

VISTAS



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

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WISHING YOU SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAY TRAVELS!

— From all of us at America's Byways® Resource Center!

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BYWAYS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS: Partnering for Success

By Matt Chase, Executive Director, National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)

The National Scenic Byways Program encourages local groups to establish effective partnerships among a variety of organizations, businesses and local governments. In many places across the nation, byway organizations are working with their regional development organizations (RDOs) with great success, maximizing economic benefits to communities located along the byway and enhancing the experiences of byway travelers.

RDOs make up a national network of over 500 multi-jurisdictional planning and development organizations that provide administrative, professional and technical assistance to counties, cities and towns. Across the country, these entities are known by several different names, including councils of government, area development districts, economic development districts, planning and development districts, regional planning commissions and regional councils.

No matter what they are called locally, RDOs share certain characteristics, such as experience working with strategic planning for locally identified needs and helping local communities to pool resources and achieve economies of scale. They are skilled at facilitating regional dialogue, leveraging project funding and providing technical assistance to local governments and other groups.

Many are involved with community and economic development, business-

development finance, environmental stewardship, transportation and land-use planning, all of which may be of interest to byway stakeholders seeking to improve local conditions and preserve scenic and cultural resources. Depending on local priorities, RDOs may also work with local communities, governments and businesses on a variety of other areas, including aging services, emergency preparedness and response, housing and workforce development.

These organizations have the ability to gauge the needs and resources of

planning new activities along already-designated routes as well as strategic planning for regions that submit applications to create new byways. Integrating byway plans into regional economic development strategies can make the best use of local resources invested in economic growth.

On the national level, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and the NADO Research Foundation provide advocacy, education, networking and research for regional development organizations primarily



many counties, cities, towns and rural areas through which a byway passes. With their regional lens, RDOs can help communities identify natural, cultural and historical assets to market to the region's travelers. They can also assist with preserving these resources for future generations of local residents and byway explorers.

Partnering with RDOs can provide byway organizations with useful resources, whether that region is

serving small metropolitan and rural regions. The association is an advocate for Federal programs and policies that promote regional strategies and solutions for addressing local community and economic development needs.

The NADO Research Foundation, NADO's 501(c)(3) affiliate, identifies and promotes best practices, analyzes the impact of Federal policies and programs on regional development

Join The Virtual Town Hall



Michelle Johnson,
Director,
America's Byways®
Resource Center

As I write this, I am in the midst of my favorite time of year. Cooler days, vibrant colors and the cracklin' of leaves underfoot. Oh, yeah, and all those vote-for-me signs along streets and intersections. Political signs are cropping up as plentiful and colorful as the autumn foliage.

The lawn signs, TV ads and meet-the-candidate events are all-American telltales of the autumn season. And, what is more American than a good, old-fashioned town hall meeting? Whether it's a gathering of neighbors, small groups of concerned citizens or entire communities, these events are usually well worth your time to participate in or watch on TV. Listening to the public's concerns, hearing reactions to ideas or platforms and just catching the general buzz of the meeting can be very enlightening and might help you form opinions and make decisions.

As a faithful *Vistas* reader, you are probably aware of SAFETEA-LU and its expiration date of 2009. Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation are organizing a national committee made up of transportation officials, leaders and member of Congress to study transportation funding and future legislation. This national committee starts making recommendations in 2007 regarding issues related to reauthorization. Now is the perfect time for the byway community to gather, share and develop a unified voice. With byways stretched across the nation, how is that possible?

Our national partners, under the leadership of Derrick Crandall of the American Recreation Coalition, have joined forces to ensure that scenic byways are a part of the national transportation discussion. They have several ideas and projects in the works. Called Byways 2021, this effort is really your opportunity to discuss critical issues, develop recommendations for continued support and funding of the National Scenic Byways Program and articulate a combined vision for the future. These partners are organizing meetings and events to highlight scenic byways among national organizations, agencies and Congress.

I know the question on the tip of your tongue is: How can I get involved or make a contribution?

The answer is high-tech, rooted in American participatory politics, and



surprisingly easy! The national partners started a "blog" at www.byways2021.org. For those of you who just Web surf and don't dive into the Internet world (like me), a blog is a "conversation" on a website that participants can watch quietly or join actively. On a regular basis, the national partners will post a blog from a national leader, a byway leader or some equally exciting individual. The concept is a lot like a town hall meeting with a panel of local leaders who facilitate a conversation with the intent of listening to the residents (but now you don't have to leave the comfort of your office or home).

The second part of the answer involves a national symposium. This national meeting will be part of the National Scenic Byways Conference in Baltimore this coming spring. While the blog is a great way to communicate and share, the byway

community needs a time to gather face-to-face to review

ideas and develop one voice in supporting the future of the National Scenic Byways Program. Look for more information on the national symposium in the conference materials arriving next month. And make plans early to attend what will turn out to be the best National Scenic Byways Conference yet!

Interested? You should be! This is a great way to share your ideas, listen to your fellow byway community residents and make a meaningful contribution. We want to hear you! Check out Derrick Crandall's article on page 3 for more information and then surf on over to www.byways2021.org for an old-fashioned town hall meeting with a high-tech twist. I'll be looking for you! ★



Brian Pakenham lives near one of Maryland's beautiful state byways.

Welcome, Brian Pakenham

Brian Pakenham joins the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Natural and Human Environment (HEPN-50) National Scenic Byways Program. Previously, Brian worked in the FHWA budget office where he was responsible for Federal-Aid Highway Program apportionments. He is familiar with all Financial Management Information System (FMIS) pre-published reports as well as ad-hoc reports and is available to assist you in any way possible. In addition, Brian has a great working relationship with FMIS staff to further develop and enhance our goals. Brian is responsible for managing, maintaining and monitoring data and financial records for National Scenic Byways Program grants and FHWA byways-related contracts.

Before working as a consultant to FHWA, Brian was a Financial Planning Specialist with Merrill Lynch of Englewood, Colorado, and a Financial Data Specialist with Financial Times Energy of Boulder, Colorado. He holds a BS - Finance from Northern Illinois University. Brian is a native of Illinois and lives in New Market, Maryland, just off Maryland's Historic National Road. He's also near the State byway that starts at the junction of Routes 75 and 144 and winds through historic New Market, the antiques capital of Maryland.



CAPITAL CORNER

By Derrick Crandall, President, American Recreation Coalition (ARC)



Byways 2021 Is Up and Running!



where thoughtful byway leaders are sharing ideas about future options and priorities. If you haven't visited the blog and voted on some of these ideas, please consider yourself personally invited to do so! Go to www.byways2021.org and see what you have been missing. Then return every two weeks as we post new essays.

