

# Making Connections

Central Iowa boasts 670 miles of bike trails traversing 10 counties. The problem is that where one trail ends, another doesn't automatically begin. Sometimes the barrier is physical. Sometimes it's cultural.

The new High Trestle Trail between Ankeny and Woodward connects five towns in four counties, but it is remarkable for the even larger connections it makes, both real and symbolic.

Half a mile long and 13 stories high, the High Trestle Trail bridge spans a major physical barrier, the Des Moines River, offering breathtaking views of the river valley. The trail also connects two 100-mile loops, the East Loop (including the Heart of Iowa Trail) and the West Loop (including the Raccoon River Trail).

A Grand Celebration planned to mark the trail opening on April 30 also addresses the cultural barriers, according to Lisa Hein of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. "There can be a disconnect between trail users and town people. We want to get trail users into the towns and town people onto the trail," she says. "Communities learn that trails bring a whole new group of visitors to the area who can appreciate and support the towns if they get off the trail and into town to explore." — *C.B.*

Slater, Madrid, and Woodward are planning events for the Grand Celebration. Visit [a2wtrail.org](http://a2wtrail.org) or [inhf.org](http://inhf.org) (click on *High Trestle Trail*).

COURTESY JESSICA RILLING

