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Volunteers help clean up new hiking, biking trail

By **JIM DINO**

jimdino@standardspeaker.com

Volunteers from a local industry Friday helped spruce up the new Rails-To-Trails hiking and biking trail around Hazleton.

Employees of General Mills' Pillsbury plant in Humboldt Industrial Park spent part of their Friday planting grass and flowers.

Steve Thiery, the plant's maintenance manager, and Sean Anderson, the plant manager, led a work party of volunteers to the trail Friday.

Thiery said the plant wanted to get involved with the trail's development.

"General Mills has a program in which each plant seeks an environmental project every year," Thiery explained. "About 20 people from the plant planted wild-flowers and warm-season grass and raked and leveled the trail. We created some

scenic vistas. The plantings will also stop erosion."

Bob Skulsky, executive director of the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership, a committee of which is developing the trail, said the employees will be back to do more work and other volunteers will also help set up picnic tables and benches along the trail, which begins on East Broad Street, near the intersection with the Arthur Gardner Parkway (Heights Beltway).

"The General Mills people provided T-shirts for the volunteers, and hosted a lunch," Skulsky said.

On April 22, more volunteers from VITAL House will also help ready the trail for

its opening May 15.

The following day, April 23, is the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup, formerly known as "Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Day," a day in which volunteers from the community clean roadsides of debris.

Volunteers will also take to the trail April 23 to clean it up for the official opening of the 4-mile first leg of the trail, which will run to the Ashmore section of Hazle Town-

ship near the former Beryllium plant.

The trail will eventually run to the Lehigh River at Rockport near the Lehigh Gorge State Park – a total of 16 miles.