

Illinois Historic Route 66

Interpretive Master Plan

May, 2008



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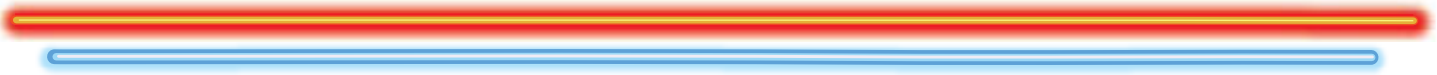
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Chapter I—

Introduction



Mr. Dominac Bazzarone and Elda (Bazzarone) Serone about 1930-31. Located along historic Route 66 in Sawyerville.



March, 2007.

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
FSA-OWI Collection [fsa 8a26684]



During the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, thousands of “Okies” fled to California on Route 66 in search of a better life.

Introduction

Route 66 is the most famous road in America. Generations of travelers have romanticized this highway as a symbol of unlimited mobility and freedom of the road. Its iconic status is enhanced by the unprecedented volume of music, books, films, and other art forms that depict it as the essence of America’s highway culture.

It was born in 1926 as part of the new numbered highway network and quickly grew to be the preferred road west for a nation on the move. U.S. Highway 66 was not as old or as long as some other transcontinental routes like the Yellowstone or the Lincoln Highway but it quickly gained fame as the shortest, year-round route between the Midwest and the coast as it passed through the fabled landscape of the American Southwest. The construction of this thin, ribbon of road helped to transform the American West from an isolated frontier to an economically vital region of the country and made it accessible to anyone with a car.

In its lifetime this celebrated road witnessed a continuum of highway and transportation evolution from Ford Model Ts plodding through rutted dirt to the rise of the monolithic American Interstate Highway System. Route 66 was the most well known road in a national network of public highways which succeeded in uniting a huge, dispersed nation into a cohesive whole.

During its heyday, Route 66 mirrored the mood of the nation. During the Great Depression, it became the Road of Flight for farm families escaping the Dust Bowl. In his classic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck christened it the Mother Road and it has carried that moniker ever since. Even this monumental exodus was but a single surge in the mass movement of humans in the nation’s history. Another was the post-World War II movement of ex GIs and their families to join the booming California job market. In the post war recovery years, optimism

pervaded the national attitude. Times were good and people traveled. American families took two week vacations to drive 66 and see the wonders of the West and the new California scene. In the 1960s, the “Hippie” counterculture lured thousands of the nation’s disenchanted youth west on 66, hitchhiking or packed into minibuses. The old highway is a road of dreams.

Part of the charm of Route 66 is its idiosyncratic personality. Like a giant carnival Midway, this corridor of neon signs and gaudy roadside attractions was embraced by the traveling public as an exciting diversion from ordinary life. A trip on Route 66 promised an exhilarating pilgrimage where one might discover the unknown and experience the unusual. Route 66 is synonymous with fun and adventure.

What made Route 66 an intimate adventure also made it dangerous. “Bloody 66” was totally accessible. It twisted through congested cities, crossed railroads on grade, and was riddled with blind corners and hazardous cross traffic. Every incremental improvement that was made to safely accommodate the increasing traffic brought the engineering closer to the Interstate Highway solution that would succeed the old road.

Route 66 achieved a mythic status in American culture that could not be replaced by a safer but soulless super highway system. Mythical 66 refused to die. Illinois was the first state to hard surface the highway and the first to replace it with Interstate. It was where Route 66 began and finally, where it was officially ended.

Route 66, stripped of its signs and removed from highway maps, appeared destined to become a forgotten footnote in history. Almost 2,500 miles of pavement, the great neon corridor, was faded, less traveled, and in places, harder to find but still there and waiting to be rediscovered. By 1984, when Interstate 40 bypassed the last stretch of Route 66 in Arizona, a movement was already developing to

Courtesy of Steak 'n Shake



Idiosyncratic gas stations, shops, and diners, like the first Steak 'n Shake located in Bloomington, Illinois, were born along Route 66 to serve travelers.

Courtesy of Geographical Journey, Towanda, Illinois



Accident on Route 66, 1948.



Courtesy of Windy City Road Warrior, www.windycityroadwarrior.com

Sign marking the eastern terminus of Route 66 in Grant Park, Chicago.

Courtesy of Digital Route 66, www.digitalroute66.com



Formed in 1989, the Route 66 Association of Illinois has preserved and restored numerous resources along the highway. Art's Motel and Restaurant sign was restored in spring of 2007.

resurrect the old road. It might not be the corridor west that it once was, but it could still be a road where travelers could experience the landscape and a time before franchises and freeways swallowed up the old route. The scale of the road corridor and its interface with the communities it connects allows travelers to experience the local sense of place in ways that super highways cannot achieve.

On March 5, 1989, the Route 66 Association of Illinois was formed with the purpose to “preserve, promote and enjoy the past and present of U.S. Highway 66.” Since their establishment, this group has developed historic route markers, traveler’s guides, museums, and signs to highlight attractions. Many tangible relics of the old road have been saved as a result of their efforts.

In the late 1990s, Illinois Route 66 was designated a “state heritage tourism project.” Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project, Inc. was developed to manage the initiative. This non-profit, 501(c)3 organization received a grant from the State of Illinois, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism to develop a Corridor Management Plan. This was a requirement for designation as a National Scenic Byway by the U.S. Department of Transportation. On September 22, 2005, Illinois Historic Route 66 was designated a National Scenic Byway.



Illinois Historic Route 66 was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2005.

Mission and Vision of Illinois Route 66

Mission Statement

The mission of the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project/ Historic Route 66 in Illinois America's Byway is to enhance and promote economic opportunities for each Illinois Route 66 community by preserving Illinois Route 66 Heritage and by sustaining and increasing heritage and cultural tourism through the development and marketing of a cohesive Illinois Route 66 product.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project/ Historic Route 66 in Illinois America's Byway is to be the national leader in developing Route 66 as the premier Byway tourist destination in the United States.



Purpose of the Interpretive Plan

A Federal Highway Administration grant was awarded to the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project in November, 2006 to develop an Interpretive Master Plan.

“The purpose of the Historic Route 66 in Illinois Interpretive Master Plan is to identify the significant stories of the historic corridor in Illinois and to outline specific strategies to tell these stories to visitors and residents in an effective manner.”



An interpretive master plan is a road map for telling the diverse stories of Route 66 in a meaningful way.

Goals of the Interpretive Plan

Tell a cohesive and comprehensive story of the Illinois Historic Route 66 Scenic Byway Corridor.

- ▶ Identify and document those tangible resources that connect Illinois Historic Route 66 travelers to the stories and meanings associated with this historic road.
- ▶ Develop themes that unify and organize these stories and tangible resources.
- ▶ Recommend specific interpretive media most appropriate for specific tangible resources (e.g. wayside exhibits and kiosks).
- ▶ Recommend comprehensive media where no tangible resources exist (e.g. traveling exhibits, visitor centers, road-trip packages).
- ▶ Recommend resources and media for audiences with specific interests related to the byway.
- ▶ Provide parameters and guidelines for future media development.

Coordinate interpretive development efforts of stakeholders and communities along the byway

- ▶ Serve as a catalyst for community involvement, economic development, and for education, conservation and preservation efforts along the corridor.
- ▶ Provide quality experiences for tourists that will extend the length of time that visitors stay in the byway communities, thereby increasing tourism revenues.



Interviewing Bill Shea, Springfield. March, 2007.

- ▶ Provide recommendations on how to make the Historic Illinois Route 66 a recognizable entity and improve wayfinding through unified graphics, structures and other means.

Delimitations of the Interpretive Plan

This plan is limited to the development of interpretive services specifically related to the story of Historic Route 66 that will provide visitors with meaningful recreational and educational experiences along the Illinois segment of the corridor. It does not address amenity services such as dining, shopping or sleeping accommodations. These are significant services important to the total recreational experience, but will be addressed by the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project/Historic Route 66 in Illinois America's Byway on their website, in tourism publications, and through information services in CVB visitor centers.

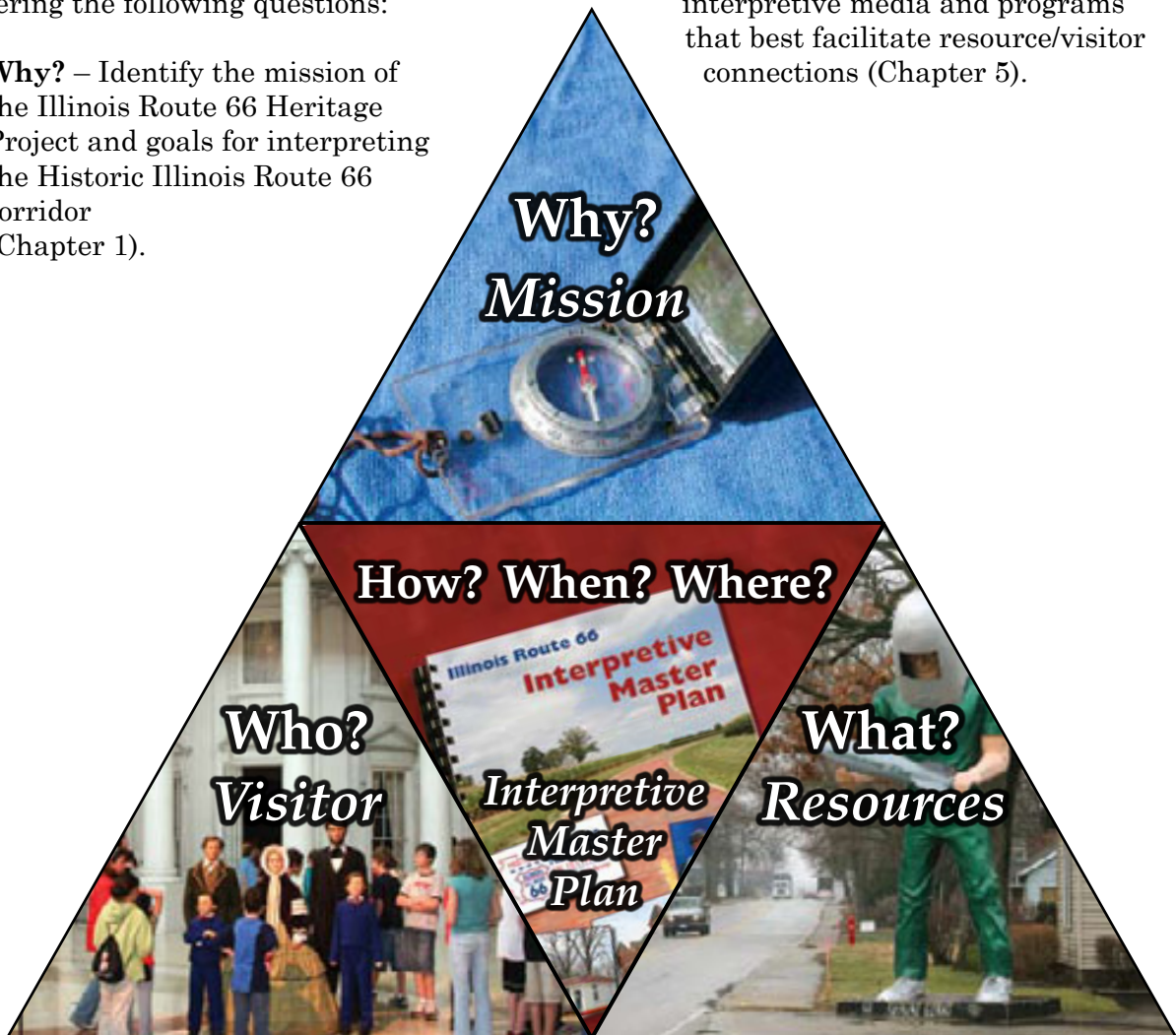
The Planning Process

The National Park Service Interpretive Development Program defines interpretation as “facilitating a connection between the meanings of the resource and the interests of the visitor.”

Planning is a process of consensus development—of achieving a shared perspective by all stakeholders of why interpretation is needed, who it will serve, and what significant stories it will tell. Planning for interpretation involves answering the following questions:

- ▶ **Why?** – Identify the mission of the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project and goals for interpreting the Historic Illinois Route 66 corridor (Chapter 1).

- ▶ **What?** – Inventory the tangible resources of the corridor and describe their intangible meanings, then distill these tangibles and intangibles into unifying themes and messages (Chapter 2 and 3).
- ▶ **Who?** – Determine who the visitor is (or will be) and the experiences they are (or will be) seeking (Chapter 4).
- ▶ **How? When? Where?** – Based on the why, who, and what, plan and develop interpretive media and programs that best facilitate resource/visitor connections (Chapter 5).





Chapter 2—

Themes and Messages



Neon signs light up Springfield. Courtesy of Ace Sign Company.



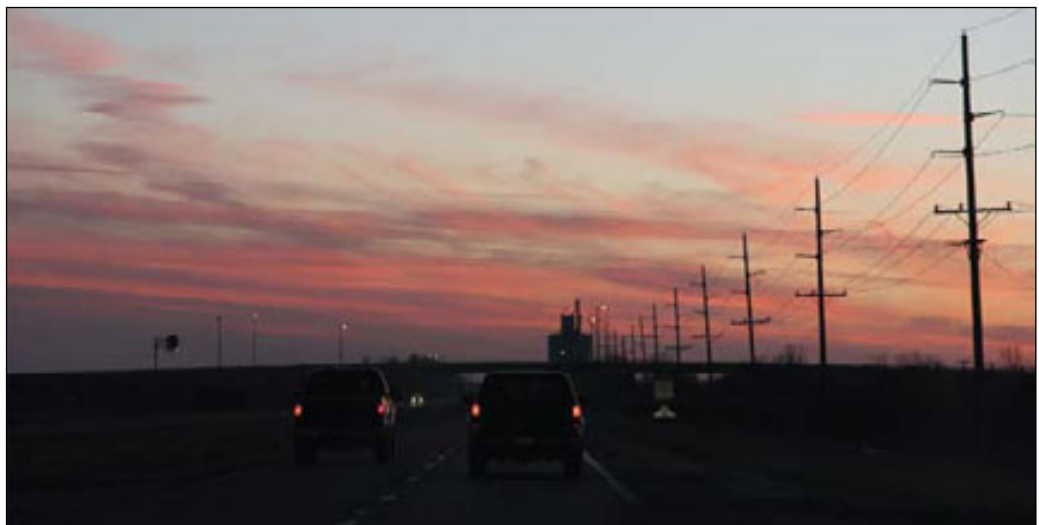
Themes tie together the diverse stories of the road. Painted Route 66 shield on an alignment into the town of Chenoa. February, 2008.

