



DAN ONORATO  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



## COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

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### **Onorato, Surma Celebrate Major Milestone for Great Allegheny Passage**

*U. S. Steel transfers Riverton Railroad Bridge to Allegheny County; Onorato thanks Rendell, DiBerardinis and Colcom Foundation for funding to convert bridge to trail use*

**McKEESPORT, Pa.** — Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato and United States Steel Corporation Chairman & Chief Executive Officer John Surma today celebrated a major milestone in the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage, part of the 335-mile biking and hiking trail stretching from Point State Park in Downtown Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C. Mr. Surma presented the County Executive with a ceremonial deed, formally transferring ownership of the Riverton Railroad Bridge from U. S. Steel to Allegheny County. The 1200-foot span will carry the Great Allegheny Passage across the Monongahela River between McKeesport and Duquesne.

“I want to thank U. S. Steel and John Surma for providing another vital piece in the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage,” said Onorato. “John Surma and I agreed to co-chair the effort to close the final gaps in the Great Allegheny Passage because we know this trail will link communities and further improve the economy and quality of life in Southwestern Pennsylvania. With this generous gift from U. S. Steel, as well as the support of Governor Ed Rendell and Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis, we are closer than ever to our goal of completing the Great Allegheny Passage.”

U. S. Steel has been an important supporter of the Passage’s completion. In 2007, U. S. Steel removed a former coke-oven gas pipeline in West Mifflin and Duquesne and transferred the 1.9 miles of property to the Regional Trail Corporation.

“Once complete, the Great Allegheny Passage will open a new door to visitors from around the world to experience all our region has to offer,” said Surma. “I have been proud to work with Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato on this initiative, and all of us at U. S. Steel are pleased to transfer a second piece of historically significant property to support it. While the transfer of this span bridges another gap in the Great Allegheny Passage, as well as the Monongahela River, we still have some work to do, and we, too, are optimistic that we will soon reach our goal.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) provided \$1 million from Growing Greener II, a voter-approved \$625-million bond issue, for conversion of the bridge to pedestrian and bike usage.

“The Great Allegheny Passage is among the most spectacular of the many thousands of miles of trails we are fortunate to have in Pennsylvania,” said DiBerardinis. “Trails provide such important connections between communities, people and the outdoors, and natural resources and quality of life. That’s why DCNR is pleased to be able to provide a \$1-million grant for the Riverton Bridge to complete an important piece of the final nine miles of the trail connector.”

The Colcom Foundation also provided \$1 million for the bridge conversion project. Tim Inglis, president of the foundation, recently completed a bike ride from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., with friends and understands first-hand the tourism and economic development opportunities that the trail creates.

“On the ride, we were amazed to meet travelers from locations across the country, as well as around the corner,” said Inglis. “The communities we visited are poised to effectively confront tomorrow’s challenges by offering efficient and healthy alternatives to auto dependency. Colcom Foundation is privileged to be associated with many generous businesses, donors and trail groups to complete another section of the Great Allegheny Passage.”

American Bridge is currently rehabilitating the bridge for use as a pedestrian and bike passage, which is expected to be completed by Oct. 4, the day the PNC Legacy Relay will reach Allegheny County. The 335-mile relay will include 18 teams of six cyclists carrying a proclamation from the United States Congress in Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh via the C&O Canal Towpath and the Great Allegheny Passage in just 24 hours.

Snaveley Forest Products and the Trex Company donated the bridge decking materials, which are made of recycled plastic. The approach ramp to the Riverton Bridge on the McKeesport side of the river is being constructed by the Trumbull Corporation. The new asphalt trail on the McKeesport side was constructed by Lindy Paving and funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Allegheny Regional Asset District.

“This trail is successful because of our many partners during the 30 years it’s taken us,” said Allegheny Trail Alliance President Linda McKenna Boxx. “Local officials, like McKeesport

Mayor James Brewster, see the value and excitement that this trail is bringing into their towns. Our volunteers in the trail groups, our local, state and federal agencies providing all types of assistance, and our contractors, who have given us a superior product, all are working for the same thing: a world-class trail that will be a source of pride and economic opportunity to the people in the region.”

Today, all but a half-mile section of the trail is in the process of being completed.

Completion of the Great Allegheny Passage is one of the signature projects of Pittsburgh 250, a celebration of the naming of our region by General John Forbes and Colonel George Washington in 1758.

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*Additional information about the Great Allegheny Passage is available at [www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org).*

*For information on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Pittsburgh region, including a listing of events and community celebrations, visit [www.imaginepittsburgh.com](http://www.imaginepittsburgh.com).*