented overviews of the planning process for developing a trail during a community needs assessment meeting held at Owensville City Hall. Also fielding questions from community leaders during the informational session were (from left) Mike Sutherland, deputy director for DNR, Dru Buntin, DNR director, and David Kelly, director of State Parks. An open house with informational displays presented by state agencies including DNR and State Parks (below) drew 83 visitors to the Owensville branch of Scenic Regional Library's meeting room earlier in the evening.



**BY ROXIE MURPHY**  
**REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER**  
rmurphy@wardpub.com

Local and state officials from Owensville, Bland, Belle, Rosebud and Gerald were invited to a Jan. 20 Rock Island Trail assessment meeting to visit with Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and State Parks personnel about resources and future partnerships.

Missouri State Parks Director David Kelly began the meeting that took place at Owensville City Hall with 35 people in attendance.

"We are pretty excited about getting with you all and learning from you all if there are partnerships we can do," Kelly said during his introduction. "A little bit about what we've been doing. We have three public meetings. The first was in Eldon and the next one is (Jan. 25). We are doing a planning process between now and the end of June and our goals are to meet with every community like we are doing here tonight."

The assessment meeting took place after 83 people stopped in at the Owensville Scenic Regional Library to visit with DNR and State Parks officials about the Rock Island Trail.

Kelly credited State Rep. Bruce Sassmann, R-Bland, for suggesting the assessment meeting be held after a public informational meeting at Scenic Regional Library in Owensville.

"We are learning things every time we go, and we are adding things to the list," Kelly said. "We are focusing on Owensville and Belle is here and we have a packet for you and want to meet with you in your community if you have things that you want to talk about over the same stuff we are doing here."

Kelly gave the history of the Katy Trail that was accepted into the State Parks system in 1990.

See **Trail assessment** page 8

*No further reference to SRL.*