

Whitewater Canal Trail opens for fun

By John Estridge
Editor

Mick Wilz was standing on historical ground and told the large crowd gathered in front of them, this was a historical day.

The founding father behind the Whitewater Canal Trail, Wilz talked to the crowd before the ribbon was cut on the Yellow Bank Trailhead to the Whitewater Canal Trail. It is the first section of the trail to be opened to the public. Some day, organizers hope the trail stretches from Metamora to Brookville along the Whitewater Canal.

"Today starts a new chapter in history," Wilz said.

Standing with Wilz was Thad Ariens. Ariens' parents gave the land to the organizers of the Whitewater Canal Association back in the 1940s. This section of land has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1967.

According to Wilz, this is a community, a neighborhood project.

Neighbors have built a stone wall, allowed parking on their property and have offered to mow grass, Wilz said.

Thousands of volunteer hours have gone into the project. Thirty to 40 truckloads of trash were removed from the one-mile section, which was opened Saturday.

Visteon was essential in funding the project.



John Estridge photo

The ribbon was cut at noon Saturday, April 30 on the Yellow Bank Trail Head section of the Whitewater Canal Trail. This is the first section to open to the public. It is planned to some day run between Metamora and Brookville along the Whitewater Canal. From left: Thad Ariens, holding his daughter, Terese Ariens, Terry Duffy, Steve Morris, Department of Natural Resources; Larry Hinkle, Visteon; and Gary Rieveschl.

"Visteon's goals are to produce products and produce products that make money." Larry Hinkle, a Visteon representative, said.

However, Visteon wants to give back to the communities in which their employees reside and make

those communities better for the children and the environment.

Steve Morris with the Department of Natural Resources said the state agency is glad to be a partner with the local group.

This section of land is owned by

the state and leased to the Whitewater Canal Trail Association, Wilz said.

Also unveiled Saturday was a kiosk funded by the Franklin County Convention, Recreation and Tourism Board.

New section of trail opens for fun