

# Traveling by trail

Grand Valley part of trend that promotes biking, walking



Mark Bowman of Emmaus, Pa., leads Nick Shaffer of Phoenixville, Pa., down the Kid's Meal Trail on Thursday as the pair and fellow rider Topher Valenti of Valley Forge, Pa., head for the more difficult Curt's Lane Trail that winds up to the rim in the Three Sisters trail system. The three men traveled from Pennsylvania to the Grand Valley to ride the area's renowned mountain bike trails.

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## *QUICKREAD*

### IF YOU GO

The second Walking and Biking Summit is from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. today at Two Rivers Convention Center. The event is \$15 for the general public and \$10 for students with a valid ID. Find the full agenda at [HealthyMesaCounty.org](http://HealthyMesaCounty.org).

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[By Amy Hamilton](#)

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You know you want to do it — walk, bike, ride the bus, even skateboard more.

We all hear that getting around, aside from driving in our personal cars, can be physically and emotionally healthier for ourselves and the environment.

So why not just do it?

If you need another reason or want a glimpse of the future of the Grand Valley's travel options, plan to attend today's second-annual Walking and Biking Summit.

The all-day event at Two Rivers Convention Center hosts an impressive lineup of forums, segments for discussion and speakers, including keynote speaker Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker.

Attendees can expect to leave with a virtual toolkit of ideas about the economic and health benefits of walking and biking, and how to make the community a friendlier place to meet those goals, event organizer Elizabeth Collins said.

Collins said it appears the Grand Valley is aligning with a national trend of folks using their vehicles less and seeking more options to get around. Their reasons for more frequently abandoning their personal cars can be linked to finances or concern for the environment.

Increasingly, people are realizing that getting there really is half the adventure, she said.

"It's about the enjoyment of travel, and making that a really quality experience," Collins said.

Creating an environment with multiple ways to travel that is geared toward promoting healthy lifestyle choices can be an economic driver, she said. That's also one of several topics for discussion today.

Dave Grossman, executive director of the Grand Valley Trails Alliance, said he is pleased with the momentum of trail building and alternative transportation options that are emerging in the Grand Valley.

In the past few years he's noted more people are commuting by bicycle to work and more people are accepting and using the Grand Valley's multiple networks of trails on public lands.

A case for the growing popularity of biking may be that Grand Junction's annual bike to work events started out celebrating the event for one day. It now includes a bike to work effort for the entire month of June.

"I think we've got all these pieces coming together in a great way," Grossman said.

There's also encouraging news about connecting the Grand Valley's towns and cities, he said.

He signaled to Fruita's push to build a bike path to the Kokopelli trail head.

That connector means folks can travel from Palisade all the way west across the valley, mostly on the Colorado Riverfront Trail.

Mesa County is working on providing a bike lane and separated walking path on 38 Road to navigate a hilly segment on the popular Fruit and Wine Byway. And, more long-range plans are underway to connect the Spanish Trail, near Whitewater, to downtown Grand Junction, along the Gunnison River.

The addition of the Three Sisters segment at the Lunch Loops off Monument Road is further reason visitors are seeking out the Grand Valley as a place to come play and live, Grossman said.

"I think trails are definitely part of our past, and part of our future and success here in the Grand Valley," he said.