The "byways birthday party" will be held a week before the actual anniversary on December 11 in Washington, D.C., just a few steps from the White House. Thanks to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the celebrations will begin at the Stephen Decatur House on Jackson Place. Then we'll be transported through the help of the National Tour Association to a Capitol Hill session where the national champions of byways in the Congress and at DOT will be recognized. Byways have enjoyed bipartisan, enthusiastic support from five Secretaries of Transportation, including two Secretaries that also aided byways while serving as the Federal Highway Administrator. Congress is likely to be in

session, and we are counting on participation from such early and enduring champions as Representatives Jim Oberstar and Tom Petri and Senator Jay Rockefeller.

Our celebration of accomplishments and assessment of opportunities will continue this May via the Byways 2021 Symposium to be held in conjunction with the National Scenic Byways Conference in Baltimore. On May 22, we'll hear a great deal about the positive difference byways have made across the nation, and also about how to sustain the byway progress. The heart of the symposium will be a high-tech live connection between the National Scenic Byways Conference in Baltimore and a gathering of key leaders in Washington, D.C. We'll share ideas and information. In addition, we hope to have the first officially proclaimed National Byways Day to celebrate!

There are opportunities—and a need—for all byways supporters to join the Byways 2021 effort. When these opportunities knock, please answer! ★

The fifteenth anniversary of the creation of the National Scenic Byways Program is fast approaching on December 18, 2006. Much is underway to tally the

accomplishments so far and to look ahead to 2021 when the America's Byways® effort will mark its 30th anniversary.

By now, hundreds of people have visited the Byways 2021 blog

Welcome, Jessica Dungan

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Scenic Byways Program is pleased to announce that Jessica Dungan has joined the team as the Byways Web Specialist. A Nashville native, Jessica has aided in the development, design, marketing and management of websites for companies such as Warner Bros. Records, Scripps Networks and Jewelry Television.

As Byways Web Specialist at FHWA, Jessica will be responsible for technical oversight of www.byways.org and www.bywaysonline.org, and will provide technical support and assistance to States on grants, nominations and other areas.

Jessica may be reached via e-mail at Jessica.Dungan@dot.gov or by phone at (202) 366-1929.



Jessica Dungan is pictured at Multnomah Falls in Oregon.

What Does Your Byway Group Want To Know?

America's Byways® Resource Center To Launch New Multifaceted Byway Training Program



Chel Ethun,
Training Manager

In May 2007, America's Byways® Resource Center will launch a completely new training and education platform for the byways community in conjunction with the 2007 National Scenic Byways Conference in Baltimore.

What is this new concept from the Resource Center? More topics, more resources and more ways to access information to help your byway organization. The new program takes into account the various topics byway groups encounter while managing their byway and it offers a full array of learning materials, Web links, contacts, publications, Web-based workshops, video conferences, classroom-style workshops, labs and a database of byway projects from which to choose.

Imagine that your byway is planning to build a new visitor center. You need help. With the new training and education program, you can still ask your byways specialist for help, and you'll be able to search for current articles and research papers about visitor centers. You can access online planning tools. We will identify existing courses that address topics associated with building visitor centers, such as those put on by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and offer slots for byway organization members like you. We may even invite experts to do an online Web-cast about visitor centers that you and your byway group can tune into.

Designing this new programming is a monumental and all-encompassing task. We are busy at the Resource Center assessing our current inventory of materials as well as reaching out to leading experts and institutions in areas such as interpretation, accessibility, recreation and the like.

To truly build a program that will benefit byways, we will need input and insight from the byway community. In late fall and early winter, the Resource Center will engage in a needs assessment to determine the types of topics, desires and obstacles byway organizations face when trying to gain more skills to do their work. A series of focus groups will be conducted by the Community Growth Institute in November and December. That information will be used to help us create the best package to fit byway needs.

In the next few issues of *Vistas*, look for updates on the program, our findings and insights into the realm of possibilities we can use to pass on more resources to the byway community. We are always interested in your input! To offer ideas or suggestions, please contact Chel Ethun, Training Manager, at 218-625-3303 or cethun@byways.org.



Dennis Adams is shown with his favorite carpentry tool.

Welcome, Dennis Adams

America's Byways® Resource Center is excited to announce that Dennis Adams, formerly of the National Scenic Byways Program staff at FHWA, has accepted a byways specialist position at the Resource Center. Dennis calls himself an "old highway guy," having worked for the Minnesota Department of Transportation for 31 years. He practiced transportation landscape architecture for most of those years, designing and constructing rest areas, participating in road design teams and providing specialized services to the agency. He helped develop and coordinate Minnesota's scenic byways program.

As a byways specialist, Dennis looks forward to working with the southeast States and nationally designated Byways, participating in Resource Center projects and initiatives, and sharing information and experience with his colleagues and fellow byway enthusiasts.

Dennis and his wife travel one of several America's Byways routes to get to their summer house above the Mississippi River in southwestern Wisconsin. He travels byways at every possible opportunity.



The Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission in Central Minnesota provides staffing support for the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway. The Byway organization has a technical agreement with this RDC to provide financial management services, staff support and special planning services for Byway efforts and projects. For more information, please contact: Dawn E. Hegland at 320-289-1981 or dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org.

organizations and local communities, and examines the latest trends in the field of regional community and economic development. Through conferences, training workshops, reports and electronic

publications, NADO and the Research Foundation share information about innovative strategies and provide peer learning opportunities for RDOs.

One of NADO and the Research Foundation's most recent initiatives is RPO America (Rural Planning Organizations of America), a program launched in June 2006 to serve as the national professional association for rural transportation planning professionals, practitioners and other interested stakeholders. Rural planning organizations (RPOs) provide a forum for local input on transportation issues impacting non-metropolitan communities with a population below 50,000. RPOs serve as a link between State transportation agencies, local elected officials and citizens to ensure their involvement in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

RPOs are often managed and coordinated by regional development organizations (RDOs). Similar to RDOs, RPOs have various responsibilities according to local needs and contracts with state agencies. Their activities may include identifying regional needs for building or maintaining infrastructure and facilities, transportation planning, collecting traffic data, mapping local features or coordinating public transit for rural areas. With their close

relationship to regional development organizations, RPOs can also help to coordinate transportation investments with economic development strategies.

As the national association for rural transportation, RPO America provides information, education, peer networking and research services for transportation stakeholders. America's Byways® Resource Center, regional development organizations and state departments of transportation are among the groups involved with NADO and RPO America.

RPO America serves as the national clearinghouse and forum for exchange of information on transportation issues affecting rural regions. It also benefits communities by creating opportunities for transportation practitioners to engage in peer learning, including national and regional conferences, scan tours, reports and online communications.

For more information on regional approaches to economic development and transportation in rural and small metropolitan areas, visit www.nado.org and www.ruraltransportation.org. ★

Kentucky's "Company's Coming" Initiative

During September of 2000, Congressman Hal Rogers formed a partnership with Kentucky's Secretary of Tourism. Together they unveiled the "Company's Coming" tourism development initiative for southern and eastern Kentucky. This initiative is much more than just another plan. Congressman Rogers is calling it "our blueprint for success."

