

Riverfront trail, road opened Saturday

► About 50 people attended the ceremonial ribbon-cutting ceremony Saturday.

By Jane Lightbourn
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With the snip of the scissors, the new Lock and Dam Road and the future Koch Riverfront Nature Preserve were opened to the public Saturday.

About 50 city officials, Koch Petroleum officials and other interested people attended the short ceremony, most of it held under a large tent because of the rain.

The ceremony marked the culmination of 18 months of design and construction work in the first phase of the Mississippi riverfront project. This phase includes the reconstruction of the road, a trail connection to the lock and dam, decorative fencing and additional trees.

"This is a beautiful park," said Jim Mahoney, vice president of Koch Petroleum. "We are seeing changes which are phenomenal. There are wonderful outdoor opportunities here."

The union at Koch Petroleum donated four park benches for the area. Jim Grotjohn, vice president of the union at Koch, spoke on behalf of the employees.

"Most members live in the community," Grotjohn said. "This is a great place to enjoy the outdoors."

City Council member Paul Hicks was master of ceremonies. He said the riverfront project is "one of the successes the city has had in the past 12 years."

"I had a feeling we'd be cutting the ribbon in the rain," Mayor Mike Werner said. "We started this project in the rain and snow, and so it does seem appropriate."

Werner said the ceremony was like a groundbreaking to the second phase of the project, which will include the construction of an inter-



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Ready to use the new road and trail connection are, kneeling, City Council member Ed Riveness; standing, left to right, Jim Mahoney of Koch Petroleum, City Council member Danna Elling Schultz, Mayor Mike Werner, City Council member Lynn Moratzka, City Council member Paul Hicks and Jim Grotjohn.

pretive center.

"This project actually started in the 1970s when a group of Hastings residents got together to save Lake

Rebecca," Werner said. "We need to preserve this area. We can look at this as the gateway to all future successes."