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## **Deltona now officially a Florida 'Trail Town'**

By Katie Kustura

With trails for hiking, biking and enjoying the outdoors throughout the sprawling residential city, Deltona has been named one of Florida's official Trail Towns.

Deltona is the first city in Volusia County to earn the designation from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails.

"The idea is to have connection to what the city has to offer, just like you would in a car," said Donald Morgan, a regional coordinator with the Greenways and Trails office.

Volusia County's largest city is a hub for some of the region's multi-use, non-motorized trails, including the St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop and the state's Coast-to-Coast Trail, Morgan said.

There's also the Spring-to-Spring Trail that, when finished, will run from Gemini Springs Park in DeBary to DeLeon Springs State Park with trail heads at multiple locations including Green Springs Park in Enterprise. Additionally, there's the East Central Regional Rail Trail, of which there are more segments in the works, that starts at Green Springs and runs to State Road 415 in Osteen.

The Florida Trail Town Program started a year ago with Dunedin, located on the Gulf Coast in Pinellas County, being named the first Trail Town.

Other Trail Towns include: Titusville, Malabar, Vilano Beach, Clermont, Palatka, Inverness and Everglades City.

For Jerry Mayes, the city's economic development director, the designation is a major step toward continued development of low-impact ecotourism.

"As far as Central Florida goes, Enterprise was the first ecotourism destination and we're right there with it," Mayes said.

The city is working on linking its parks by trails and turning the old Deltona Community Center, 980 Lakeshore Drive, into a lodge and bringing a bicycle shop into another building on the property.

Morgan said those plans and the preservation of the Enterprise, the former county seat, are part of what impressed him about the area, and other officials agree.

"[The lodge] could really be a huge part of the puzzle," Georgia Turner, executive director of the West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority, said.

Former Volusia County council member Pat Northey, affectionately known locally as the “Trails Queen,” said low-impact development with a focus on the environment is just what the area needs. She also said the trails probably wouldn’t have developed to the level they’re at without help from the state.

“Their support for the program has been unparalleled,” Northey said.