Themes and Messages

Themes are the important ideas that organize the messages that we wish to communicate about Illinois Route 66. They create a framework for planning and help place resources and events into meaningful contexts for visitors. Once these important concepts are identified, decisions can be made about what site resources and media are most appropriate to tell these stories. Compelling interpretive themes link a tangible resource to the interests of visitors. The theme statement, which is the main idea of an interpretive opportunity, should always contain universal concepts.

A **universal concept** is an intangible meaning that has significance to almost everyone, but may not mean the same thing to any two people. They are the ideas, values, challenges, relationships, needs, and emotions that speak to the human condition.

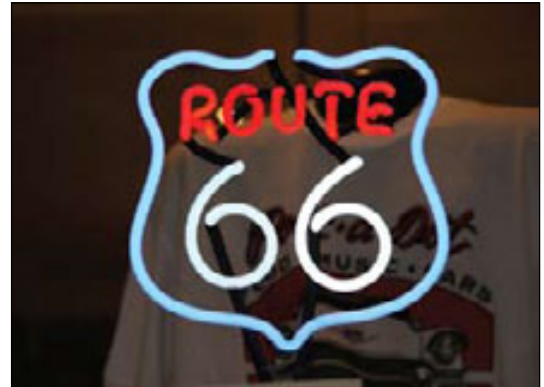
Interpretation is most effective when media and other interpretive opportunities allow visitors to grasp the meanings expressed in themes and apply them to their own lives. Visitors may not parrot the themes we write— but if they are provoked, inspired, or can relate to something within themselves, we have been successful.



*Illinois Route 66 at sunset.
December, 2006*

Primary Themes

Primary themes express the main ideas and unifying concepts that tie together the stories of Route 66. To provide a cohesive visitor experience, all interpretation along the corridor should relate to these holistic themes.



General Route 66 Theme:

The general primary interpretive theme expresses the significance of the entire highway from Illinois to California.



Route 66, the great “Mother Road” from Chicago to Los Angeles, is an American icon, symbolizing romance, freedom of the road, individuality, and opportunities for small businesses and tourist stops.

Illinois Route 66 Theme:

The more specific Illinois Route 66 primary theme expresses the importance of the route in Illinois.



The beginning of the “Mother Road,” Illinois Route 66 was a vital economic artery between Chicago and St. Louis that still connects travelers to prairie farms and small Midwest towns.



Small towns in Illinois represent the “real America” to many travelers. Hawes Grain Elevator in Atlanta. December, 2006

Courtesy of the Polk-a-Dot Drive In, Braidwood



Community festivals along Route 66 celebrate the “car culture” of the road. A popular gathering called “Cruise Night” is held annually at the Polk-a-Dot Drive In in Braidwood.

Sub-Themes and Messages

Sub-themes split the primary theme into several more specific and workable ideas. **Messages** break down the sub-themes further into very specific stories that can be told with personal and non-personal interpretation.

Sub-theme #1

Route 66 symbolizes the spirit and freedom of America and the pursuit of the American dream.

Messages:

- 1.1 Route 66 has always been more, in the collective mind of America, than a utilitarian highway. It has been an inspirational portal to adventure, the promise of a second chance to many, and a glitzy corridor that welcomes everyone’s dreams without judgment.
- 1.2 Route 66 is the Mother Road, the Road of Flight (*Grapes of Wrath*). It was the principle migration route for people searching for better lives during the Depression and following WWII. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright referred to the Road as the chute of a tilting continent, on which everything loose seemed to be sliding into Southern California. “Flower Children” of the 1960s flowed along Route 66 into the promised land of California.
- 1.3 Route 66 is a highway of the recent past which enjoyed significance from 1926 to 1956. It is popularly known as the “Main Street of America.”
- 1.4 Route 66 celebrates the heyday of car culture and automobile tourism. It epitomizes the enormous impact of the automobile on the development, history, and culture of America.

The post World War II years of 1946-1956 have been described as the “Golden Years” of Route 66 when Americans “hit the road” in their new cars.

- 1.5 Route 66 transects diverse American cultures and landscapes, intensifying a traveler’s sense of discovery and adventure. The highway was a popular all-weather route linking the industrial Midwest to the California coast.
- 1.6 Illinois small towns represent the “real America” to many Route 66 travelers and offer an opportunity for visitors to meet people who live along the Road.
- 1.7 Generations of people have pursued their dreams and their livelihood on 66 as pilgrims, migrants, vacationers, truckers, police, waitresses, and filling station attendants.
 - The Mother Road has been a conduit for people seeking jobs in California during the Great Depression and in the post WWII boom economy.
 - Families took two week vacations to see the wonders of the American West in the 1950s and 60s.
 - With the improvement of federal and state roads in the 1920s, commercial trucking became profitable and competitive with rail roads. The infrastructure of truck stops, service garages, brotherhood of teamsters, and the growth of trucking companies created a national road culture.
 - The police who patrolled the “hard road” witnessed tremendous

changes in procedures, technology, and engineering during their careers. Speed traps sprang up in small towns; radio communication became standard; fatal accidents were common.

- Entrepreneurial families converted farms and homes into diners, filling stations, motels, roadside zoos and curio shops in order to profit from the escalating numbers of travelers on 66.
- Sub-cultures of hitchhikers, vagabonds, and salesmen were born from the travel corridor.
- Tow truck drivers, ambulance operators, and road maintenance crews all have their unique perspectives of the Road.
- Children growing up in the towns and countryside of Route 66 often developed a curiosity and wanderlust for discovering what exotic places lay down the road.

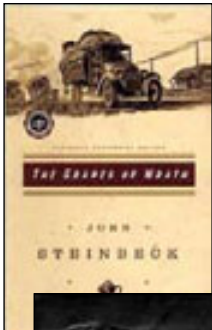
Courtesy of california2007.centerblog.net/2509176-En-route-pour-le-desert



To many, Route 66 represents the freedom of the open road; a trip through the very essence of American culture.



Route 66 was known as the “neon corridor” from the 1930s to the 1960s. The Ariston Cafe in Litchfield still glows along the highway. August, 2007



Books, like *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, and television series, like *Route 66* with *Tod and Buz*, helped romanticize the highway to worldwide audiences.



Courtesy of CBS Television, 1960

Sub-theme #2

Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.

Messages:

- 2.1 John Steinbeck’s “Grapes of Wrath” and Dorothea Lang’s photographs in “An American Exodus” chronicle the “Mother Road, the Road of Flight.”
- 2.2 Books, such as the reprinted Rittenhouse “A Guide Book to Highway 66,” Least Heat-Moon’s “Blue Highways,” and a host of recent books and travel guides are evidence that Route 66, once a highway to vacation destinations is today’s vacation destination.
- 2.3 Movies such as “Easy Rider” and “Cars” and the television series “Route 66” romanticize the road to world-wide audiences.
- 2.4 Bobby Troupe’s “Get Your Kicks on Route 66,” is a lyrical travelogue of the road that was sung by a host of famous artists ranging from Nat King Cole to The Rolling Stones.
- 2.5 The evolution of commercial design of service stations, cafes and motels can be seen in many historic structures lining Historic Route 66 in Illinois and add to the nostalgic attraction of the road.
- 2.6 Folk art such as the “giants” that line Historic Route 66 in Illinois add nostalgic attraction to the road.
- 2.7 The small towns and farms of Historic Route 66 in Illinois with their characteristic 19th and 20th century architecture add nostalgic attraction to the road.
- 2.8 In its heyday, Route 66 was described as “a corridor of neon signs from Chicago to Los Angeles.” The design of neon signs soared to

the status of an art form in the 1930s and into the 1960s.

- 2.9 Free standing billboards, Burma Shave signs, and painted messages on barns and silos were popular media for advertising commercial attractions along the highway.
- 2.10 Whimsical, and sometimes bizarre, roadside attractions sprang up as economic responses to the increasing traffic on 66. Oversized pink elephants, muffler men, giant coffee pots, Dutch Mills with rotating propellers, or the worlds largest covered wagon are a few examples that add to the myth and fantasy of the Mother Road.
- 2.11 The International Transcontinental Foot Marathon (also known as the Bunion Derby) in 1928 and 1929 ran from Los Angeles to New York as a gimmick to promote the fact that a network of roads linked the nation coast to coast.



Burma Shave advertisements with catchy rhymes divided into several signs were popular along Route 66. These restored signs can be found outside of Godley. March, 2007

Folk art along Illinois Route 66 continues to create a nostalgic ambience and attract visitors.



Pink Elephant Antiques, Livingston. February, 2008



Henry's Rabbit Ranch, Staunton. April, 2007



Launching Pad Drive In's Gemini Giant, Wilmington. March, 2007

August, 2007



Abandoned stretches of Route 66 preserve early engineering and construction techniques. The end of this stretch was flooded by Lake Springfield.



The "ghost bridge" outside of Lincoln. March, 2007.

Sub-theme #3

Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.

3.1 Route 66 illustrates the evolution of the national highway system.

- By 1924 SBI (State Bond Issue) 4 was completely paved between Chicago and St. Louis.
- In 1925, a committee of federal and state highway officials developed a numbering system for federal roads based on twenty base longitudinal roads and ten base latitudinal roads.
- Principal east-west roads were to end in "0" and a fight ensued over the designation of the arching Chicago-Los Angeles route, which was eventually resolved by numbering it "66" in 1926.
- Because it was already completed, the Chicago to St. Louis Route 4 segment became the first paved road on Route 66.
- The Defense Highway Act of 1941 authorized a limited-access four-lane freeway from Chicago to St. Louis, and from 1943-1946 several segments were completed.
- By 1950, the 18 foot, two lane road was replaced with a four-lane 24 foot limited access highway.
- The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 authorized a system of freeways that would eventually replace Route 66.
- In 1956, several sections of Route 66 became Interstate 55.

3.2 "Bloody 66" gave rise to Illinois State Police patrols and improved engineering for safety.

- The Illinois State Police were organized in 1922, mainly to enforce weight limits because trucks were breaking up the new hard roads.
- Initially, “reasonable and proper” was the speed advisory prior to the inauguration of speed limits.
- “New Deal” 1930s road funding focused on safety, including eliminating railroad grade crossings and straightening curves. In 1936, a 4 ½ mile four-lane bypass of Springfield replaced corners with gentle curves.
- Numerous intersections and access roads resulted in fatal accidents.
- Speed traps sprang up in many small towns on 66 with local motorcycle police behind billboards and judges extracting inflated fines from out-of-state vacationers. The American Automobile Association began its National Road Reporting service in 1922. At one time more than half the offending speed traps were located on Route 66.

3.3 Route 66 was a military corridor in WWII, delivering war materials to the frontlines and bringing soldiers home.

- A second mass migration on Route 66 rivaled the migration of the Depression, as workers surged to war industry jobs in California.
- Route 66 suffered major deterioration from trucks hauling war materials and from four years with little maintenance.
- Ex-GI’s used the route for a third mass migration to plentiful post-war jobs in California.

3.4 Brick roads, old pavement, bridges and abandoned routes are evidence of early engineering practices on the road.

Courtesy of Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation



Route 66 was known as “Bloody 66” due to the large number of accidents, which kept the Illinois State Police busy.

Courtesy of Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation



Cadet training at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield in the 1940s.



The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie encompasses over 15,000 acres of land on the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant.



Funks Grove is the largest remaining intact prairie grove in the state of Illinois. April, 2007

Sub-theme #4

Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

- 4.1 Historic trails used for centuries underlie the pavement of Route 66 in many places. In Illinois, the Pontiac Trail was an unpaved road that connected Chicago to St. Louis.
- 4.2 Levelled by glaciers, the landscape of Illinois served as a natural transportation route.
 - The Illinoisian glacier, 50,000 to 15,000 years ago, deposited a thick, fertile layer of topsoil and left few obstacles for roads and railroads.
 - The Chicago and Alton Railroad, built during the early 1850s along the corridor, created a loose line of settlements about every five miles.
 - Development of the first hard road, Route 4 (State Bond Issue 4), paralleled the Chicago and Alton Railroad's easy grades and curves.
- 4.3 Most of Route 66 in Illinois passes through the Grand Prairie Natural Division, one of 14 Natural Divisions in the state.
- 4.4 Prior to European settlement, Illinois had approximately 22 million acres of prairie habitat (60% of the state).
 - Drainage of prairie soils was poor resulting in numerous marshes and potholes.
 - Many wildlife species depended on the Illinois tallgrass prairie and wetland habitat for survival.
 - Bison, Blanding's turtles, and Franklin's ground squirrels were common residents of the prairie ecosystem. Today, bison are

extirpated and many other species are endangered.

4.5 Most of the fertile prairie land has been converted into agriculture. Less than 1,000 acres of prairie habitat remains (0.01% of the state).

- By 1833, the invention of the steel plow opened the tough prairie sod to agriculture cultivation.
- The construction of railroads after the Civil War accelerated cultivation by providing easier transportation to markets.
- By 1900, most of the Illinois prairie had been converted into agricultural fields.