Company's Coming outlined distinct programs that were designed to lead the tourism industry of southern and eastern Kentucky to a brighter future. The programs will utilize tourism promotion and development as the catalyst to bolster local economies. One of the main programs outlined in the plan is the Scenic Byway Program. TOUR Southern and Eastern Kentucky (TOUR SEKY) is charged with implementing and overseeing the byway program and projects.

TOUR SEKY provides technical assistance and coordination of regional project development efforts and facility improvements through tourism promotional development groups called byway teams. These teams consist of representatives from 29 byway counties, cities, tourism organizations, historical societies and local businesses.

TOUR SEKY hosts monthly byway team meetings throughout the three National Scenic Byway routes to keep volunteers informed on funding available for county projects, workshops offered and daily activities along the byways.



For more information, please contact:
Jeffrey W. Crowe

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Take a Road Trip!

Discover Maryland's Byways at the 2007 National Scenic Byways Conference

MAY 20-23, 2007

explore!

2007 NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS CONFERENCE



Diners enjoy crabs on the deck of one of the waterfront restaurants at Kent Narrows along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway.
© 1998. OAC Dept. of Business & Tourism.

"Drive 10,000 miles across America and you will know more about the country than all the institutes of society and political science put together." – Jean Baudrillard

Come explore Maryland's scenic byways and live the adventure and freedom of the road that is part of the American experience. Share in our culture and heritage and enjoy stories unique to Maryland. While at the 2007 National Scenic Byways conference, you can embark on a journey through a cross-section of American landscape and culture. Extend your stay to ride ribbons of highway that weave our State and nation together, and slow down and see the country!

In the State where down-home charm meets "Charm City," you'll discover mile after friendly mile of Maryland Scenic Byways. Three routes in particular—Historic National Road, Chesapeake Country and Catoclin Mountain—are recognized among the "Best of the Best" in the nation. The Historic National Road is an All-American Road, while the others are National Scenic Byways. Altogether, Maryland boasts 31 scenic byways.

The conference's Applied Learning Workshops will tour sections of these byways, plus several other Maryland favorites: Charles Street, Old Main Streets, Underground Railroad Trail, and the Civil War Battlefields. One of the Applied Learning Workshops will take place on Delaware's Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway. Join us for a road trip. There's so much to see and do, you won't want to miss it!

Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway

If there's one thing for which Maryland is known, it's the Chesapeake Bay and its great seafood. Drive the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway from the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal to the Bay Bridge. Then explore the "Mid" and "Lower Shore" on a trip to Crisfield, skirting the Chesapeake Bay. From there you can cruise to Smith Island to see a fishing village that is frozen in time. It's the perfect way to relax and slow down for awhile. Your trip will take you through farm country graced by handsome manor houses and water views. Explore quaint 18th-century villages and waterfront towns, where watermen actively



The best-known and most magnificent National Road stone bridge in Maryland is the bridge at Little Crossings, called the Casselman River Bridge. Built on a tributary of the Youghiogheny River in 1813, this structure was the longest span of any stone bridge in the nation at the time of its construction.
© 2000. Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects.

work the Bay. Visit national wildlife refuges that are internationally renowned for birding and flat-water kayaking and lose yourself in an amazing sunset. Along the way, don't miss the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Museum, the Chesapeake Exploration Center, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art and the Crisfield Historical Museum provide a peek into the watermen's way of life.

Catoctin Mountain National Scenic Byway

Mountains, matches and moonshine! These were once integral elements in carving out a living in Maryland's Appalachians. Today you can trace old winding roads and mountain paths that lead to sawmills, whiskey stills, the site of tanneries and the nation's first match factory. Explore the natural riches and industrial heritage of the Catoctin Mountain. Discover the mountain people, both free and enslaved, who fed the ravenous Catoctin Iron Furnace with charcoal wrung from the dense woods, while they struggled for

their own survival. See spectacular mountaintop vistas and a cascading waterfall. Visit orchards and drive alongside peaceful Big Hunting Creek in Catoctin Mountain Park, a National Park that was started in 1936 as an experiment to reforest this once depleted marginal land. This trip is like no other in the nation.

The Historic National Road

No other road was more important to our fledgling nation than the National Road—the first Federally funded road in America—and it all began right here in Maryland! The National Road created a gateway to the West for thousands of settlers who followed it from Baltimore through the Appalachians to Vandalia, Illinois in hopes of finding prosperity. In 1806, Congress authorized a road running west from Cumberland, Maryland. This new road inspired Maryland's General Assembly to create a turnpike, called the Baltimore National Pike and run by private interests, to connect Baltimore and Cumberland. The National Road encouraged trade and travel between the Mid-Atlantic and "the Ohio Country." Pike towns

and villages sprung up along the road to service travelers and their vehicles, from buggy and wheel repair shops to modern-day service stations. Come explore a piece of our nation's history. See graceful stone-arched bridges, historic taverns, a vintage country store and pike towns on a true "byway." A map guide and a series of wayside exhibits will be your travel companions. Call 1-877-2MDHNRD for a Historic National Road travel packet.

Charles Street Scenic Byway

Taste and experience Baltimore's authentic cultural flavor. The blend of quirky bohemian neighborhoods, chic restaurants, distinctive shopping districts and stately buildings expresses the fashion and influence of "Charm City." The byway bisects cultural, residential and commercial districts along Baltimore's grandest and best-known route. Travelers are tantalized with an architectural smorgasbord that showcases the work of Ludwig Mies von der Rohe, one of the world's most important "modern" architects, and Richard Upjohn, founder of the American Institute of Architects, among others. Visit the Cathedral

Hill and Mount Vernon historic districts and see 19th-century residential squares and parks, bordered by Greek Revival and Italian Renaissance-style homes. Belvedere Row boasts an entire block of dignified Queen Anne-style row houses and Charles Village features one of the city's first suburban neighborhoods. Along the drive, tour notorious cultural institutions: the Peabody Institute, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore Museum of Art and Johns Hopkins University. This is the place to be!

While in Baltimore for the National Scenic Byways Conference, also explore the Falls Road Byway and the National Historic Seaport Byway. These byways reveal ways to showcase history, culture and scenery along urban routes.

Old Main Streets Scenic Byway

Country life at its best! Antique shops, country inns, and horse farms are common sights along this byway. Peaceful Main Streets were once the hub of activity in the small towns and countryside near Westminster. Today they offer the



Photo Credit: © 2006 Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association

The Baltimore Visitor Center on the Inner Harbor

Baltimore at a Glance

Baltimore is a modern, vibrant city. It's also a collection of unique neighborhoods rich with history and small-town charm. Here's a preview of what you'll experience next May!

