

# African American Heritage Trail

Ribbon cutting officially opens South Route.

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A crowd of more than a hundred gathered in Founders Park Feb. 10 to celebrate the official ribbon cutting for the South Route of the city's African American Heritage Trail along the Potomac River waterfront.

"These historic interpretive signs connect to our nation's history and are a part of the story we have to tell," said Mayor Justin Wilson. "We are not only telling the stories of those titans of African American Alexandria history but we are telling the stories of the ordinary Alexandrians who did incredible things to help change our city and

**"This is another thoughtful way to engage everyone who comes to Alexandria."**

— U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-8)

change our country. We are telling the stories of the folks who were part of the fishing industry, part of the war effort at the Torpedo Factory, part of building ships at Lort Lumley. These are the folks whose stories we tell in these signs."

Years of research by city historians and members of the African American Heritage Trail committee went into developing the 2.3-mile trail that includes 30 stops and 11 interpretive signs.

"The footprints of this trail were here before us and will be here long after we are gone," said committee member McArthur Myers. "What is important is that now the story is here and people can see the story. If you know Alexandria history, you know America's history – from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War until now. There are many stories here. Sometimes we have to look back to go forward."

Following the ribbon cutting in Founders Park, a second ribbon cutting was held in Waterfront



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Mayor Justin Wilson, center, flanked by U.S. Rep. Don Beyer and civic leader McArthur Myers, celebrates following the ribbon cutting to open the African American Heritage Trail South Route Feb. 10 at Waterfront Park.



Civic leader McArthur Myers, center, waves after participating in the ribbon cutting for the African American Heritage Trail South Route Feb. 10 at Waterfront Park.



Retired City Manager Mark Jinks, left, at the ribbon cutting for the African American Heritage Trail South Route Feb. 10 at Founders Park.



**Congressman Don Beyer (D-8) speaks at the official opening of the African American Heritage Trail South Route Feb. 10 at Founders Park.**



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Park. The new South Trail Route is the second in a series of trails covering the waterfront.

“We have a huge story to tell here in Alexandria,” said Congressman and Alexandria resident Don Beyer (D-8). “This is where the slave markets were. This was the destination of the contrabands early in the Civil

War. While as a community we’ve done things pretty well, we’re not at the end of overcoming the original sin of the American democracy. This is another thoughtful way to engage everyone who comes to Alexandria.”

Information and maps on both the North and South routes can be found at [www.alexandriava.gov/historic-sites/african-american-heritage-trails](http://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-sites/african-american-heritage-trails)



**Audrey Davis, director of the Alexandria Black History Museum, makes remarks at the ribbon cutting for the African American Heritage Trail South Route Feb. 10 at Waterfront Park.**



**Attendees gather at the unveiling of the South Route of the African American Heritage Trail Feb. 10 at Waterfront Park.**