4.6 Prairie remnants and restorations are significant to rare wildlife and plant communities, while serving as tangible links to the past landscape.

- The Right-of-Way between Route 66 and the railroad harbors tallgrass prairie remnants with diverse forbs and grasses representative of the Illinois prairie landscape. Periodic fires sparked by train wheels have preserved these remnants.
- The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie on the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, located on Route 66, is the largest prairie restoration in the country at 15,000 acres.
- Funks Grove is the largest remaining intact prairie grove in the state of Illinois, dominated by spreading white oak, bur oak, and sugar maple trees.
- The Lockport Prairie along Route 66 protects rare “wet dolomite” prairie habitat. Limestone restricts plant roots, resulting in a high number of federal- and state-threatened and endangered species.



The Henry Eilers Shoal Creek Nature Preserve, owned by the City of Litchfield, protects 250 acres of savanna/woodland. August, 2007.



The Sugar Grove Nature Center interprets the prairie and farming legacy of Illinois' past. Funks Grove. April, 2007.



Grain elevators, like these near Elkhart, still dominate the landscape of rural Illinois communities along Historic Route 66. April, 2007



Scenic town squares, like this one in Divernon, were and continue to be social gathering areas for farmers of the region. April, 2007

Sub-theme #5

Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns and marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.

- 5.1 The level Illinois farm country creates an environmental context for Route 66 and dominates the travel experience from the Chicago suburbs to St. Louis. Highway travelers race through countless corn fields but slow to a leisurely tempo when they enter the intimate environment of rural Illinois towns.
- 5.2 Many of the small towns on Illinois Route 66 exhibit a strong sense of place because they are socially autonomous communities complete with restaurants, hardware stores, and civic amenities.
- 5.3 Visitors on Illinois Route 66 can glimpse the sense of community found in many of the small towns along the road. It can be seen as people interact in restaurants, gas stations, and at parks, monuments and other public places where social values are expressed.
- 5.4 The rich Illinois farm economy is evident in the built environment of the Route 66 corridor. Busy railroad spurs, massive grain elevators, and affluent looking farms rise out of the surrounding croplands.
- 5.5 Funk's Grove is the largest prairie grove surviving today. It is a self-contained example of Illinois farm history, featuring a pioneer church and cemetery, a nature reserve with a tall grass prairie, a historic sugar bush operation, and the Funk Farm and Museum, all clustered around a state operated I-55 wayside.
- 5.6 Many historic Route 66 rights of ways, particularly those adjacent to railroad tracks

harbor tall grass prairie remnants. These prairies built the rich soils that gave birth to Illinois farming.

5.7 Many travelers are seeking to interact with people as they explore the Route 66 corridor. Small towns in Illinois offer excellent opportunities for travelers to meet residents.

5.8 Towns, like Atlanta, and Collinsville celebrate their rural heritage by preserving and interpreting historic farms (Willowbough Farm) and grain elevators (Atlanta Grain Elevator).

5.9 Most American and European travelers are unfamiliar with agricultural practices of the past and present. There are numerous opportunities to help these people connect to farming and rural living in the Illinois Route 66 corridor.

5.10 Route 66 transects the heart of farm country in Illinois. Nearly 80% of Illinois' land is devoted to farming while 89% of that farmland is ranked as Prime Farmland (Ranked third nationally according to Illinois Department of Agriculture).

5.11 Illinois holds a competitive edge in agriculture over many other states due to its central location and superior transportation system of which Route 66 was a "hard road" prototype (Statistics from IDA).

5.12 Family run operations still dominate the 76,000 farms in Illinois.



The Willoughby Heritage Farm in Collinsville interprets the family farm of the 1920s-50s. February, 2008



The Mother Jones Memorial in Mt. Olive commemorates the struggles of miners and the fight to reform labor policy in the country. April, 2007

Sub-theme #6

Coal underlying Illinois influenced the development of many communities along Route 66, fueled the nation's industry, and shaped national policy toward the Labor Movement.

- 6.1 Coal was deposited under much of the southern two thirds of Illinois during the Pennsylvanian (Carboniferous period), about 300 million years ago.
- 6.2 Coal has been mined in 73 counties of Illinois. More than 4,500 coal mines have operated since commercial mining began in Illinois about 1810. There were two mining regions along Illinois Route 66: South of Wilmington and south of Springfield.
- 6.3 Miners of many ethnic backgrounds immigrated to Illinois towns for work in the mines. Working conditions were miserable, dangerous, and low-paying leading to strikes and conflict with Illinois troops and Pinkerton guards. Labor unions grew out of these conflicts.
- 6.4 The Virden Mine Riots of October 12, 1898 resulted from a strike at the Chicago-Virden Coal Mine. Mine management had brought in black strike-breakers and when the train carrying them tried to enter a stockade around the mine, gunfire broke out between the guards and strikers, killing 12 and wounding 45.
- 6.5 By the early 20th Century, shaft mining ended in the Wilmington area. In the 1920s strip mining revived the industry until the last mine in the Wilmington area closed in the 1960s. As you drive Historic Route 66 you can see slag mounds and other reminders of the era.

- 6.6 Mary Harris Jones, known as Mother Jones, “The Miner’s Angel,” was a national labor organizer. After 1890 she became involved in the struggles of coal miners and became an organizer for the United Mine Workers of America. Mother Jones died in 1930, seven months after her one-hundredth birthday. She was buried in the Union Miners Cemetery at Mount Olive, Illinois, in the coalfields of southern Illinois. Her grave is near those of the victims of the Virden mine riot of 1898.
- 6.7 Much of the coal was shipped to Chicago to provide heat and steam for homes and industries. The steel mill in Joliet was established because of the nearby coal fields.
- 6.8 Coal is still actively mined in several areas near Illinois Route 66 south of Springfield. In 2005, 23 million tons of coal was extracted, generating nearly \$1 billion for Illinois producers. More than 90% of Illinois coal is purchased by electric utilities. It ranked ninth among coal producing states in 2005.



A monument in Virden’s central park depicts the deadly Virden Miner’s Riot of 1898. August, 2007

August, 2007



Coal is still actively mined in areas near Historic Illinois Route 66, like the Monterey Coal Company just south of Carlinville.



Gas stations, restaurants, and motels sprang up in the 1920s and 30s to serve Route 66 travelers. This sign is all that remains of an old gas station in Litchfield. February, 2008



Restored 1932 Standard Oil gas station in Odell that served travelers until 1975. March, 2007

Sub-theme #7

Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied and continue to rely on automobile traffic for their social and economic wellbeing.

- 7.1 Route 66 in Illinois was an important farm to market road that took livestock to Chicago slaughterhouses and grain to Mississippi River and Chicago ports.
- 7.2 Commercial development included billboards, campgrounds, tourist courts, motels, diners, service stations, roadside attractions, amusement parks and raceways.
 - In the late 1920s, specialized service stations and garages sprang up to serve motorists. In Chenoa, Morehead Street became known as “Gasoline Alley,” as six gas stations opened up.
 - In the 1920s and ‘30s, overnight accommodations evolved from “camping ground” to “campground” to “tourist cabins.” E.g.: Red Bird Park in Chenoa started as a private campground. Later, chicken coops were converted to lodging. Eventually, four double cabins were built along with a filling station and lunch room.
 - “Tourist traders,” such as Funk’s Grove Maple Sirup, evolved to supply necessities and souvenirs to passing tourists.
 - Drive-in restaurants evolved in the early 30s. Steak ‘n Shake in Normal began in 1934 as a small gas station that served hamburgers. Curb service was introduced with curb attendants running from car door to order window and back to serve sandwiches, chili and milk shakes on a metal tray hung from the car window.
 - As more and more people drove Route 66 during the “Golden Years,” 1946-1956, small entrepreneurs were drawn to the roadside. The range of roadside services

that would define the tourist experience along Route 66 appeared during this time. Billboards touting these services became a fixture of the landscape.

- At diners, check out counters evolved into souvenir shops, offering mementos of Route 66. Emblazoned match books, ash trays, coffee cups, and especially, picture postcards were available at motels, diners, and filling stations.

7.3 Truckers plied their trade on the route and truck stops served their needs.

- The Shirley Oil Company, incorporated in 1923, moved to McLean in 1928 as the Dixie Truckers Home, a 24-hour service station for truckers. It moved again when I-55 replaced Route 66.
- As railroads closed service to small towns during the depression, interstate truckers proliferated. E.g.: Cassens Transport, of Edwardsville, which began in 1930, became the first ICC licensed vehicle hauler in 1937, and now delivers 10,000 vehicles a day for 11 automobile manufacturers.

7.4 The road aided the economies and development of all the communities along the route and the decline of those it bypassed.

- Between 1932 and 1941, and again from 1946- 1949, many communities were bypassed by new highway construction, which included many divided four lane segments.
- Franchise food, lodging and service establishments and limited access along I-55 led to the closing of most businesses on Route 66 that were not near an access ramp. Many neglected old buildings still stand as evidence of how the interstate system altered the economic life of rural roadside America.



Drive-in restaurants for travelers “on the go” helped define Route 66 starting in the early 1930s. A few, like the Cozy Dog in Springfield (above) are still serving travelers. Others have been long abandoned, like the Oasis in Lexington (below).



The 1949 Lazy A Motel in Springfield is on the National Register of Historic Places. It now serves as an apartment complex. March, 2007

7.5 The mythology of Illinois Route 66 includes stories of bootlegging, gambling, gangsters, and prostitution.

- Routes 4, and later Route 66, were an economic artery between Chicago and St. Louis. In addition to farm and industrial products, illegal goods like moonshine could be transported undetected past law enforcement.
- Gangsters, like Al Capone, welcomed, and even promoted, the hard surfaced roads because they facilitated fast getaways and anonymous movement. Route 66 became the road of choice for big time gangsters who set up vast networks of gambling, rum running, and prostitution along the corridor.
- Nearly every old cafe and roadhouse has its tales of red light districts, gambling, and gangsters.
- Witnesses say that Al Capone often traveled from De Camp Junction to his interests at the Luna Cafe in Mitchell by way of Scotty's Road House in Hamel.
- Benld was known to be the site of one of the largest stills that operated illegally during prohibition. Number 5, as it was called by locals, referred to it in relation to the other four coal mines in the area. It was raided and closed in March, 1928.
- The Luna Cafe in Mitchell was reputedly the center of a number of questionable activities. It is rumored that when the red neon cherry on its sign was lit up, the professional girls were keeping business hours.
- Several infamous prisons are located on Illinois Route 66 at Joliet and Crest Hill. The former Joliet Prison has been used in movies like *The Blues Brothers* and television series like *Prison Break*.

It is the subject of *Percy's Song* written by Bob Dylan. Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill is where Richard Spect was housed and John Wayne Gacy was put to death.

- The Riveria Supper Club near Gardner was frequented by Al Capone and his brother Ralph. A freezer in the basement with a steel door was said to be used as a safe for liquor and gambling machines.
- The town of Cicero became the Capone Gang headquarters following the 1924 Mayoral Election, in which Capone ran a puppet candidate.
- Coonhound Johnny's Road House north of Lincoln was notorious for gambling. Johnny ran bootleg liquor under the floorboards of his truck (which he protected with cages of snarling coonhounds) and according to Ernie Edwards, provided slot machines to local establishments like The Pig Hip. Ernie also reports serving as a driver for Johnny and Al Capone after Al's release from prison in 1939. Coonhound Johnny was the only moonshine runner pardoned by President Calvin Coolidge.
- "Revenuers," U.S. Treasury agents, patrolled Route 66 and raided suspected establishments which made or sold moonshine or operated illegal gambling machines.
- Godley was once well known for its popular red light district. One such house of ill-repute was a particular favorite, as it sat directly on top of the county line. Here, both the "ladies," as well as their customers could avoid the local law by just stepping to the other side of the house.

Sub-theme #8

As a transportation hub of the nation, Chicago was the logical starting point of Route 66.

- 8.1 Canals, rivers, trails and railways preceded Route 66 on the corridor from Chicago to St Louis. Because transportation radiated out in all directions, Chicago became the trade, industry, financial, and agriculture center of the nation.
- 8.2 Route 66 carried politicians to Springfield and gangsters to small towns and St. Louis.
- 8.3 The intersection of Jackson and Michigan Boulevards was the starting point of Route 66 until Jackson was lengthened to Lakeshore Drive and outbound traffic was diverted to Adams Street. Buckingham Fountain, built in 1927, is the ceremonial starting point of Route 66.
- 8.4 The corner of Jackson and Michigan boulevards is the only place where 66 and the Dixie Highway intersect.
- 8.5 The Architectural Foundation on the corner of Jackson and Michigan boulevards offers cityscape tours of downtown Chicago, the “birthplace of the skyscraper.” Many structures of historical and architectural interest line Route 66 in Chicago.
- 8.6 The start of Route 66 connects visitors to the history of the Chicago fire of 1871 and World Columbian Exposition of 1893.
- 8.7 Douglas Park on Ogden Avenue is a monument to 19th and 20th century architects and city planners.



As a hub of transportation, commerce, and industry, Chicago served as the eastern terminus of Route 66. October, 2007



The skyline of Chicago punctured by skyscrapers is an exciting start to the Route 66 experience and a contrast to the rural cities along the highway. October, 2007



Chapter 3—

Community Interpretive Resources



Our Lady of the Highway Shrine on Route 66, Raymond. April, 2007



Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago. November, 2007



The "Five Senses" stained glass windows in Dwight's former Keeley Institute (now the Fox Development Center). March, 2007

Resource Inventory

Effective interpretative media links buildings, objects, and even landscapes to intangible meanings and human values that are implicit in the themes and messages.