Baltimore is renowned for its bustling Inner Harbor and many waterfront attractions, and a great deal more! Baltimore's rich cultural heritage is rooted firmly in its diverse neighborhoods, with a variety of arts, theater, history and culture appealing to a wide range of visitors. Whether you travel by water taxi, bus, car—or even on foot—you'll find Baltimore an easy city to enjoy.

Most travelers begin their journey at the state-of-the-art Baltimore Visitor Center at the Inner Harbor. (For byway leaders interested in visitor centers, this is a must-see!) With the harbor's spectacular waterfront vista as a backdrop, guests can gather information about accommodations, shopping destinations, dining options and myriad cultural and recreational activities. Then it's off to explore all the city has to offer: Family-oriented attractions and sporting events around the Inner Harbor, museums filled with distinguished collections, a wide array of live theatrical performances and numerous sites of historical interest.

Beyond the Inner Harbor, charming neighborhoods beckon, each with its own proud ethnic heritage and culinary traditions. From the cultural mecca of Mt. Vernon to the kitchens of Greektown and Little Italy, and from the cobblestone streets of Fell's Point to the view atop Federal Hill, Baltimore offers many unique and unforgettable experiences.

Start planning your trip to Baltimore now! Baltimore is a busy place in May, so watch for e-mail updates with events and activities scheduled in the city before and after the conference (such as the exciting Preakness Stakes® at Pimlico Race Course on Saturday, May 19!). Come for the National Scenic Byways Conference, but extend your stay to take advantage of all that Baltimore, Maryland's byways and the surrounding area have to offer!

FOR VISITOR INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

- www.byways.org
Byway traveler information
- www.baltimore.org
Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association
- www.washington.org
Washington, D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation
(Washington, D.C. is a 30-minute train ride from Baltimore)

atmosphere of bygone days with an enticing variety of shops and restaurants mixed with small farmhouses and Victorian buildings. Enjoy the Kimmey House, a museum of 19th-century dolls and toys or visit the Union Mills Homestead and Gristmill, a working mill. See the Uniontown Academy, a one-room schoolhouse museum dating from 1851 and cross the Roddy Road Covered Bridge. Be sure to visit the Western Maryland Railroad Museum, a Victorian railway station that details the role of the railway in the life of the region. Come enjoy some wide open spaces.

Civil War Battlefields Scenic Byway

Follow a driving route traced across landscapes that have remained mostly unchanged over the last 140 years. Come face to face with familiar and lesser-known Civil War stories, from John Brown's Raid in 1859 to the first bloodshed of the war during the 1861 riot in Baltimore. Follow in the footsteps of General Robert E. Lee's Confederate army as it entered Maryland in both 1862 and 1863 leading up to the pivotal battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. Visit the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, the crossroads of the Civil War in Maryland. Discover the dramatic story behind the inventive physicians, courageous patients on both sides of the struggle, and the devoted nurses and citizens that unified this war-torn area. The tour visits South Mountain Battlefield in South Mountain State Park, Monocacy National Battlefield, and Antietam National Battlefield.



Underground Railroad Trail Scenic Byway

For years prior to the Civil War and emancipation, a secret network of trails, waterways and sanctuaries aided enslaved people fleeing northward to escape bondage. On this tour, learn more about freedom seekers, agents, conductors and stationmasters on the Underground Railroad—positions that mirrored functions on real railroads. You will also hear tales about slaveholders, slave catchers and civil authorities who tried to keep African Americans enslaved. Feel the excitement, fear, pain and joy of the courageous men, women and children that raced for liberty. Follow in the footsteps of locally born Harriet Tubman, the most famous conductor, on her route to freedom. Visit the approximate birthplace of orator and statesman Frederick Douglass. Along the way, safe houses, home sites, meeting houses and courthouses silently reveal stories of the people whose lives depended upon events that transpired there.

Start your tour early. For a free Maryland Scenic Byways map, call toll-free 1-877-MD-BYWAY (1-877-632-9929). Additional information is online at <http://www.marylandroads.com/> in the Scenic Byways section. ★



Fertile green hills lie below billowy clouds in this view from Chimney Rock at Catoctin Mountain Park. Public domain.

Economic Impact Project Underway

The America's Byways® Resource Center is pleased to announce that a new project is underway to develop a tool for measuring the economic impact of designation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road.

A common hope among the byway community is that joining the collection of America's Byways may lead to increased visitors and visitor spending, resulting in a significant, positive impact on the local and/or regional economy. Byway groups seek an effective, relatively simple and standardized tool for collecting and analyzing data.

We've already learned from several studies at various locations over the years that study results from one geographic or cultural area of the byway community does not directly transfer to other areas. The economic impact measurement tool developed will be available for use by groups that want to collect and analyze data to report on economic impact for their own defined corridor. The results might be applied to activities such as fundraising, building community support, marketing and communicating with public officials. We expect the project's economic impact measurement tool to be developed and tested over the next two years.

The byway community will have major involvement in the tool's development via a steering committee, which will be facilitated by Melinda Huntley of the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail. We'll pay careful attention to this committee's input, and members will serve as communicators between the byway community and the project leader and contract vendor.

A consultant with experience in natural resource-based, rural community and economic development has been selected to develop the measurement tool and make final recommendations

for packaging and distribution. As the project picks up speed, steering committee members will seek information and feedback from the America's Byways community. However, we are not

conducting a survey or a study as part of the project.

The Resource Center encourages you to participate in the process when you are asked. Watch for

updates in Vistas and on www.bywaysonline.org.

If you have general questions about the project, contact Susan Koschak at skoschak@byways.org. ★

Dear Byway Community Member,

Developing an economic impact tool that fits every byway's needs is kind of like what planning meals used to resemble at my house. With two teenage boys—each with vastly different tastes—dinnertime regularly resulted in one son leaving the table hungry because he didn't like what I was serving. Then we discovered Sunday Night Planning Sessions where everyone sits down and states what they want for the week. We discovered a little communication and planning went a long way toward making mealtime a peaceful and pleasant experience.

It would be nearly impossible for all of us byway leaders to gather in a room and agree to meal choices, not to mention to discuss what type of economic impact data we need and how to collect it. So, the America's Byways® Resource Center has given us the opportunity to develop a steering committee, representative of the byway community, to help guide this important project along. Steering committee members were selected based on a number of variables to help us identify the needs of byway leaders with different experiences, geographic origins, backgrounds and budgets. These committee members will soon be reaching out to the byway community to get input at various stages of this project's development.

The committee represents the voice of the byway community. We'll begin by figuring out how we might use the data once it's collected. Then we'll provide input on what type of data is needed most. We'll address methodology, such as what works and what doesn't when it comes to collecting data or conducting surveys. And, we'll keep you posted every step of the way.

