



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ARKANSAS RIVER TRAIL TASK FORCE ADVANCES SAFETY PROCEDURES** *Emergency medallions to improve emergency responder dispatch*

**LITTLE ROCK, ARK.** – September 3, 2014 – The Arkansas River Trail Task Force is pleased to announce the addition of trail signage that improves efficiency for emergency responders dispatched to the trail. Emergency medallions are in the process of being placed at trailhead access points and along the main trail every two-tenths of a mile. Trail users will soon be able to relay information from the nearest emergency medallion to plainly communicate an exact location to 911 operators.

Emergency medallions can be identified by “911 Emergency Location” and either “Arkansas River Trail” or the name of the trail printed on the disc. Within the center of the medallion is a set of initials and numbers. For emergencies on the Arkansas River Trail, the public is asked to dial 911 and communicate the set of initials and numbers. Coded to latitude and longitude coordinates, this crucial piece of information will determine how emergency responders enter the location.

“While we want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable experience visiting our wonderful Arkansas River Trail System, accidents and medical emergencies will happen and our emergency responders take their responsibility for you very seriously. You can help them help you if you take note of the medallions as you make your way along the trails,” advised Jon Swanson, Executive Director of Metropolitan Emergency Medical Services (MEMS).

Emergency medallions were made possible by the cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock, Pulaski County, and Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Over 100 medallions will be installed along the Arkansas River Trail loop in Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pulaski County. Other trails are expected to participate in the emergency medallion program in the future. This is a continued effort to enhance the Arkansas River Trail System. In 2013 a grant from the National Park Service for the Challenge Cost Share Program that supports collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership projects funded the Arkansas River Trail way-finding signs that were installed. The grant is being administered through Metroplan.

The Arkansas River Trail System began as a 14-mile loop between Little Rock and North Little Rock, transecting and connecting the riverfront parks of both cities. It has become the catalyst for the development of bicycling, walking, and running trails in the entire metropolitan area, traveling west on both sides of the Arkansas River to Pinnacle Mountain State Park over the Two Rivers Park Bridge. Led by the Arkansas River Trail Task Force and coordinated by Metroplan, a June 1, 2012 “Memorandum of Understanding” established the Arkansas River Trail System to be extended 88 miles across multiple cities and counties. The signatories to that MOU are the cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle, Mayflower, Conway and Bigelow, Pulaski County, Faulkner County, the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The signatories to the MOU own different segments of the Arkansas River Trail and work together through the Arkansas River Trail Task Force to operate and promote the trail system.

Metroplan is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the four-county region of Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline counties. It is a voluntary association of local governments that has operated since 1955.

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