This comprehensive inventory of community interpretive resources along Historic Illinois Route 66 organizes the physical artifacts, buildings, and landscapes by region and community, categorizes them by their relationship to Route 66, and links them to the appropriate themes and messages. These lists are derived from participants in ten regional community meetings, from physical inventories and photo documentation carried out by the interpretive planners, and from books and other media that document and describe the resources of the road.

Regional meetings were organized by the Route 66 Illinois Heritage Project in ten communities during the summer and fall of 2007. Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted the meetings, described the interpretive planning process, and solicited input by posing four lead questions:

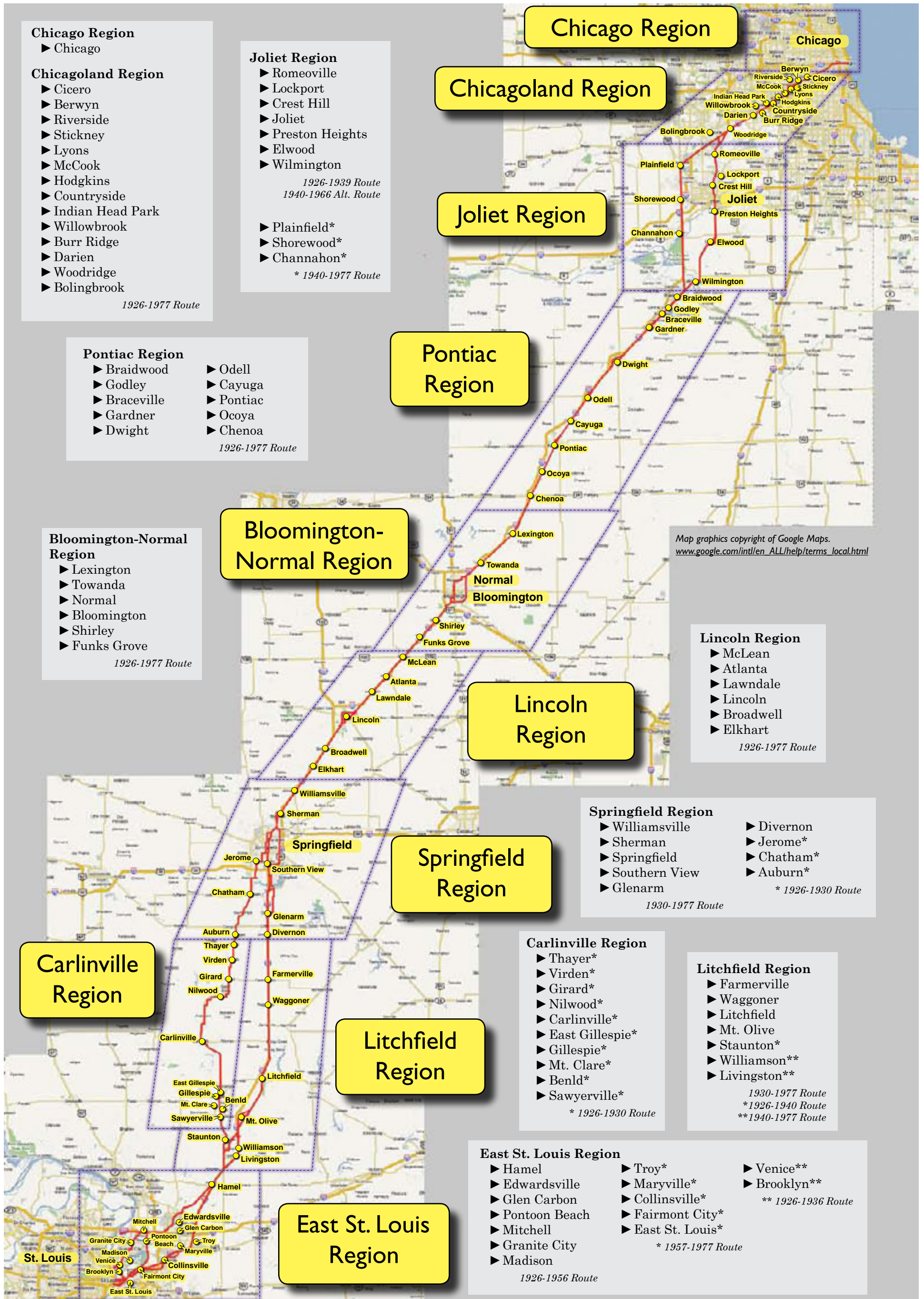
1. When a Route 66 tourist is in town, what are some "must see" places, things, or activities that he/she should experience?
2. What stories about your community would you share with travelers?
3. What documents, people, or other resources will help us learn about Route 66 in your community?
4. Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

Answers to these questions were recorded verbatim and are reported in Appendix 1 of this document.

Beginning in 1989, the Route 66 Association of Illinois and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) conducted inventories of the road, published visitor



Historic Illinois Route 66: Community Overview Map



- Chicago Region**
- ▶ Chicago
- Chicagoland Region**
- ▶ Cicero
 - ▶ Berwyn
 - ▶ Riverside
 - ▶ Stickney
 - ▶ Lyons
 - ▶ McCook
 - ▶ Hodgkins
 - ▶ Countryside
 - ▶ Indian Head Park
 - ▶ Willowbrook
 - ▶ Burr Ridge
 - ▶ Darien
 - ▶ Woodridge
 - ▶ Bolingbrook
- 1926-1977 Route*

- Joliet Region**
- ▶ Romeoville
 - ▶ Lockport
 - ▶ Crest Hill
 - ▶ Joliet
 - ▶ Preston Heights
 - ▶ Elwood
 - ▶ Wilmington
- 1926-1939 Route*
1940-1966 Alt. Route
- ▶ Plainfield*
 - ▶ Shorewood*
 - ▶ Channahon*
- * 1940-1977 Route*

- Pontiac Region**
- ▶ Braidwood
 - ▶ Godley
 - ▶ Braceville
 - ▶ Gardner
 - ▶ Dwight
 - ▶ Odell
 - ▶ Cayuga
 - ▶ Pontiac
 - ▶ Ocoya
 - ▶ Chenoa
- 1926-1977 Route*

- Bloomington-Normal Region**
- ▶ Lexington
 - ▶ Towanda
 - ▶ Normal
 - ▶ Bloomington
 - ▶ Shirley
 - ▶ Funks Grove
- 1926-1977 Route*

- Lincoln Region**
- ▶ McLean
 - ▶ Atlanta
 - ▶ Lawndale
 - ▶ Lincoln
 - ▶ Broadwell
 - ▶ Elkhart
- 1926-1977 Route*

- Springfield Region**
- ▶ Williamsville
 - ▶ Sherman
 - ▶ Springfield
 - ▶ Southern View
 - ▶ Glenarm
 - ▶ Divernon
 - ▶ Jerome*
 - ▶ Chatham*
 - ▶ Auburn*
- * 1926-1930 Route*
1930-1977 Route

- Carlinville Region**

- Carlinville Region**
- ▶ Thayer*
 - ▶ Virden*
 - ▶ Girard*
 - ▶ Nilwood*
 - ▶ Carlinville*
 - ▶ East Gillespie*
 - ▶ Gillespie*
 - ▶ Mt. Clare*
 - ▶ Benld*
 - ▶ Sawyerville*
- * 1926-1930 Route*

- Litchfield Region**
- ▶ Farmerville
 - ▶ Waggoner
 - ▶ Litchfield
 - ▶ Mt. Olive
 - ▶ Staunton*
 - ▶ Williamson**
 - ▶ Livingston**
- 1930-1977 Route*
** 1926-1940 Route*
*** 1940-1977 Route*

- East St. Louis Region**
- ▶ Hamel
 - ▶ Edwardsville
 - ▶ Glen Carbon
 - ▶ Pontoon Beach
 - ▶ Mitchell
 - ▶ Granite City
 - ▶ Madison
 - ▶ Troy*
 - ▶ Maryville*
 - ▶ Collinsville*
 - ▶ Fairmont City*
 - ▶ East St. Louis*
 - ▶ Venice**
 - ▶ Brooklyn**
- * 1957-1977 Route*
*** 1926-1936 Route*
1926-1956 Route

- East St. Louis Region**

Map graphics copyright of Google Maps.
www.google.com/intl/en_ALL/help/terms_local.html

guides and maps, and provided grants and guidance to preserve and interpret places along the route. The documents, museum exhibits, and roadside signs created by these groups has been invaluable in the development of the resource inventories.

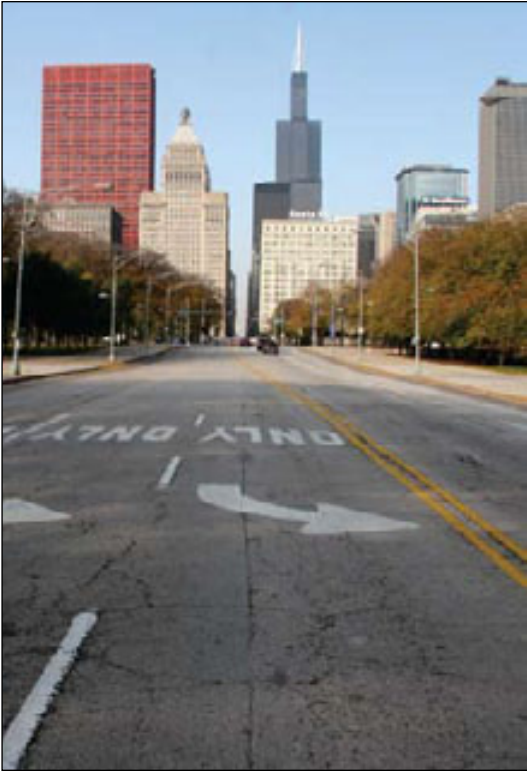
Categorizing Interpretive Resources

Resources have been organized into specific experience categories. These categories provide a way to prioritize preservation and development, while targeting special interest groups (Chapter 4).

Symbols identify the category (or categories) that each resource fits into.

<p>Primary Resources:</p>	<p>Secondary Resources:</p>
<p>Directly relate to Route 66 and its history</p>	<p>Do not directly relate to Route 66, but are located along or near the byway</p>
<p> Historic road infrastructure: Pavement, curbing, bridges, mile markers, signs, rest areas</p>	<p> Attraction relates to community's history: historic sites, museums, buildings, cemeteries, artwork, murals</p>
<p> Historic services facilities and signs: Motels, restaurants, gas stations, garages, bars, police stations, businesses, advertising signs</p>	<p> Attraction relates to transportation: cars, trains, flight, racetracks, I&M Canal</p>
<p> Historic roadside attractions and signs: Attractions (shrines, drive-ins, fiberglass giants) and signs built specifically for Route 66 travelers</p>	<p> Attraction relates to agriculture or mining: farms, grain elevators, monuments, quarries</p>
<p> Modern services that interpret or are themed to Route 66: Motels, restaurants, rest areas themed to Route 66 or that have era kitsch.</p>	<p> Attraction relates to landscape or natural history: prairies, natural areas, lakes, gardens, nature centers, bike trails, parks, zoos</p>
<p> Modern attractions that interpret or are themed to Route 66: Entertainment, festivals, museums, halls of fame, murals, antique malls</p>	<p> Other attractions: Major museums, national historic sites and cemeteries, and others that do not fit above categories</p>
<p> Core Route 66 Experience: Primary resources with this additional icon are “must see” attractions for travelers on Illinois Historic Route 66. These resources are the best direct connections to the scenic byway and help tell a holistic story.</p>	

October, 2007



Looking down Jackson Boulevard, toward downtown Chicago. This was the alignment of Route 66 through the city after 1933. October, 2007

Courtesy of Images of America: Route 66 in Chicago, David G. Clark, 2007



Looking north up Michigan Avenue in 1921. Grant Park renovations are underway on the right side of the road.

Interpretive Resources in Chicago

Regional Overview:

“The windy city,” “the city of the big shoulders,” Chicago, is a world city which each year attracts almost 12 million domestic business travelers, 33 million domestic leisure visitors and more than one million international visitors. With a population of nearly 3 million people, the city is the anchor of the Chicago metropolitan area, commonly called Chicagoland, which has a population of over 9.7 million people in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana, making it the third largest metropolitan area in the U.S.

Located at the site of a portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watershed, Chicago was incorporated as a village in 1833 and then later as a city in March 1837. Within several decades, it would become a major transportation hub, as well as the business, financial, and cultural capital of the Midwest. Since the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, it has been regarded as one of the ten most influential cities in the world. It is rich in history and renowned for its architecture, museums and lakeshore location.

Relationship to Route 66:

Before the advent of Route 66, the Pontiac Trail, SBI 4, was a paved road linking Chicago and St. Louis. With the designation of numbered Federal highways in 1926, Route 4 was simply assigned as part of the great diagonal road called Route 66. Many tangible and intangible resources of Chicago Route 66 exist virtually unchanged from 80 years ago. Most important, it is the physical and sentimental beginning of the road. Route 66 begins in Chicago and ends in Los Angeles.

Any tour of the Mother Road should start in Chicago, the “Gateway to the West” (of course, there are those contrarians who travel east and end their

tour there). Route 66 began in 1926 on the corner of Jackson and Michigan Boulevards. It traveled from Lake Michigan through skyscraper canyons, out to the suburbs and prairie farmland. For the whole existence of Route 66, travelers were fortified with breakfast (and Milk Duds) at Lou Mitchell's before embarking on the journey. Many stayed a day or two to savor the architecture, history, culture, and cuisine of the city (including The Berghoff restaurant). Today, the magnificence of the “windy city” continues to attract travelers from around the world.

Interpretive Resources:

► **Buckingham Fountain**



Built in 1927 in Grant Park, is based on a Versailles Palace fountain. This is one of the largest fountains in the world. Daily music and light displays during the summer make this a popular attraction. Constructed one year after Route 66, it is the nostalgic and symbolic starting point of the road.