I'm excited to be heading up this committee. The Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail was designated during the last round of designations; however, our organization has been in existence since 2002. Prior to launching this organization, I was executive director of the Lake Erie Islands/Ottawa County Visitors Bureau. I'm a true believer in preserving and promoting the unique qualities of our communities, and I'm thrilled to be at the helm of this committee as we work toward the final goal of documenting the value of America's Byways.

To end up with a product that's valid and useable, we'll need your suggestions and ideas. We want to hear from you.

Melinda Huntley

Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail
huntley@coastalohio.com

A Conversation With...

Dean Reeder
National Park Service
Tourism Director



Dean Reeder
National
Park Service
Tourism
Director

1 What is your background and experience?

Most of my experience has been attained as a manager and CEO in the hospitality business, specifically hotels and resorts. I have an MBA with an emphasis on policy and marketing. In 1993 I was appointed to serve as Director of the Utah Travel Council, which was my first introduction to government service and the facilitation of quality of life through economic development.

2 What is the mission of the National Park Service (NPS) as it relates to National Scenic Byways?

The mission of the National Park Service is “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the

enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Scenic byways within National Parks have served the mission by providing access and, in many cases, means for park enjoyment. In addition, many scenic byways contribute to a network of related public lands attractions and gateway communities that share our mission to provide public enjoyment. (See table on page 11.)

3 How does the National Park Service support tourism and America's Byways®?

The NPS supports tourism and America's Byways® best at the park/visitor interface. This is a critical intersection of park managers, interpreters, park partners and our joint customers. That is why our tourism office is focused on the gateway community dynamic.

4 What are some National Park services that the byway community can tap into?

For nearly 100 years, the National Park System, with a huge boost from Congress,

valuable partners and dedicated employees, has gathered a large reservoir of brand capital.

This resource is based on the values of conservation amassed through telling authentic and interesting interpretive stories about people, nature and unique experiences. Some of this capital can be shared. By working with park managers and engaging us in cooperative marketing efforts, the byway community can join in an expansion of communication channels for a collection of stories that help to transform visitors into stakeholders.

As a public entity, the research and data we collect about the changing needs and patterns of leisure travelers is available to add to and compare with similar customer profiles collected by our tourism partners. This year and next, we are conducting one such project, known as the Comprehensive Survey of the American Public. Not only will we expand our knowledge of the park visitor through this effort, we also expect to better understand non-visitors and those leisure time activities they consider to be alternatives to a park experience.

“Help pre-educate the visitor to know what to expect and how to respect.”

5 What suggestions can you share with byway groups about the NPS?

Get to know your park superintendent well. Take a constructive, proactive approach. Identify your common interests, common objectives and common market segment targets. Look for ways to understand, empathize with, and address park challenges. Demonstrate your understanding that if the park resource is impaired, the concept of sustainable tourism becomes moot. Help tell the park stories in ways that complement and echo park interpretation. Help pre-educate the visitor to know what to expect and how to respect.★

America's Byways® And The National Park Service

More than 90 of America's Byways® out of 126 are on or near a National Park Service designation, including National Parks, National Rivers, National Scenic or Historic Trails, National Monuments or Historic Shrines, National Memorials and National Recreation or Heritage Areas.

1. Natchez Trace Parkway & National Scenic Trail (NPS-designated road) - Trail of Tears National Historic Trail – AL
2. Selma to Montgomery March Byway - Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail – AL
3. Alaska Marine Highway - Katmai National Park and Preserve, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Admiralty 1 National Monument, Misty Fjords National Monument – AK
4. Glenn Highway - Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve – AK
5. The Seward Highway - Kenai Fjords National Park, Iditarod National Historic Trail – AK
6. Historic Route 66 – AZ
7. Kaibab-Plateau-North Rim Parkway - Grand Canyon National Park – AZ
8. Great River Road - Arkansas Post National Memorial, Trail of Tears National Historic Trail – AR
9. Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway - Old Spanish National Historic Trail – CA
10. Death Valley Scenic Byway - Death Valley National Park – CA
11. San Luis Obispo North Coast - Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail – CA
12. Tioga Road/Big Oak Flat Road - Yosemite National Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – CA
13. Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway - Lassen Volcanic National Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, California National Historic Trail, Lava Beds National Monument – CA
14. Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway - Colorado National Monument – CO
15. Gold Belt - Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument – CO
16. San Juan Skyway - Mesa Verde National Park, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail – CO
17. Santa Fe Trail - Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, Santa Fe National Historic Trail – CO
18. Top of the Rockies - Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
19. Trail of the Ancients – CO
20. Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road - Rocky Mountain National Park, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail – CO
21. State Route 169 - Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor – CT
22. A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Highway - Castillo De San Marcos National Monument, Fort Matanzas National Monument – FL
23. Indian River Lagoon Scenic Highway - Canaveral National Seashore – FL
24. Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway - Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, Florida National Scenic Trail – FL
25. Northwest Passage Scenic Byway - Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Nez Perce National Historic Park, Nez Perce National Historic Trail – ID
26. Payette River Scenic Byway - Oregon National Historic Trail – ID
27. Great River Road - Trail of Tears National Historic Trail – IL
28. Historic Route 66 – IL
29. Illinois River Road: Route of the Voyageurs – IL
30. Ohio River Scenic Byway - Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial – IN
31. Great River Road - Effigy Mounds National Monument – IA
32. Loess Hills Scenic Byway - Missouri National Recreational River, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, California National Historic Trail – IA
33. Flint Hills Scenic Byway – KS
34. Wilderness Road Heritage Highway - Cumberland Gap National Historic Park – KY
35. Acadia Byway - Acadia National Park – ME
36. Old Canada Scenic Byway - Appalachian National Scenic Trail – ME
37. Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway - Appalachian National Scenic Trail – ME
38. Schoodic Scenic Byway - Acadia National Park – ME
39. Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway – MD
40. Historic National Road - Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine, Hampton National Historic Site, Appalachian National Scenic Trail – MD
41. Copper Country Trail – MI
42. Grand Rounds Scenic Byway - Mississippi National River & Recreation Area – MN
43. Great River Road - Mississippi National River & Recreation Area, North Country National Scenic Trail – MN
44. North Shore Scenic Drive - Grand Portage National Monument – MN
45. Lower Mississippi Great River Road – MS
46. Natchez Trace Parkway & National Scenic Trail (NPS-designated road) - Tupelo National Battlefield – MS
47. Little Dixie Highway of the Great River Road - Trail of Tears National Historic Trail – MO
48. Beartooth Scenic Byway - Yellowstone National Park, Nez Perce National Historic Trail – MT
49. Connecticut River Byway – NH
50. Lake Tahoe Eastshore Drive - California National Scenic Trail, Pony Express National Historic Trail – NV
51. Las Vegas Strip - Old Spanish National Historic Trail – NV
52. Pyramid Lake Scenic Byway – California National Historic Trail – NV
53. Kancamagus Scenic Byway - Appalachian National Scenic Trail – NH
54. White Mountain Trail - Appalachian National Scenic Trail – NH
55. El Camino Real - Old Spanish National Historic Trail, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail – NM
56. Historic Route 66 - El Malpais National Monument, Petroglyph National Monument, Santa Fe National Historic Trail, Old Spanish National Historic Trail, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail – NM
57. Jemez Mountain Trail - Bandelier National Monument, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail – NM
58. Santa Fe Trail - Pecos National Historic Park, Fort Union National Monument, Santa Fe National Historic Trail – NM
59. Trail of the Mountain Spirits Scenic Byway – NM
60. Lakes to Locks Passage: The Great Northeast Journey - Saratoga National Historic Park, North Country National Scenic Trail – NY
61. Mohawk Towpath Byway – NY
62. Blue Ridge Parkway & National Scenic Trail (NPS-designated road) - Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail – NC
63. Sheyenne River Valley Scenic Byway - North Country National Scenic Trail – ND
64. Canal Way Scenic Byway - Cuyahoga Valley National Park – OH
65. Historic National Road - North Country National Scenic Trail – OH
66. Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail – OH
67. Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway - Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – OR
68. Hells Canyon Scenic Byway - Oregon National Historic Trail, Nez Perce National Historic Trail – OR
69. Historic Columbia River Highway - Oregon National Historic Trail, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail – OR
70. McKenzie Pass-Santiam Pass Scenic Byway - Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – OR
71. Pacific Coast Scenic Byway - Fort Clatsop National Monument, Oregon National Historic Trail – OR
72. Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway - Crater Lake National Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – OR
73. Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway - Crater Lake National Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – OR
74. Cherokee Foothills Scenic Byway - Cowpens National Battlefield – SC
75. The Native American Scenic Byway - Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail – SD
76. Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway - Mt. Rushmore National Memorial – SD
77. Natchez Trace Parkway & National Scenic Trail (NPS-designated road) - Trail of Tears National Historic Trail – TN
78. Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway - Dinosaur National Monument, Canyonlands National Park, Arches National Park – UT
79. Highway 12 - A Journey Through Time Scenic Byway - Bryce Canyon National Park, Capitol Reef National Park –UT
80. Trail of the Ancients – UT
81. Blue Ridge Parkway – VA
82. Colonial Parkway – VA
83. George Washington Memorial Parkway – VA
84. Skyline Drive – VA
85. Connecticut River Byway – VT
86. Chinook Scenic Byway - Mt Rainier National Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – WA
87. Coulee Corridor Scenic Byway – WA
88. Mountains to Sound Greenway - Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail – WA
89. Stevens Pass Greenway – WA
90. Strait of Juan de Fuca Highway - SR 112 - Olympic National Park – WA
91. The Coal Heritage Trail - Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Bluestone National Scenic River – WV
92. Midland Trail - New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreational Area – WV
93. Washington Heritage Trail - Harper's Ferry National Historic Park, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail – WV

