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ANNISTON AWARDED \$597,520 GRANT FOR MICHAEL TUCKER PARK TRAILHEAD

ANNISTON, AL -- The City of Anniston is proud to announce a significant achievement in its ongoing mission to establish our community as a premier ecotourism destination in the Southern United States. **Governor Kay Ivey has awarded the City of Anniston a Federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Grant for Fiscal Year 2024, totaling \$597,520.00.** This grant is dedicated to vital enhancements at the Michael Tucker Park Trailhead, facilitating a seamless experience for both visitors and trail enthusiasts while establishing a pivotal connection to Anniston's forthcoming Chief Ladiga Trail.

The Chief Ladiga Trail, poised to become the longest paved pedestrian path in the United States upon completion, will seamlessly link the Georgia Silver Comet Trail to Anniston's multimodal station. This visionary project opens up exciting opportunities for trail bike riders and travelers to access convenient train services. The grant awarded by Governor Ivey marks a momentous leap forward in fulfilling Anniston's commitment to ecotourism and bolstering connectivity with neighboring communities and counties.

Toby Bennington, City of Anniston Planning & Economic Development Director, underscores the importance of this grant, stating, *"In conjunction with the completion of the Chief Ladiga Trail, Mike Tucker Park serves as the city's northern gateway, connecting us with our partner communities and counties. The provision of a safe, efficient parking and gathering area for park and trail users enhances the overall recreational experience."*

The City of Anniston eagerly anticipates making significant strides towards the completion of the Chief Ladiga Trail. This achievement will firmly establish Anniston as a premier ecotourism destination in the South, drawing outdoor enthusiasts from both near and far.

About Michael Tucker Park:

Anniston's Michael Tucker Park currently serves as the southern terminus of the Chief Ladiga Trail. The park was named in memory Dr. Michael Tucker, a noted Anniston physician and long-time bicycle enthusiast. Nestled within a pecan grove, the park currently offers trail parking, a gazebo, a drinking fountain, a 16-site primitive campground, and restroom facilities. To learn more, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/3xzcta8b>.

About The Chief Ladiga Trail:

The Chief Ladiga Trail is Alabama's first extended rails to trails project. It extends over 33 miles and connects the cities of Anniston, Weaver, Jacksonville, and Piedmont, as it travels through Calhoun and Cleburne Counties. The trail provides a safe, non-motorized way to travel, exercise, and relax while enjoying the outdoors. Streams, wetlands, forest, farmlands, and mountains can be seen along this family oriented pathway.