Buckingham Fountain, Chicago. October, 2007

► **The Chicago Architecture Foundation**



Located in the historic Santa Fe Building where the Road began and ended in 1926. Visitors are offered exhibits, tours and Chicago memorabilia. Route 66 tours, exhibits, and publications would be a natural addition to their offerings. The Foundation is interested in contributing to the Route 66 interpretive effort.

Courtesy of the Chicago Architecture Foundation, www.architecture.org



Santa Fe Building, Chicago. October, 2007

► **Grant Park/Millennium Park**



Built from landfill on the lakeshore, this park hosted the Columbian Exposition and contains many attractions including Millennium Park, the Art Institute of Chicago, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum of Natural History, and Adler Planetarium.



Visitors at the Cloud Gate Sculpture in Millennium Park, Chicago. October, 2007

► **Skyscrapers and Historic Buildings along Jackson Blvd. and Adams St.**



Many significant structures line the inbound and outbound Route 66 corridors. Of special



Sears Tower, Chicago. January, 2004

interest to travelers are the Sears Tower, Marquette Building, Chicago Board of Trade, Union Station, and Old St. Patrick's Church. You have the sense that you are in the nation's economic hub as you walk through the narrow concrete canyons. The monumental buildings and dense traffic provide a contrast to the open farmland on the rest of Illinois Historic Route 66.

► **Sears Tower** 

A skyscraper constructed in 1973 by the Sears, Roebuck & Co. At the time, it was the tallest building in the world. Today, it continues to be the tallest building in the United States at 1,451 feet tall. The Sears Tower Skydeck located on the 103rd floor, 1,353 feet up, is one of the most famous tourist attractions in Chicago, and provides a commanding view of Ogden Avenue and the Southwest suburbs of Route 66. Eastbound motorists are lured to the downtown by its towering height. Sears Tower is symbolic of the big, bold, and booming City of Broad Shoulders. 233 South Wacker Drive

► **Lou Mitchell's Diner**  

Built in 1923, Lou Mitchell's has served Route 66 travelers since its beginning. As part of its unique tradition, women receive a free box of milk duds. It was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2002. Its atmosphere and menu remain true to the heyday of Route 66. 565 W. Jackson Boulevard



Lou Mitchell's Diner, Chicago. October, 2007

► **Berghoff Restaurant** 

Near the center of the Chicago Loop, the restaurant was opened in 1898 by Herman Joseph Berghoff. It has served Route 66 travelers since the beginning. The Berghoff Restaurant closed in February, 2006. The basement cafe was reopened by Carlyn Berghoff in April, 2006 as the "Berghoff Cafe." The bar was also reopened under the new

name “17/West at the Berghoff.” The dining room is offered as a private banquet hall.

► **1910 Railroad Viaduct** 

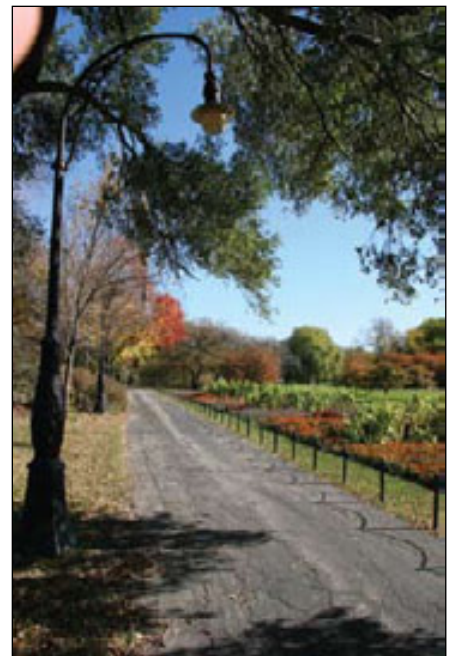
As the only crossing of the multiple tracks, the viaduct between Western Avenue and Rockwell Street dictated that Route 66 follow this corridor. This grey concrete monolith appears old and utilitarian. Its appearance defies the importance it had in channeling Route 66 through Chicago.



1910 Railroad Viaduct, Chicago. November, 2007

► **Douglas Park** 

This park was created by the Illinois legislature in 1869 to give Chicagoans a nature area on the edge of the city. Several early 20th century Prairie School structures designed by landscape architect Jens Jensen and others include the Flower Hall and Reflecting Pool, the Pergola, and the Georgian style Field House. Route 66 bisects the park. A visit to this “prairie park” makes one aware of the historic growth of Chicago west into the open countryside. Ogden Ave.



Douglas Park, Chicago. October, 2007

► **Castle Car Wash** 

This unique building started as a classic style filling station in 1925 and was in business until the early 1980s. It is considered an endangered Route 66 icon. 3801 Ogden Ave.



Castle Car Wash, Chicago. November, 2007

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- Sub-theme #1: Route 66 symbolizes the spirit and freedom of America and the pursuit of the American dream.
- Sub-theme #8: As a transportation hub of the nation, Chicago was a logical starting point of Route 66.



Busy streets on Route 66 through Cicero, heading toward downtown Chicago. March, 2007

Interpretive Resources in Chicagoland

Cicero, Berwyn, Riverside, Stickney, Lyons, McCook, Hodgkins, Countryside, Indian Head Park, Willowbrook, Darien, Woodridge, Bolingbrook

Regional Overview: *The Southwest Suburbs*

The suburbs of Chicago, collectively called Chicagoland, are described as “The Birthplace of Chicago.” In a literal sense, the Chicago Portage connecting the Great Lakes and the Mississippi is where the city began. But the suburbs are where it grew. Route 66 through the southwest suburbs is a story of decline of old industries and their communities in the nearby Chicago suburbs and rebirth and growth of new industries in the outer suburbs. The Chicago bedroom communities along Ogden Avenue and Joliet Road experienced their greatest growth during the Route 66 “Era of Significance.”

Relationship to Route 66:

These southwestern Chicago suburbs were along old Indian trails and trading routes that became SBI 4 (State Bond Issue 4) and eventually Route 66. The Chicago suburbs that formed the 66 corridor remained relatively consistent since the only underpass of the multiple railroad tracks was funneled through the 1910 viaduct on Ogden Avenue. The outbound march of residential development from Chicago in the last sixty years is evident and has been accelerated by the Stevenson Expressway (I-55). Most of these communities are transitioning from manufacturing and farm economies to light industry and service businesses. Many “era of significance” buildings and streetscapes are still intact, though most are in need of restoration. The architectural



Chicagoland communities, like Berwyn, celebrate their connection to Historic Route 66. March, 2007

character of the urban landscape still gives hints of the small autonomous villages that Route 66 passed through in its heyday.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Cicero

Ogden Avenue, a former Indian trail, was one of the early thoroughfares through Cicero. When the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was built westward from Chicago in 1848, Cicero became the first western suburb connected to the city by rail. In 1869 Cicero was incorporated as a town. Cicero's location on several rail lines influenced the Chicago & North Western Railway and the Chicago & Alton Railroad companies to establish manufacturing and repair shops there. Small communities began to develop around these and other industries.

Western Electric established a telephone equipment manufacturing plant in Cicero in 1904 employing more than 20,000 people. Cicero's population more than quadrupled over the next 20 years, with the majority of newcomers immigrating from Eastern European. The current population is 85,000.

Cicero's position at the edge of Chicago attracted criminal elements wishing to evade Chicago's law enforcement agencies. In the mid to late 1920s, the gangster Al Capone established his headquarters in Cicero.

► Western Electric Hawthorne Works

The factory once employed 40,000 workers. It operated from 1906 to 1983 as the main manufacturer for the Bell system and included Bell Labs where the vacuum tube, desktop phones, movie sound, and air to ground communications were developed. Most of the site has been demolished or converted to other uses, including the tower that was incorporated into the Hawthorne Works Shopping Center at Cicero Ave. and Cermak Road. This vast complex is representative of industrial development on Route 66.

Courtesy of CommunityWalk's Labor Trail, www.communitywalk.com/map/list/5258



Historic photo of the Western Electric Hawthorne Works, Cicero



Henry's Drive-In, Cicero. March, 2007

► **Henry's Drive-In**  

Their slogan, “It’s a Meal in Itself,” refers to the way they serve Chicago-style hot dogs in the same bag with French fries and a pickle spear. It is a regional mom and pop diner with a fun old 66 personality. 6031 West Ogden Avenue.

Berwyn

In 1846, the first land in “Berwyn” was deeded to Theodore Doty who built the eight-foot wide Plank Road from Chicago to Ottawa. This thoroughfare became what is now Ogden Avenue in South Berwyn. In 1856, Thomas F. Baldwin purchased 347 acres of land, in hopes of developing a rich and aristocratic community called “LaVergne.” However, few people were interested in grassy marshland. Mud Lake extended nearly to the Southern border of today’s Berwyn, and the land flooded regularly during heavy rains. Also the only mode of transportation to LaVergne was horse and buggy on the Plank Road.

With the advent of commuter trains, the first two decades of the twentieth century saw Berwyn develop in much the same way as other Chicago suburbs. It was a place in which, as “The WPA Guide to Illinois” states, “harried commuters relaxed in the evening, weeded gardens, set hens, and mowed their lawns.” Berwyn’s growth was such that in 1902, it was incorporated as a village. Six years later, on June 6, 1908, Berwyn became a city, receiving its official charter from the State of Illinois. The 1910 census recorded Berwyn’s population as 5,841.

Block after block of bungalows rose as Berwyn’s population swelled; from 14,150 in 1920 to 47,027 in 1930 - an increase of 222% in just ten years. Today, Berwyn has the most significant collection of Chicago-style bungalows in the nation. Families with Czech and Bohemian roots, together with many Italian-Americans, Greeks, Lithuanians, Poles, Yugoslavians and Ukrainians, have been joined in recent years by Hispanics, African and Asian Americans who now call Berwyn home.



Lit rainbow glass block signs welcome travelers to Berwyn. March, 2007

► **Rainbow Route 66 Welcome Sign and Street Banners** 

Berwyn celebrates its Route 66 heritage with banners and a unique glass block welcome sign that glows with multi-colored lights. The community also hosts a Route 66 car show every September. www.berwynrt66.com

► **The Spindle** 

The Spindle is a 40-foot spike skewered with 9 cars that was created by Dustin Shuler in 1989. It is public art (currently) displayed in the Cermak Plaza Shopping Center on Cermak Road and Harlem Avenue.

Riverside

Riverside is situated on a beautiful stretch of the Des Plaines River. Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous landscape architect, designed an elite suburban community here in 1865. The curvilinear street plan and the open spaces are landmarks in American residential planning. In 1893 several wealthy local residents opened the Riverside Golf Club, one of the oldest golf clubs in the Chicago area. Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, and other prominent local architects drew the plans for houses that still stand. A striking Romanesque village hall was built in 1895, and in 1901 the Burlington line constructed a charming stone railroad station.

In the 1920s and late 1930s, many modest houses were constructed. The remaining residential areas were developed during the post–World War II boom and by 1960 no space was left. Riverside is an upscale suburban community of 8,500 that includes small, well-maintained bungalows, larger comfortable houses from the 1920s and 1950s, and huge Victorian and early-twentieth-century mansions that attract architectural tours. The entire village was designated a National Historical Landmark in 1970.



“The Spindle” of skewered cars in Cermak Plaza, Berwyn. November, 2007

Courtesy of City-Data.com, www.city-data.com/city/Riverside-Illinois.html



The Riverside Landscape Architectural District includes beautiful historic buildings, like the water tower.

Courtesy of City-Data.com, www.city-data.com/city/Riverside-Illinois.html



Historic village hall on the Des Plaines River in Riverside.

► Riverside Landscape Architectural District

The community is recognized as one of the first planned suburban communities in the country. A CD tour is available online and for purchase. This beautiful community has graced Route 66 for its entire existence. 708-447-2542.

Stickney

Until about 1900 the village of Stickney was covered by Mud Lake across which ran the historic portage trail between the Chicago and Des Plaines Rivers. Mud Lake began to recede with the construction of the Illinois & Michigan Canal in 1836, and by 1900 the Sanitary and Ship Canal had left it relatively dry. Developers moved quickly to build on the reclaimed land. Most early residents worked as truck farmers or in the quarries near town.

Neighboring Cicero and Berwyn boomed in the 1920s, and Stickney also expanded. Around 1920, Al Capone and other criminals moved into Stickney and a period of illegal activities took root. Stickney has achieved fame for its sewage treatment plant, the largest in the world, which takes up 40% of the village.

Lyons

The marshy region at what is now 47th and Harlem separates waters that flow into the Great Lakes from those that flow into the Mississippi River. During wet seasons Native Americans could travel from the South Branch of the Chicago River to the Des Plaines River through an area called Mud Lake. The Chicago Portage is the birthplace of the city. A small portion of the historic connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi waterways is preserved in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Portage Woods and Ottawa Trail Woods in Lyons. It is one of only two National Historic Sites in Illinois and one of the few in the country that is not owned by the National Park Service.


Courtesy of the Village of Stickney, www.villageofstickney.com




The Village of Stickney Municipal Building.

A trading post and tavern was established in the late 1820s near the confluence of Salt Creek and the Des Plaines River. Construction on the Illinois & Michigan Canal brought workers to the region. German farmers settled here, but growth was slow, in part owing to fear of prairie fires. A large brewery began operations in 1856. By the early 1880s, a thriving limestone quarry and lime kilns, a flour mill, and numerous taverns constituted the town's major commercial enterprises. Harvesting ice from the Des Plaines River provided seasonal employment.