NOTE: Data compiled from National Scenic Byways nominations.

Discover America Through The BLM's National Back Country Byway Program

By Mark Conley, Federal Lands Scenic Byways Coordinator
USDA Forest Service, Duluth, MN

The National Back Country Byway Program is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)'s unique contribution to the larger National Scenic Byways Program. The program started in 1989 as a result of a study by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors (1985-1987), which noted that nearly half of all Americans regard driving for pleasure as their favorite recreation activity. Further, the commission emphasized the high level of public interest in seeing the nation's beauty and diversity along and adjacent to public roads, and called upon natural resource agencies to cooperate with communities to identify, improve and protect outstanding byways across the nation.

In response to recommendations made by the commission, the BLM initiated the National Back Country Byway Program. The BLM offers the public a network of backcountry routes that were identified for their beauty, historical significance and access to some of the most spectacular scenery in the western United States. Most of the Back Country Byways are located in remote areas far from tourist attractions. Many are located near rural communities, giving the byways traveler a chance to visit, stay overnight or just relax in Small Town USA.

Most Back Country Byways are unpaved gravel or native surface roads that provide access to some of America's most beautiful, historic and special places. They traverse much of the 260 million acres of National Public Lands under BLM's jurisdiction. The byways vary from narrow graded roads passable only during a few months of the year to two-lane paved highways providing year-round access. Each byway provides access to a diversity of

landscapes and some of the most spectacular country in America.

Gateways to Recreation and Beauty

Back Country Byways serve as the gateways to the public lands and outdoor recreation adventure. They provide scenic corridors to a diversity of landscapes, scenic vistas, ancient petroglyphs and fossil areas, historic mining areas and ghost towns, and wildlife viewing sites. Many Back Country Byways also have hiking, camping or picnicking areas close by. These special places allow people to temporarily leave behind the fast-paced urban lifestyle, reconnect with nature, or find a place for spiritual renewal.

Since 1992, the BLM has designated 54 National Back Country Byways that total nearly 3,000 miles of touring routes located in 10 western States. See the table on page 13 with the complete list of BLM Back Country Byways.

Back Country Byways are designated by the type of road and the vehicle needed to safely travel the byway. Back Country Byways vary from a single-track bike trail to a low-speed paved road that traverses backcountry areas. Segments of Back Country Byways are subdivided into four types based on the characteristic of the road. (See inset above.)

Back Country Byways reveal the best that public lands have to offer, from high alpine meadows and mountain peaks to arid desert environments.

"Adventures in the Past," a program associated with the Back Country Byways, provides opportunities to experience firsthand the exciting legacy of the country's cultural heritage. Countless backcountry adventures await: panning for gold near the old placer mines in southwestern Oregon along the Galice to Hellgate Back Country Byway; exploring cultural sites inhabited

TYPES OF BACK COUNTRY BYWAYS

TYPE I Roads are paved or have an all-weather surface and have grades that are negotiable by two-wheel drive vehicles and passenger cars. Most of these roads are narrow, slow speed, secondary routes through public lands.

TYPE II Roads that require high-clearance type vehicles such as trucks or four-wheel-drive vehicles. These roads are usually not paved, but may have some type of surfacing. Grades, curves and road surface are such that they can be negotiated with a two-wheel drive, high-clearance vehicle without undue difficulty.

TYPE III Roads require four-wheel-drive vehicles or other specialized vehicles such as dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), etc. These roads are usually not surfaced, but are managed for safety and resource protection. These roads often have steep grades, uneven tread surfaces and other characteristics that require specialized vehicles to negotiate the route, usually at slow speeds.

TYPE IV Trails are managed specifically to accommodate dirt bike, mountain bike, snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle use. Most of these routes are single-track trails.

by Native Americans 8,000 to 12,000 years ago along the Chain of Craters Back Country Byway in northwestern New Mexico; or journeying back to the time when pioneers lived close to the land along the Black Hills Back Country Byway in southeast Arizona. Visit the "Adventures In The Past" website at www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures/.

