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For more information, contact:

Bonnie Combs, Director of Marketing

bcombs@blackstoneheritagecorridor.org

508-234-4242

Blackstone Heritage Corridor Appoints Anya Wilczynski as Executive Director

WHITINSVILLE, Mass. (July 15, 2025) – The [Blackstone Heritage Corridor](https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org) is pleased to announce the appointment of Anya Wilczynski as executive director.

Wilczynski is an experienced and innovative nonprofit professional who previously served as director of operations at Essex National Heritage Area in northeastern Massachusetts and most recently had been Blackstone Heritage Corridor's director of volunteers and community engagement, as well as interim executive director. She earned a bachelor's degree in design studies and historic preservation from the Boston Architectural College. She also holds a certificate in nonprofit management and leadership from the Institute for Nonprofit Practice.

Blackstone Heritage Corridor is a private nonprofit that manages the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, recognized by Congress in 1986 for its national importance. Stretching across 25 cities and towns from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI, the area is known as the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. It features a rich mix of historic sites, natural landscapes, and recreational opportunities. The Corridor's mission is to preserve, promote, and celebrate these resources through volunteer programs, community events, and more.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are thrilled to welcome Anya as the next executive director," Dennis Rice, board chair, said. "Blackstone Heritage Corridor will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of our designation next year. We are excited to be entering our fifth decade with an enthusiastic and innovative leader aboard."

"I have a deep appreciation for the many attributes and historical assets that the Blackstone Valley has to offer," Wilczynski said. "This is a special place, home to many inspirational stewards and valuable historic and natural resources. I am honored to step into this role and feel invigorated to work with community partners to promote the legacy of this region."

Among other duties Wilczynski will spearhead Blackstone Heritage Corridor's *Legacy Campaign: Reimagining our Future*. This is the organization's first fundraising effort since becoming a nonprofit. Federal financial support had significantly decreased over the years and



becoming a nonprofit in 2014 has allowed the organization to fundraise directly within the cities and towns that the organization serves.

“Regardless of what is happening at the federal level, we remain committed to our mission,” Wilczynski said. “Blackstone Heritage Corridor will continue its work in the Blackstone River Valley.”

“Anya brings a strong understanding of nonprofit sustainability, management, and community-based fundraising,” Rice said. “Her experience building donor relationships, securing grants, and running impactful campaigns like the Legacy Campaign will help our organization grow.”

Thanks to the generosity of individuals, businesses, and foundations, the Legacy Campaign is nearly halfway towards a \$1.3 million goal. This funding supports efforts to update historic site signage, champion completion of the Worcester-to-Providence bikeway, grow volunteer and community programs, and sustain the organization for the future. Learn more or contribute at www.BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.

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