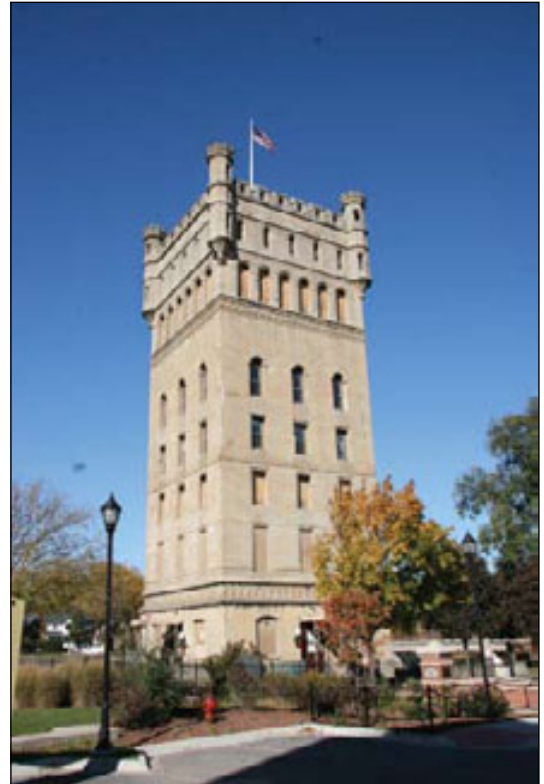
Formal incorporation came in 1888. A brewer, George Hofmann, Jr., built a power dam on the Des Plaines River in 1908, and adjacent to the dam he erected the Hofmann Tower, the center of a park complete with boat rides on the river. The paving of Ogden Avenue in 1914 expedited auto travel, and the Chicago & Joliet Electric Railway made the town even more accessible. Residential development boomed after 1945, when most of the town's available land was converted to housing. The last amusement park closed in the 1970s, as did the red-light district. The population was 10,255 in 2000.

► **Hofmann Tower** 

Built in 1908 by a local brewer as a centerpiece for his Des Plaines River recreational business, the tower now houses the Lyons Historical Museum. Open periodically. 708-447-0753

► **Chicago Portage National Historic Site** 

This site is considered the birthplace of Chicago, a small portion of the historic land connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. Long used by Native Americans, Marquette and Jolliet crossed it in 1673. Jolliet suggested a short canal cut through the portage area would be vital for transportation. This became a reality 160 years later when the I&M Canal was completed. Located in Portage Woods Forest Preserve and Ottawa Trail Woods Forest Preserve.



Hofmann Tower, Lyons. November, 2007

Courtesy of the Friends of the Chicago Portage, www.chicagoportage.org



Memorial Statue at Chicago Portage National Historic Site, Lyons.

McCook

Permanent settlement began in the 1880s when several quarries began operating. This dangerous and exhausting work primarily attracted youthful male laborers—first Eastern European immigrants, including Poles, Croatians, and Italians, and later African Americans and Mexican Americans. The stone was shipped on the Illinois & Michigan Canal and later on the Sanitary and Ship Canal.

In 1926 McCook incorporated as a village. In the middle 1930s the Electro-Motive Company, a subsidiary of the General Motors Corporation, opened a diesel engine plant. During World War II, a large aluminum sheet mill provided airplane “skins.” By 2000 85 manufacturing and commercial firms operated here. The McCook-Hodgkins quarry, through which Route 66 ran until the road became unstable, covers over six hundred acres and produces seven million tons of crushed stone per year.



Snuffy's 24-Hour Grill, McCook. November, 2007

► Snuffy's 24 Hour Grill

Snuffy's is a Route 66 eatery whose classic Formica tables, vinyl seats, and counter stools are little changed from its 1964 opening. On Joliet Road west of Riverside Drive

► McCook Quarry

The massive 650-acre quarry, currently owned by Vulcan Materials Company, was opened over a hundred years ago. Nearly 8.5 million tons of crushed limestone are quarried each year. See the “Hodgkins” section for more details. 5500 Joliet Road, 866-713-4862

Hodgkins

Transportation and stone quarries have shaped the development of Hodgkins. In the late 1880s the Santa Fe Railroad came through this area and the Kimball and Cobb Stone Company opened a large limestone quarry. The town was named for Jefferson Hodgkins, president of the company, and was incorporated as a village in 1896. Italian Americans and others arrived

in the 1890s to help build the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

The quarry continued to dominate the local scene until the 1950s, although the economy diversified somewhat with the addition of numerous motor freight terminals. In 1995 United Parcel Service opened a huge sorting facility here. In 1997 the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway established an intermodal freight facility at Hodgkins.

► **McCook Quarry**   

Spanning both McCook and Hodgkins, this quarry is a 650-acre limestone pit that Route 66 spanned on a precipitous ribbon of road until recently, when it was declared unsafe for travel. A viewing tower at this point would be desirable. The quarry is a visual focal point, and has been throughout the heydays of 66. Its immense size and depth, not to mention the ominous looking abandoned roadway, demand a travelers attention and beg for an explanation. It is ironic that a quarry providing road building material has closed down a portion of the famous road. 5500 Joliet Road, 866-713-4862



The original alignment of Route 66 is indefinitely closed through the McCook Quarry. March, 2007



A viewing tower would provide views of the old roadway through McCook Quarry.

Countryside

Countryside was originally inhabited by the Potawatomi Indians and later by early American pioneers in the beginning of the 19th century. The area remained as large expanses of rural farmland until the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which sent thousands of City dwellers into what is now the West Suburban Chicago Region. With land selling for only \$2 an acre, areas such as Countryside offered a respite from the congestion and industry in Chicago.

The area largely remained a quiet farming community until the post World War II era when suburban areas such as Countryside began to experience explosive growth. These new pioneers



came looking for affordable homes and safe places to raise and educate their children. Countryside began its transformation into a bedroom community for workers commuting into Chicago.

Following inquiries from surrounding incorporated communities, the City of Countryside was officially incorporated in 1960. With a 1960 population of about 2,000, the City has since almost tripled its original population, primarily through annexation of surrounding residential areas.


► **The Wishing Well Motel** 

Dating from 1941 and demolished in 2007, this motel was a retreat for Chicago entertainers and Route 66 travelers. The iconic wishing well structure is now preserved at the Route 66 Museum in Pontiac. 6363 Joliet Road



► **Route 66 Classic Motors** 

Houses a 6,000 square-foot showroom with extensive and varied collectible automobiles. It was given dealership status in 2002 and is staffed by collector car enthusiasts. 6420 S. Joliet Road, 708-588-1560

► **White Castle Restaurant / Marx Brothers chicken farm** 

In 1917 the Marx Brothers comedy team bought a chicken farm near Joliet and LaGrange Roads, reportedly to avoid the draft. Groucho Marx later claimed that the brothers spent too much time at Wrigley Field watching the Chicago Cubs to make the farm economically viable. The White Castle restaurant in Countryside is on the site of the Marx Brothers chicken farm.

The classic Wishing Well Motel was an icon along Route 66 since the 1940s. It was demolished in 2007 after being damaged by fire. Countryside. March, 2007.



White Castle represents the oldest hamburger chain in the United States, having been founded in 1921 by Walter Anderson. Franchises like White Castle eventually flourished on 66 and later on the interstates,

Route 66 Classic Motors, Countryside. March, 2007

replacing the Mom and Pop diners and chicken stands. The castle architecture is said to be inspired by the Chicago Water Tower, while the clean white exterior and the stainless steel interior are a visual counter to Sinclair Lewis' book attacking the unsanitary conditions of the meat packing industry of their day.

Indian Head Park

The first Democratic Convention of Cook County was held in the area in 1835. Just north of the village, now on the site of the Timber Trails subdivision, is one of the last camps of the Potawatomi Indians in Illinois. The Village of Indian Head Park was incorporated on August 4, 1959. The 2000 census listed 3,685 residents.

► Wolf's Head Inn

This restaurant is filled with curiosities and offers good food. Although not a historic restaurant, it is idiosyncratic in the Route 66 tradition. Joliet Road and Wolf Road, 708-246-0400

Burr Ridge

Burr Ridge's gently rolling hills were carved by glaciers at the end of the last ice age, and most of the village lies on the Valparaiso Moraine. Flagg Creek, a tributary of the Des Plaines River, runs through town.

After 1848, farmers shipped their goods to Chicago along the Illinois & Michigan Canal. A small settlement of German farmers also inhabited Flagg Creek by the 1880s. In 1917 the International Harvester Company purchased 414 acres for an experimental farm, where it tested the world's first all-purpose tractor, the Farmall. Also in 1917, the Cook County Prison Farm (also known as the Bridewell Farm) began operation in what is now Burr Ridge.

April, 2003



Marx Brothers metal silhouette statues in Joliet. The brothers owned a chicken farm in Countryside in 1917.



The Wolf's Head Inn in Indian Head Park houses an eccentric collection of paraphernalia from around the world. March, 2007



Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket, Willowbrook.
March, 2007



The interior of Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket is decorated with vintage Route 66 and chicken paraphernalia. March, 2007

From the 1940s to the 1990s Burr Ridge converted farmland to subdivisions. As with other towns in the industrial corridor southwest of Chicago, close proximity to Interstates 294 and 55 spurred development in Burr Ridge.

Willowbrook


This bedroom community in DuPage County, was incorporated from the Ridgemoor subdivision in 1960. Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket has been a Route 66 icon since 1946.

► Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket

Dell Rhea's began in the late 1930s or early 1940s as a lunch counter in an old gas station along Route 66. The owner, Irv Kolarik, learned a special fried chicken recipe from some local farm women. The chicken was a hit and business boomed. An expanded building was built next door in 1946, which continues to serve travelers today. This 66 icon has survived as a remnant in a sea of residential and commercial development. It is an example of a "chicken diner" that was common on Route 66. Dell Rhea's has maintained its down home charm and menu. It is decorated with a vintage chicken motif and the historic neon sign is turned on every evening. 630-325-0780

Darien

The community began as a stagecoach inn in 1835. However, it was not incorporated until 1969 when four Chicago suburbs decided to unify as one city. The mayor suggested that it be named for Darien, Connecticut, which he found to be a very pleasant and attractive community. Today, Darien is known as "A Nice Place to Live." This became the motto for the town depicted in "Back to the Future."

► **National Shrine of St. Therese and Castle Eden** 

Castle Eden, built in 1903, is a 1/10 scale model of the White House. The former 50 acre estate on which it stands is now the National Shrine of St. Therese and Carmelite Retreat Center. The shrine has a museum and gift shop. The chapel holds the largest religious wood carving in the country, hand carved in Italy of lindenwood. 8501 Bailey Road, 630-969-3311

Woodridge

Woodridge was incorporated in 1959 with less than 500 residents, on a wooded area of high ground overlooking the DuPage River's East Branch. A special census commissioned in 2003 put the population at 33,253. Woodridge is a young community with the vast majority of its homes, businesses, and churches constructed after the 1950s. In July of 2007, Woodridge was placed on *Money Magazine's* "100 Best Places to Live" list. Woodridge was ranked #61.

Bolingbrook

The modern Village of Bolingbrook got its start in the first half of the 1960s when the first builder laid out the first housing tract in the farm fields just north of old U.S. 66 and beside Illinois Route 53. The three original home tracts - sold from 1961 to 1965 under the names of Westbury, Colonial Village and King's Park were all part of the original "Bolingbrook Subdivision." It was these homes that were incorporated as the Village of Bolingbrook in 1965 with a population of 500. The young families, for the most part, were lured out to model homes by advertisements that featured a handsome and distinguished British butler named Mr. Dover. They came via the new Stevenson Expressway, the long umbilical cord that replaced Route 66 from the city of Chicago to the far west farmlands. The village has since grown to almost 70,000 residents.



Castle Eden on the grounds of the St. Therese Shrine and Carmelite Retreat Center, Darien. July, 2007



The largest religious wood carving in the United States depicts the life of St. Therese. In the chapel of the St. Therese Shrine, Darien. July, 2007



Chicken neon at Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket in Willowbrook. July, 2007

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- ▶ Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- ▶ Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- ▶ Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- ▶ Sub-theme #5 : Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.

Interpretive Resources in the Joliet Region

**Plainfield, Shorewood, Channahon,
Romeoville, Lockport, Crest Hill, Joliet,
Preston Heights, Elwood, Wilmington**

Regional Overview: *Crossroads of America*

This section of the route is an intersection of canal, rail, and highway transportation. The I & M Canal, Sanitary and Ship Canal, Chicago and Alton Railroad, Lincoln Highway, Route 66, and more recently, Interstates 80 and 55, all played and still play a significant role in the development of these communities.

Relationship to Route 66:

These towns were settled on or near the I&M canal, mostly in the 1830s. Industries and agriculture developed along the canal which connected the Chicago and Illinois rivers. The canal made water travel possible between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. Railroads, the Ship and Sanitary Canal and highways replaced the I&M canal, and it ceased all operation in 1933.

Joliet is the largest Route 66 community near Chicago and has done much in recent years to celebrate its connection to the road. It is at the intersection of I-80 and I-55, major connections for regional tourists. It was the “Crossroad of America” where the Lincoln Highway and Route 66 intersected. Joliet is taking advantage of its unique location to become a tourism center for Illinois Route 66. The *Blues Brothers* movie is used as a Joliet/Route 66 symbol that audiences can relate to. Greater efforts may be needed to define their local relevance to travelers. For example, “Joliet Jake” (John Belushi) is released from the Joliet Prison while his brother, “Elwood,” is named for the nearby Route 66 town. Their “religious catharsis” occurs in Elwood, Illinois.



Historic downtown Wilmington. March, 2007



Joliet, the largest Route 66 community near Chicago, celebrates its connection to the historic road. April, 2003

Courtesy of Waymarking.com, www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM2TXE



Plainfield is one of two places that Historic Route 66 and the Lincoln Highway intersect.

Courtesy of Waymarking.com, www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMPMI



The Plainfield House, built in 1836, was the home of Dr. E.C. Wight, one of the first physicians in northern Illinois.