Back Country Byway Visitor Information

Visitors should learn of road conditions, location of services, safety considerations and seasonal restrictions before touring a Back Country Byway. It is always best to inquire at the local BLM office about route conditions and safety concerns. Visit the BLM website at www.blm.gov for a list of local BLM offices. Check weather forecasts. Some Back Country Byways that are safe for passenger vehicles in dry weather may not be so during thunderstorms or heavy rain.

Remember the following tips while traveling Back Country Byways:

- Be sure your vehicle is suitable for the road surface.
- Ensure your vehicle is equipped with a spare tire, jack and tools for minor repair.
- Travelers may encounter logging trucks or other heavy equipment on backcountry routes.
- Respect wildlife by viewing from a distance.
- Be careful of livestock and always close gates behind you.
- Do not disturb archaeological or historical sites. ★

BACK COUNTRY BYWAYS

	STATE	BACK COUNTRY BYWAY	DESIGNATION DATE	TYPE	MILES	OTHER DESIGNATIONS
1	AZ	Harquahala Mountain	03/00/00	III	11	
2	AZ	Historic Route 66	02/08/93	I	42	
3	AZ	Black Hills	10/19/92	II	21	
4	CA	Parker Dam Road	08/11/94	I	11	
5	CA	Chimney Peak	03/05/96	II	39	
6	CA	Owen Valley-Death Valley	08/00/92	II	3	
7	CA,NV	Buckhorn	06/20/89	II	27	
8	CA,NV	Barrel Springs	06/20/89	II	35	
9	CA	Saline Valley	06/20/89	II	100	
10	CA	Bradshaw Trail	11/08/92	III	75	
11	CO	Alpine Loop	09/22/89	III	63	State Scenic Byway
12	CO	Gold Belt	09/22/89	III	131	National Scenic Byway
13	ID	Owyhee Uplands	06/22/89	I	103	
14	ID	Lewis & Clark	06/22/89	I	39	
15	MT	Big Sheep Creek	07/21/89	I	51	
16	MT	Big Sky	07/13/00	I	105	
17	MT	Missouri Breaks	07/21/89	II	80	
18	MT	Garnet Range	07/21/89	IV	12	National Winter Recreation Trail
19	NM	Chain of Craters	03/10/93	II	36	
20	NM	Wild Rivers	06/20/89	I	13	
21	NM	Lake Valley	04/14/93	I	44	
22	NM	Quebradas	06/20/89	II	26	
23	NM	Guadalupe	09/26/94	I	55	
24	NV	California Trail	06/05/90	I	96	
25	NV	Lovelock Cave	09/16/94	I	20	
26	NV	Ft. Churchill to Wellington	11/11/89	II	67	
27	NV	Mt. Wilson	06/05/90	II	66	
28	NV	Gold Butte	06/19/89	II	62	
29	NV	Red Rock Canyon	06/19/89	I	13	
30	NV	Bitter Springs	06/19/89	II	28	
31	NV	Lunar Crater	09/24/97	II	24	
32	OR	Lakeview to Steens Mountain	06/29/89	I, II	91	
33	OR	Christmas Valley	06/29/89	I, II	102	
34	OR	Diamond Loop	03/14/91	I	75	
35	OR	Steens Mountain	06/19/88	I, II	53	State Scenic Byway
36	OR	Snake River-Mormon Basin	03/14/91	I, II	130	
37	OR	South Fork Alsea River	09/26/89	I	11	
38	OR	South Fork John Day River	09/26/89	I	50	
39	OR	Lower Crooked River	09/26/89	I	43	
40	OR	Lower Deschutes River	09/26/89	I	36	
41	OR	Quartzville Road	02/16/92	I	50	
42	OR	Nestucca River	09/26/89	I	55	
43	OR	Cow Creek Road	09/16/93	I	45	
44	OR	Galice to Hellgate	06/29/89	I	39	
45	OR	Grave Creek to Marial	06/29/89	I	33	
46	UT	Pony Express Trail	04/27/92	II	133	
47	UT	Transcontinental Railroad	08/16/93	II	90	
48	UT	Silver Island Mountain	05/06/92	II	54	
49	UT	Smithsonian Butte	06/21/89	I	9	
50	UT	Bull Creek Pass	06/21/89	III	68	
51	UT	Nine Mile Canyon	06/21/89	I	78	
52	WY	Red Gulch/Alkali Road	06/28/89	II	32	
53	WY	Seminole to Alcova Road	06/28/89	I, II, III	64	
54	WY	South Bighorns/Red Wall	06/28/89	II	101	
TOTAL MILES					2940	

What are the BLM public Lands?

Most of the BLM's public lands are located in the western United States and Alaska. Its holdings comprise about one of every five acres in the American West. Lands under the BLM's jurisdiction are the legacy of territory originally claimed by the Federal government early in the Nation's history. Much of the 1.8 billion acres of public land was either claimed for homesteads, reserved as parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, military bases or for other public purposes. Today, as the nation's largest lands manager, the BLM manages more than 262 million acres of public lands, nearly one-eighth of all land in the United States. The BLM also manages 570 million acres of subsurface mineral estate.

New Great River Road Visitor Center Moves From Vision To Reality

By Jane Carrola, Scenic Byways and Rustic Roads Coordinator,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The city of Prescott is now the proud owner of the new, bustling Great River Road National Scenic Byway Visitor Center complex.

There were times when it looked like it would never happen. But thanks to the adherence to the vision and the dedication of key local officials and citizens, the small community of Prescott, Wisconsin is now home to a modern visitor and learning center complex that will help visitors of all ages gain a better understanding of the Great River Road story.

The Great River Road (GRR) parallels the mighty Mississippi River as it meanders some 2,500 miles along ten States from its headwaters at Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico at New Orleans. Six of the States (Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin) have National Scenic Byway (NSB) designation for all or portions of their part of the route. The NSB enters Wisconsin at Prescott, making this community the “northern gateway” to Wisconsin’s portion of the Great River Road National Scenic Byway (GRR/NSB).

In 2002, this vision of Prescott as a “northern gateway” advanced when the city submitted a NSB

project application entitled “GRR/NSB Learning Center at Freedom Park.” A key feature of the complex would be a tourist visitor center that would introduce visitors to the 250-mile Wisconsin Great River Road National Scenic Byway and its many attributes. Local proponents advocated that this municipally owned and operated facility would be a “win-win” for the city, the region and the GRR/NSB by encouraging travelers to visit sites primarily in Wisconsin but also along the entire ten-State Great River Road.

As with any ambitious project, challenges emerged. Some people wondered if the prospective learning center complex would be little more than an extravagant upgrade of the park to accommodate weddings and other parties. Others were concerned that rising city expenditures and tax burdens would only grow when operational and maintenance costs of the proposed GRR Visitor Center Complex were added.

