



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Two-Wheel Adventures Offer Amazing Views, Challenging Terrain**

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.—Whether you are looking for rugged mountain biking trails or you would like a place where you can explore area attractions on bicycle, Johnson City offers the best of both worlds. Johnson City has designated bike routes that run throughout the town, and it has been selected by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Community. Additionally, numerous mountain trails are located nearby for those who want an off-road adventure.

“Biking has grown in popularity, both as a sport and for those who want to use it as a form of transportation. Our system of bike paths throughout our community allow bikers and first-time visitors to experience the natural wildlife while taking an athletic adventure through the terrain,” said Brenda Whitson, executive director of the Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Johnson City began incorporating bike paths into the city in the early 1990s when the State of Franklin Bikeway construction began. In 1994, the Bikeway and Greenway Committee, composed of bicyclists, professional planners and community members, developed a plan for the future of bikeways and greenways in the city, which is still continuing to improve and progress today.

The Johnson City Bicycle Loop is 14 miles of multi-use paths, bike lanes and bike routes throughout the city, including the State of Franklin multi-use trail, a 3.3-mile trail, and the middle anchor of the Med-Tech Corridor, Buffalo Street and Watauga Avenue. Bikers throughout the city can take advantage of the bike racks at select locations, with future plans for additional racks. Johnson City also has future plans to incorporate additional bike routes in high profile locations, including East Tennessee State University, Veterans Administration Hospital, Johnson City Medical Center and downtown Johnson City, as well as other residential and business developments.

“Future plans include the conversion of Tweetsie Railway, the old railroad bed connecting Johnson City to Elizabethton, into a ten mile bike path, creating alternate transportation routes and recreational outlets, as well as preserving the historical Tweetsie Railway site,” said Whitson. “Additional plans also include the construction of Buffalo Trace Greenway, connecting Tipton-Haynes Historic Site to Buffalo Mountain Park and Cherokee National Forest, a bike connection to the town of Jonesborough and sites along the scenic paths of Boone and Watauga Lakes.”

For bikers who want to venture out of the city, two of the best options close to Johnson City include the Virginia Creeper and Buffalo Mountain Trails.

### **The Virginia Creeper Trail**

Nestled in the Southwest Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains in the small town of Damascus, VA, only minutes away from Johnson City, The Virginia Creeper Trail is one of the nation’s most historical biking trails. With a rich, regional history and beauty, this fascinating trail began as a Native American footpath, and was used by early pioneers, including the explorer Daniel Boone. The slow and tedious process of building the railway began in the late 1800s, and ultimately became the main transportation for the coal and iron market. In 1977, a flood damaged most of the track, and was left unprepared. That same year the removal of the track began, which left the recreational park that exists today.

The retired railway has since been converted into 34 miles of biking trails. The well-groomed surface and gentle grade formulates a perfect trail for cyclist of all abilities.

“The Virginia Creeper Trail, a cinder and crushed gravel trail, travels through some of the most rugged and beautiful scenery in the Eastern United States. Many believe it to be one of the most picturesque rail-trails in the country,” said Whitson.

Located on the east end of the Virginia Creeper Trail, the employees of the Creeper Trail Depot will give bikers advice about the most distinctive trails, bike rentals and food shops along the Virginia Creeper Trail. The Creeper Trail Café, ten miles down the start of the trail, provides hikers and bikers with a variety of food options.

Open seven days a week, the family-owned, Virginia Creeper Bike Shop, provides the unique option of a shuttle service and bicycle rentals for the trail. The indoor repair shop and factory trained technicians are available for needed repairs, as well as offering an extended line of products, from biking apparel and accessories to various toys. The shuttle service allows bikers to reserve energy for the bike ride, while also providing an expert’s opinion about the many trails.

“With the historical trails mixed with the convenience of bike stores and food shops, the Virginia Creeper Trail has become the destination of thousands of mountain bikers and road bikers searching for a great outdoor adventure,” said Whitson.

### **Buffalo Mountain**

Located just 12 miles south of Johnson City, Buffalo Mountain has more than 15 miles of hiking and biking trails.

Bikers wanting to test aerobic fitness and technical riding skills can challenge themselves on the 6.8-mile Buffalo Mountain loop. The trail begins with a quick descent down a paved road, Day Creek, and is followed by a two-mile climb through grassy terrain to the top of Buffalo Mountain. Winding along Buffalo Ridge, bikers will enjoy scenic views of Cherokee and Panicle Mountains. As the trail descends down the mountain, it merges with an all terrain path, Blue Trail, full of rocky and technical terrain.

“For bikers wanting to experience a tranquil bike ride, there are parks with paved paths to help you enjoy the beauty of Buffalo Mountain,” said Whitson.

Located at the bottom of Buffalo Mountain, Willow Springs Park is a 36-acre site offering stunning views of the mountain, and has more than a mile of paved trails, playground equipment and a picnic area.

The Buffalo Mountain Park contains 723-acres of spectacular scenic overlooks that give visitors an opportunity to experience some great hiking, biking, and bird watching, as well as providing the opportunity to study wildflower, tree and animal habitats. The park also contains a picnic area where visitors can relax and enjoy the views from 8 a.m. until sunset.

Johnson City is located in Northeast Tennessee and is the fourth largest metropolitan city in the state. Set in a region known as America's First Frontier, Johnson City is “Where the Pioneer Spirit Began”—a historically significant and culturally rich community surrounded by an abundance of unspoiled natural beauty. Johnson City has a history, which dates back more than 200 years, and its culture embraces individual creativity and encourages innovation through expression. The area is world-renowned for its modern and traditional Appalachian and bluegrass music, art and cuisine, and outdoor recreation for the whole family throughout all four seasons.

For more information on Johnson City, please visit [www.visitjohnsoncitytn.com](http://www.visitjohnsoncitytn.com) or call (423) 461-8000 or (800) 852-3392.

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