The “idiosyncratic personality” of Route 66 comes to life in this segment with the “Joliet Kicks on 66” attractions, the Launching Pad Drive-In in Wilmington, and “the world’s greatest chicken” at White Fence Farm.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Plainfield

Tracing its roots to the 1820s, the village of Plainfield is the oldest American community in Will County. It was earlier a Potawatomie village site along the DuPage River. Over the years it has grown from a river and railroad town to become a thriving suburb of Chicago.

Plainfield’s main thoroughfare, Lockport Street, was chosen as the route of the Lincoln Highway, which began in 1913. The road was the first paved, transcontinental highway and stretched from New York to San Francisco. Later, when U.S. Route 66 joined the Lincoln Highway for three blocks in the heart of the village, Plainfield was at the intersection of the two longest highways in the world.

► Route 66 and Lincoln Highway Shared Route

Banners in downtown commemorate the 1930-40 period when Lincoln Highway and Route 66 joined for three blocks.

► Historic Structures

Three structures are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Plainfield House (1836), Flanders House (1841), and a Standard Oil Gas Station (1928). Located within the Village are numerous Greek Revival, “upright and wing” cottages, a school built in 1847 (which may be the oldest surviving “one-room schoolhouse” in Illinois), and a number of early-19th-century homes.

Shorewood

Established in the 1830s as Troy (after the city in New York), village commerce focused on the DuPage River. The name was changed to Shorewood to reflect the resorts along the river and because a Troy, Illinois already existed. With over 10,000 residents, it has become a thriving suburb of Chicago.

Channahon

Its name meaning “Meeting of the Waters” in the language of the area’s original Potawatomi inhabitants, Channahon is located at the confluence of the Des Plaines and Kankakee rivers, where they form the Illinois River. The Illinois and Michigan Canal (including several locks) runs through most of the village, where it is fed by the water of the DuPage River. Later in the 19th century, a line that eventually came under the control of the Santa Fe Railroad was laid through the eastern portions of the township, but no railroad actually passed through the village itself. In the late 1920s, U.S. Highway 6 came through Channahon; Interstates 80 and 55 followed in the 1960s (although I-80 runs approximately two miles to the north of the village limits).

Channahon’s abundance of transportation links makes its historically small size somewhat puzzling. The demise of the I & M Canal by 1900 certainly contributed to the village’s dwindling population, and the absence of a railroad encouraged business to locate elsewhere. Another possible explanation is that the village did not formally incorporate until 1896, and disincorporated fifteen years later (to avoid liability in an early automobile accident). It did not reincorporate until 1962. Serious development finally began in the 1970s with middle class, and, in the 1990s, upscale homes. As of the 2007 special census, the Village of Channahon’s population is 13,500.

Romeoville

Romeoville, some 30 miles southwest of Chicago, was first called Romeo when nearby Joliet was still called “Juliet.” Founded in the 1830s, the area was home to abundant farmlands and stone quarries.

Courtesy of David Johnsen, www.djwriter.com/cycling/git/day4.html



The Illinois and Michigan Canal in Channahon.



The White Fence Farm near Romeoville is a restaurant of multiple interconnected buildings (above) and houses a diversity of antique machines (right). March, 2007



In 1845, Juliet was changed to Joliet to honor the famous explorer Louis Jolliet. When this happened, Romeo changed to “Romeoville.” Located on the west bank of the Des Plaines River, Romeoville supplied Chicago with produce sent to the city along the historic Illinois & Michigan Canal System, which was opened to commercial traffic in 1848. However, it’s main economic source were the numerous limestone quarries in the area, soon gaining it the nickname “Stone City.” In its heyday, two trainloads of limestone were shipped from Romeoville every morning on the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.

The coming of concrete as a building material spelled the decline of quarrying and Romeoville’s importance was greatly diminished. Lacking new industries, the town’s population gradually declined during the first half of the twentieth century.

However, in the late 1950s, Romeoville annexed several parcels of land and built new subdivisions. The population increased from 197 in 1957 to more than 3500 by 1960. Today, Romeoville is called home to more than 20,000 residents with several distribution centers, national companies, and corporate offices.



► **White Fence Farm**  

This restaurant dating to the 1920s which serves the “World’s Greatest Chicken” family style. While you wait you can play with and observe a large collection of antique machines, cars, and other artifacts in a rambling building that feels like it dates to the 1920s. 630-739-1720



► **Isle a la Cache Museum** 

This museum is situated on an island in the Des Plaines River. Meaning “Island of the Hiding Place,” it is a historic fur trade site operated by the Forest Preserve of Will County. Kid-friendly hands-on exhibits deal with the fur trade of the late 18th Century including trade items and the lifestyles of the Native American people and the voyageurs

Isle a La Cache Museum, Romeoville. March, 2007

who traded for animal pelts.
501 E. Romeo Road, 815-886-1467

► **Fitzpatrick House** 

Patrick Fitzpatrick constructed this house in 1848. He was a laborer who helped construct the I&M canal. The house is made of the same limestone as that quarried for the canal. By 1860, this was one of the largest estates in the Lockport area. It is a solitary structure that has always been a Route 66 landmark. Today, it serves as the Lewis University Alumni Relations Development Office. Contact: Jennifer Doherty, Director of Foundation and Corporate Relations and Grants Services, Lewis University, 815-836-5038



Fitzpatrick House, Romeoville. April, 2007

Lockport

Lockport, located in the Des Plaines River Valley, grew initially as the headquarters for the Illinois & Michigan Canal and as an agricultural processing center. In recent years, history has become a focus of commercial development. In 1968 the Will County Historical Society opened a canal museum in the old I&M Canal headquarters building. The Gaylord Building, built in 1837 to store canal construction materials, was acquired by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is now operated as a museum by the Canal Corridor Association. The old downtown was made a historical district in 1974 and Lockport began calling itself “The Old Canal Town.” In the 1980s restaurants, antique shops, and specialty retailers opened in the historic district.

► **Gaylord Building** 

The oldest remaining commercial building in the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor, the limestone Gaylord Building was built in 1837 to store canal construction materials. It was acquired by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is now operated as a museum by the Canal Corridor Association.
200 West 8th Street



Gaylord Building, Lockport. March, 2007



Norton Building/Illinois State Museum—Lockport Gallery. April, 2007



Pioneer Settlement, Lockport. April, 2007



Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve. April, 2007

► **I&M Canal Museum** 

Will County Historical Society operates a canal museum in the old I&M Canal Commission headquarters building. Here, engineer William Gooding designed the canal and supervised the contractors who hired thousands of immigrant canal workers. The original one-story building was constructed in 1837, with the two-story addition built in 1876. Docents in period dress will guide you through canal and local history exhibits. 8th and State Streets

► **Norton Building/Illinois State Museum—Lockport Gallery**  

The Illinois State Museum Lockport Gallery is located on the first floor of the historic Norton Building, a limestone structure built by Hiram Norton around 1850. Strategically placed at the edge of the I&M Canal, the large, arched portals were used as access points for storing, processing, and packaging barrels of grain. 10th and Commerce Street

► **Pioneer Settlement** 

Behind the museum on the site of the canal Public Landing, is the Pioneer Settlement. These historic structures were moved here from different parts of Will County when they were threatened with demolition in the 1960s. They are reconstructed to give the impression of an early village. The buildings are currently planned for removal and the site will become a canal-side park.

► **Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve** 

Located in the Des Plaines River Valley, adjacent to Route 66, with an open view toward Lockport, this Will County preserve is a 254-acre surviving remnant of the rare “wet dolomite prairie” habitat. Shallow limestone restricts the prairie plant’s roots, and the site is notable for its high number of federal- and state-threatened and endangered species. 0.4 mile trail. 815-726-3306

Crest Hill

Crest Hill incorporated in 1960 to avoid annexation to Joliet. The Lincoln Highway bisects the western half of the city, and old Route 66 travels along its eastern edge. As a new community it has no downtown. The only historic buildings are along Route 66. Crest Hill's motto, "A City of New Beginnings," reflects its short history.

► Stateville Correctional Center

This prison has a historic 1925 "roundhouse" design and is still in operation. While not open to the public, it has an ominous presence for Route 66 travelers and has many stories to tell. The U.S. government tested malaria vaccines on prisoners during WWII. Leopold and Loeb, two university students who murdered a boy in 1924 to prove they could commit the perfect crime, were incarcerated here. And serial killer John Wayne Gacy was put to death here in 1994.

► "Building the Lincoln Highway" Sculpture

This statue depicts a 1915 Joliet road worker pouring concrete. The sculpture and associated interpretive panel are located across the street from the Crest Hill Municipal Center.

Joliet

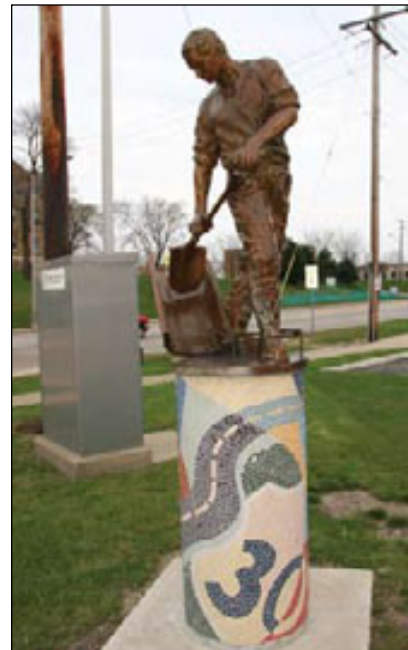
Joliet originally bore the name "Juliet" which was probably a corruption of the of French Canadian explorer Louis Jolliet's name. Jolliet first ventured through this area in the fall of 1673, describing the game as abundant and the prairies wide, surrounded by lush forests.

Though the settlement already existed, the town wasn't officially laid out until 1834. Early settlers were attracted to the Des Plaines River and the fertile soil of the area. Most found ample reason to stay and the town began to grow.

Courtesy of Lloyd DeGrane, Chicago Historical Society (ICHi-24705)



The Stateville Correctional Center has a historic 1925 "roundhouse" design with an interior tower.



"Building the Lincoln Highway" sculpture, Crest Hill. April, 2007



"Joliet Kicks on 66" is a diverse program of replica gas pumps, murals, sculptures, and exhibits that celebrate the city's Route 66 heritage.



The "Route 66 Experience" in the Joliet Area Historical Museum has interactive exhibits that interpret the highway. A mosaic sculpture outside (above) greets visitors to the museum. July, 2007

The opening of the Illinois & Michigan Canal in 1848 spurred Joliet into an era of aggressive growth in both industry and residential development. Soon, mills and factories sprang up and the discovery of rich limestone deposits created a new quarrying industry that flourished. Joliet, like its counterpart, Romeoville down the road, was known as "Stone City."

In the late 1800s, the abundance of soft coal in the area made Joliet a perfect location for an emerging steel industry and soon was established as a steel town, the success of which brought with it a flood of new residents.

Once an industrial city, today Joliet has reinvented itself as a tourist destination. With a population of more than 100,000, Joliet has many historic and cultural attractions. Its unique history with the rivers and canal are symbolized by its many diverse bridges. It features grand architecture in the downtown and supports a superb regional museum. It is also one of the few areas where the Lincoln Highway and Route 66 intersect.

► **"Joliet Kicks on 66" Tours**



Route 66 themed murals, sculptures, mosaics and antique replica gas pumps are found throughout Joliet's New City Center. These and other downtown attractions are part of the Joliet Kicks on 66 driving and walking tours. 877-4-JOLIET, www.jolietkicks.com.

► **"Route 66 Experience:"
Joliet Area Historical Museum**




This "must stop" for Route 66 tourists celebrates the themes and experiences of the people who settled the Joliet area, including a Route 66 Welcome Center, exhibit gallery, discovery room, gift shop, cafe and auditorium. A prominent Route 66 sculpture is outside. It is located at the "Crossroads of America" where Route 66 and Lincoln Highway intersected, 201 N. Ottawa Street.

► **Route 66 Park**  

This park has an overlook for viewing the historic Collins Street Prison where the Blues Brothers and other movies were filmed. Informational kiosks highlight Route 66 attractions in Joliet with directions, photos, and messages. Rich & Creamy on Broadway is also located here. 920 N Broadway Street

► **Collins Street Prison** 

Also known as the Joliet Correctional Center, the prison was built here in 1858 by prison labor. Its 25 foot, 5 foot thick walls are made of pure Joliet limestone. It operated until 2002, having housed up to 1,300 inmates. The classic prison architecture and atmosphere has been the set for several movies and television productions including the Blues Brothers. An exhibition at the Joliet Area Historical Museum interprets the prison.

► **Rich & Creamy on Broadway** 

Typical of ice cream stores that dotted Route 66 in its heyday, when Broadway was a leg of the highway in Joliet. City leaders restored Rich & Creamy back to the retro appearance from its heyday as part of a larger plan by area officials to brand Joliet as the place for tourists to begin their journey along The Mother Road. Jake and Elwood, “The Blues Brothers,” dance atop the tower wrapped in neon lights. Route 66 Park, 920 N Broadway Street, 815-740-2899

► **First Dairy Queen** 

The McCullough family developed soft-serve “ice cream, frozen seconds before you eat it” and called it Dairy Queen. The first store, opened in 1940, was located on Route 66 at 501 N. Chicago Street. The building now serves as a church. The location has great potential to tell the story of “soft serve ice cream” and the history of this popular chain.