At the same time these concerns were being raised, the community leadership changed. Some of the project’s strongest proponents and people involved in the original

grant applications were no longer in leadership roles. It was then discovered that a rail right-of-way extended into the park and needed to be addressed before the project could proceed. It took about a year to clear the title. Finally, the city and a consultant firm who had worked on the project for 18 months parted ways.

Despite all these changes, one thing remained the same: the commitment of the core parties to see the vision through to implementation. This included the current Mayor of Prescott (and former Parks Committee Chair); the Wisconsin Mississippi River Regional Parkway Commission (a formal byway group); the Wisconsin DOT and Scenic Byways Coordinator (project management) and the Federal Highway Administration’s Scenic Byways Coordinator for Wisconsin.

Mayor Mike Hunter and the Prescott City Council affirmed the vision and their support for the project. They hired new consultants: Cedar Corp, with noted interpreters Ron Zimmerman and Jim Buchholz as subcontractors. With city oversight, the consultants conducted several





View from deck: The Great River Road parallels the Mississippi River. The "northern gateway" at Prescott, Wisconsin offers panoramic views.



Captain display: The modern visitor and learning center complex will help visitors gain a better understanding of the Great River Road story.

public listening sessions to identify concerns and communicate decisions. One by one, all the issues and challenges were eventually addressed. The city and its consultants developed a mission statement that Prescott residents could support:

The Freedom Park Visitor Center will interpret the Great River Road through stories of Prescott and the surrounding region, provide for travelers' physical and informational needs and enhance the Freedom Park site for the community.

By upholding the vision through the mission statement, and conducting a site inventory, interviews and other research, Prescott officials began to narrow what the building site should look like and what themes and stories should be told via the Visitor Center.

The Great River Road Visitor Center: Interpretive Master Plan (1/05) detailed the relationship of the building to the site, identified the different interpretive themes to be located in the Center and how they would be "brought to life" through visual or auditory means. Once Prescott decision-makers and residents could finally "see" how it would look, more and more people began to embrace the vision and to buy into the project.

A contract to build the building was let in May 2005. A design plan for the exhibits was let separately. A grand opening was

held on Memorial Day weekend, 2006. People finally took a firsthand look at the long-awaited GRR Visitor Center complex both inside and out.

To provide a quality experience for visitors, the goal was to have the grounds and the building complement one another. Liberal use of native limestone and wood visually connects the site to the surroundings. The focal point of the Visitor Center and grounds is the convergence of the Mississippi and St. Croix National Scenic Riverway some 100 feet below. A clear color contrast shows where waters from the two rivers meet. Visitors can experience the area's natural beauty and view the confluence of the two rivers from a group viewing and presentation area constructed at the edge of the bluff. Two outlooks with scopes allow viewing of wildlife or maritime activity. Guests can also relax in the gazebo. The GRR Visitor Center interior features large windows to view nature when the weather is inclement.

Bald eagles are an integral part of the story at Prescott and have become a common site in Freedom Park particularly in the winter months. In 1982, a rehabilitated eagle named "Freedom" was released in the park to commemorate the release of American hostages in Iran. The GRR Visitor Center Complex held a special event on Labor Day to announce that "Flight of

Freedom," an original painting of the eagle Freedom, was purchased and will be installed in the northeast corner of the exhibit hall in the Learning Center. All of the original major participants in the release, including one of the hostages released from Iran, the Minnesota Raptor Center and the widow of the artist who created the painting attended.

GRR Visitor Center stories and interpretive displays focus on four main themes: the significance of the eagle; other wildlife of the Upper Mississippi; Native American use of the river; and use of the river during the 1800s. The focal point of the visitor center is an exhibit entitled "A Delicate Balance," which depicts a full-scale eagle in flight and emphasizes the need to balance human endeavors with natural resources. Interactive components around the eagle statue include skulls and talons for touching, pushbuttons to hear an eagle's call, and buttons that light up eggs and illuminate the effects of DDT on eagle populations.

The Center's other themes have tactile and audio components to engage the visitor and assist with communicating the story. An interactive wall map shows river towns along the Great River Road and visitors can see highlights of attractions. The indoor vestibule provides access to information about the Great River Road National Scenic Byway. A touch-screen computer

with "fly-by" software allows the user to touch a certain part of the route for destination information and graphics create the sensation of flying down to that special place.

Federal grants covered 80% of the project. From 2001-2003, the National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants Program awarded \$1.4 million for development of the facility. There were three separate grants:

Site improvements and design (\$368,000)

Building construction (\$700,000)

Interior and interpretation (\$343,000)

The city of Prescott is providing the 20% local match and is responsible for staffing the Center and maintaining the building and grounds. An active "Friends of Freedom Park" group spearheads fundraising and volunteer support for the Center. The Prescott Garden Guild is helping with the Center's landscaping and grounds.

The city has already implemented a series of special events at the complex, including talks, music and art.

The city of Prescott is now the proud owner of the new, bustling GRR National Scenic Byway Visitor Center complex situated on a bluff-top park overlooking the convergence of Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers. It is a vision fulfilled. ★

Calendar

Send calendar entries by the 5th of each month to center@byways.org

EVENTS IN 2007

February 7-9, 2007

Saving Places 2007: Preservation, Planning

and Growth

Denver, Colorado

Colorado Preservation, Inc.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.coloradopreservation.org/spc/index.html#uc>

March 12-14, 2007

2007 Washington Policy Conference

Washington, D.C.

National Association of Development
Organizations (NADO)

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.nado.org/conferences/washington.php>

March 25-28, 2007

National Trust Main Streets Conference

Seattle, Washington

For more information, please contact:

mary_delafe@nthp.org or visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/pwyqh>

April 14-18, 2007

APA's 2007 National Planning Conference

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

American Planning Association (APA)

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.planning.org/2007conference/index.htm>

April 21-25, 2007

International Pow Wow 2007

Anaheim, California

Travel Industry Association of America

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.tia.org/powwow/index.html>

May 6-9, 2007

National Association of Recreation Resource

Planners Annual Conference

Austin, Texas

National Association of Recreation Resource

Planners (NARRP)

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.narrp.org/conference/>

May 20-23, 2007

National Scenic Byways Conference

Baltimore, Maryland

For more information, please visit:

www.bywaysonline.org

June 18-21, 2007

International Heritage Development

Conference

MotorCities National Heritage Area, Detroit,

Michigan

Alliance of National Heritage Areas

For more information, please visit:

www.nationalheritageareas.org

August 25-28, 2007

2007 NADO Annual Training Conference

Austin, Texas

National Association of Development

Organizations (NADO)

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.nado.org/conferences/annual.php>

September 2007

National Trust and Scenic Trails Conference

Duluth, Minnesota

National Park Service, National Trails System

Details coming soon!

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

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07

2007 NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS CONFERENCE

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND ★ MAY 20-23, 2007

★ Registration Information Coming Soon! ★