The Route 66 Park in Joliet features a “Joliet Kicks on 66” photo opportunity to travelers. July, 2007



Collins Street Prison, Joliet. April, 2003



Rich & Creamy on Broadway, Joliet. July, 2007



Rialto Theatre, Joliet. April, 2003




Joliet Iron Works Historic Site. April, 2003



Bicentennial Park, Joliet. April, 2003

► **Rialto Theatre** 


On May 24, 1926, the Rialto Theater opened, unveiling a stunning reflection of Greek, Roman and Byzantine architecture. Serving the public for years, the theater underwent a complete restoration in 1980 and continues to offer a wide selection of performances today. 102 N. Chicago Street, 815-726-6600

► **Bird Haven Greenhouse & Conservatory** 

Lord & Burnham designed this historic greenhouse featuring a tropical house, cacti-room, shows. 225 N. Gougar Road, 815-741-7278.

► **Union Station** 

Union Station, built in 1912, once catered to the glamorous rail travelers of the early 1900s, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Grand Ballroom features classic architecture with crystal chandeliers and 45 foot ceilings. 50 E. Jefferson Street, 815-727-1200.

► **Joliet Iron Works Historic Site** 

Follow a 1-mile walkway through the site on a self-guided tour through exhibits explaining the iron making process, and just as importantly, describing the men who worked there. Collins Street, 815-727-8700

► **Bicentennial Park**  

Built along the river on land that had been Joliet's first street, Bicentennial Park was opened in 1976 to celebrate the nation's 200th birthday. The park features a beautiful Riverwalk Promenade with views of Joliet's bridges, metal silhouette sculptures and interpretive panels that describe Joliet's history, a lighted fountain named "Frannie," and an entertainment stage. 201 W. Jefferson at Bluff Street, 815-724-3760, bipark@jolietcity.org

► **Jacob Henry Mansion** 

In 1873, Jacob A. Henry built his mansion on Eastern Avenue, which was then referred to as “Silk Stocking Row.” He employed a master craftsman from Germany along with three cabinetmakers to fashion the elaborate carved interior. It took three years to complete and has 16,800 square feet consisting of over 40 rooms. 20 S. Eastern Avenue, 815-722-2465



Jacob Henry Mansion.
April, 2007

► **Joliet Jackhammer giant statue** 

Located at Silver Cross Field, this muffler man sports the Joliet Jackhammers baseball team colors and holds a jack hammer. Named “Left Field Louie” by baseball fan submissions, the giant was purchased by Peter Ferro from Ham Lake, Minnesota in 2003.




Joliet Jackhammer
giant statue,
located at Silver
Cross Field, Joliet.

Courtesy of Waymarking.com, www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM11JDR

Preston Heights

Preston Heights is a small, unincorporated community south of Joliet.

► **Chicagoland Speedway** 

State of the art 75,000 seat, 1.5 mile superspeedway hosting the NASCAR Winston Cup, Indy Racing League, NASCAR Busch Series, ARCA RE/MAX Series and International Race of Champions events. On Historic Route 66, 500 Speedway Blvd., 815-722-5500



Chicagoland
Speedway.

March, 2007

► **Route 66 Raceway** 

A high octane entertainment facility featuring concerts, motorsports, and more, including NHRA National Drag Racing events and Demolition Derbies. On Historic Route 66, 500 Speedway Blvd., 815-722-5500



Route 66 Raceway.

► **Historic Tourist Court** 

Near Chicagoland Speedway is a deteriorating Route 66 tourist court with main office building and smaller cottages around a circle drive. This is not a part of the designated



Historic tourist court near the Chicagoland
Speedway, Joliet. March, 2007

scenic byway but is historic Route 66. They are a significant remnant of pre-motel accommodations.

Elwood

Elwood was founded in 1854 along the Joliet-Bloomington rail line, and incorporated as a village in 1869. Elwood remained a small farming community until 1941, when the federal government required land with which to train soldiers for World War II and to construct the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant. In spite of the closing of the arsenal in 1993, Elwood is today a growing community of 2,300. The arsenal is now administered by the U.S. Forest Service as the Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.



Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.
March, 2007



Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood.
March, 2007

► Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

Encompassing 18,000 acres of the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, this is the largest tallgrass prairie restoration in North America. Historic Route 66 bisects the preserve. The immensity of this open grassland contrasts with the urban landscape of Chicagoland. It is a visual introduction to the prairie farmland of Illinois Route 66.

► Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

Established in 1999 on 982 acres of the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, the cemetery has many monuments and garden niches that make it well worth a visit. Adjacent to the main entry is a monument to ammunition workers killed in an explosion. This grim memorial is testament to the wartime manufacture of munitions. This vast reservation was placed here to be near the Route 66 and railroad transportation corridors. The cemetery is accessible by turning west on Hoff Road. 815-423-9958

► Original two-lane segment

An original two lane segment of Route 66 dating from 1926-30 connects .3 mile south of

Manhattan Road along S. Chicago Road, then right on W. Mississippi Road to Elwood.

► **Elwood Children’s Garden** 

This community garden has many delightful botanical nooks and mazes for children based on themes, including nursery rhymes, alphabet, and pizza ingredients. It reflects a community pride that is characteristic of the small rural towns on Illinois Route 66. Half mile east of Mississippi Street in Elwood on Chicago Avenue, 815-423-6861

July, 2007



The Children’s Garden Project in Elwood offers a creative and fun approach to gardening (below).

Wilmington

Wilmington began in 1834 when Thomas Cox acquired 400 acres of land from the government and built a saw mill. He later added a corn cracker, a gristmill, and a carding machine and the enterprise took on the name Cox’s Mills. Patronized by settlers from as far as 50 miles away, pioneers brought their corn and wheat to Wilmington to be ground.

In the spring of 1836, Cox laid out the town of Winchester (later Wilmington) and began to sell lots. One such home, built of stone by Daniel McIntosh near Forked Creek, still stands today just south of Route 66. The Eagle Hotel, built that first year, became a stage stop. Later it would be used as part of the Underground Railroad.

A hitching yard was located on Main Street between Baltimore and Jackson where wild horses were driven to be sold. Adjacent to the hitching yard was the Westbound Stage Depot. The early stage ran between Chicago and Pontiac. The Chicago and Alton Railroad pushed through town on July 4, 1854.

► **Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Welcome Center**  

The 18,000 acre Midewin Tallgrass Prairie extends from Elwood to Wilmington. The Welcome Center is two miles north of Wilmington along Historic Route 66. It has exhibits and a bookstore. 815-423-6370



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Welcome Center. March, 2007



Launching Pad Drive-In and Gemini Giant, Wilmington. March, 2007

Courtesy of City-Data.com, www.city-data.com/city/Wilmington-Illinois.html



Mar Theater, Wilmington.

Courtesy of Waymarking.com, www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM286N



Sinclair Dinosaur on top of G&D Tire Company, Wilmington.

► **Launching Pad Drive-In and Gemini Giant**   

Founded in 1960, the Launching Pad at first sold only hot dogs and ice cream, but now has a full service menu. It is also home to the Gemini Giant, a fiberglass “muffler man” sporting a space helmet and rocket ship, a remnant of our fascination with space travel. This is a friendly little establishment where travelers feel welcome and can easily chat with locals. It is reminiscent of drive-ins before corporate chains standardized them. 810 E. Baltimore Street, 815-476-6535

► **Mar Theater** 

Built in 1937, the building has only been used as a movie theatre. The original auditorium comfortably seats 300 moviegoers with a new second auditorium accommodating 64 patrons. Outside, the original marquee is still used to inform moviegoers of current shows. The Mar is still a first run theatre and is one of the oldest and the only privately owned operating movie theatre in the Will County Area. 121 S. Main Street, 815-476-4662

► **G&D Tire Company and Sinclair Dinosaur**  

A Sinclair Dinosaur statue sits atop the G&D Tire Company, housed in an old filling station.

► **Eagle Hotel** 

The Eagle Hotel was built as a stage stop and hotel by David Lizer in 1836. Since then it has also been a warehouse, tavern, bank, and storefront. When repairs are made from a 1990 fire, it will serve as the Wilmington Area Historical Society Museum. The hotel may be one of the oldest commercial structures on Illinois Route 66. 100 Water Street

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- ▶ Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- ▶ Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- ▶ Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- ▶ Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.



Eagle Hotel, Wilmington. March, 2007

The Gemini Giant greets Historic Route 66 travelers in Wilmington. March, 2007





Jukebox at the Polk-a-Dot Drive In in Braidwood. March, 2007



An Amtrak train rumbles past Godley carrying passengers between Chicago and St. Louis. Prior to paved roads, most Illinois communities along the byway depended on the railroad to transport farming goods. March, 2007

Interpretive Resources in the Pontiac Region

Braidwood, Godley, Braceville, Gardner, Dwight, Odell, Cayuga, Pontiac, Ocoya, Chenoa

Regional Overview: *The Coal Mining Strip—Braidwood, Godley, Braceville and Gardner*

In 1865 William Henneberry was digging a well on the Thomas Byron farm, when he found instead rich black coal. Mining activity boomed at a town named for James Braidwood, a Scottish emigrant who sank the first shaft for the Chicago & Wilmington Coal Company (C&W). Located about 60 miles from downtown Chicago, not far from the tracks of the Chicago & Alton Railroad, these mines were well-suited to supply a portion of the big city's growing demand for fuel.

Miners of many ethnic backgrounds immigrated to Illinois towns for work in the mines. Working conditions were miserable, dangerous, and low-paying leading to strikes and conflict with Illinois troops and Pinkerton guards. Labor unions grew out of these conflicts.

By the early 20th century, shaft mining ended. In the 1920s strip mining revived the industry until the last mine in the Wilmington area closed in the 1960s. As you drive Historic Route 66 you can see mountains of slag and other reminders of the era. The Mazonia Fish and Wildlife Area near Braceville is a large, reclaimed strip mine.

Regional Overview: *Railroad Towns—Dwight, Odell, Cayuga, Pontiac, Ocoya, Chenoa*

These towns, with the exception of Pontiac which originated in 1837, were established when the Chicago & Alton railroad was built in 1854 between Chicago and St. Louis. They were farming communities serving the needs of farmers. Trains

transported their products to markets in Chicago and St. Louis. SBI 4 (later, Route 66) came through these towns and truckers took over much of the transport of farm commodities. This rail line was one of the most important in Illinois development. Abraham Lincoln was an investor. Later, it carried his body on the last leg home to Springfield.

Relationship to Route 66:

These mining and farm towns owe their existence to the railroad and highway that links them in a string from Joliet to Bloomington. Coal and farm commodities were shipped along this corridor to Chicago.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Braidwood

Braidwood was a coal town filled with immigrants from all over the world, along with their varying political, religious, and cultural ideals. These differences often spawned violence. However, most disagreements were forgotten in the common cause to improve wages and working conditions. Some strikes were quelled when the town was occupied by troops and company strike breakers.

This town of 5,000 celebrates its Route 66 heritage with the 1950s Polk-a-Dot Drive In and its annual “Cruise Night at the DOT,” a vintage car rally held the first Saturday of August.

► Polk-a-Dot Drive In

In 1956, Chester “Chet” Fife began taking fast food orders in his school bus painted in rainbow Polk-a-Dots. In 1962, he moved the business into the current building, which today continues to be a popular stop along Route 66. The drive-in has inside booths along with outdoor seating. Fiberglass figures of Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, Betty Boop, James Dean, and the Blues Brothers adorn the outside. Travelers are quickly engaged by the light-hearted, fun atmosphere. 222 N Front Street, 815-458-3377



The Polk-a-Dot Drive In in Braidwood (above) houses numerous fiberglass statues and classic pictures of stars (below). March, 2007





Lucenta Tire housed in a 1939 historic service station, Braidwood. March, 2007

► **Braidwood Historic Service Station** 

Formerly Lucenta Tire, this 1939 Art Deco service station veneered in white ceramic tile is now an automotive repair shop. 100 N Washington Street

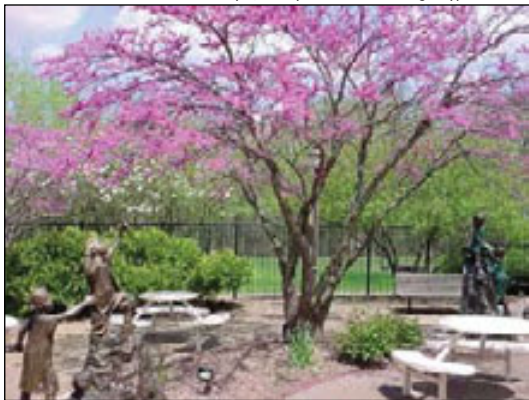
► **Braidwood/Rossi's Motel** 

Built in the 1960s as Rossi's Motel, the classic U-shaped brick building is still serving travelers on Route 66. It was renamed the Braidwood Motel. 120 N Washington Street

Godley

Godley was a coal mining settlement of the nineteenth century. During its heyday around the turn of the 20th century, the town had 18 taverns and 8 houses of ill repute. According to one report, "Godley was probably one of the most ungodly places on earth at that time." One house of ill-repute was a particular favorite, as it sat directly on the county line. Here, both the "ladies," as well as their customers could avoid the local law by just stepping to the other side of the house.


Courtesy of Godley Park District, www.godleyparkdist.com



Statues in K Mine Park, Godley.

► **K Mine Park**  

This large community recreation park is named for the mine that created the community of Godley. It has a children's zoo, playground, and statues of children at play. It also has pavilions, a community recreation center, and jogging trails. 815-458-6133

► **Burma Shave signs** 

A series of classic Burma Shave advertising signs with catchy phrases have been installed between Route 66 (Hwy. 53) and the railroad tracks on the edge of Godley.





Burma Shave advertising signs on the edge of Godley. March, 2007

Braceville

The village of Braceville was once a thriving city with 3,500 residents at its height. By the late 1880s the town had six general merchandise stores, two banks, a hotel, two restaurants and 18 other retail businesses. In the summer of 1910, miners of the

Braceville Coal Company went on strike. The coal company simply closed and within just a few months the town was all but abandoned. Only a few slag heaps along the old highway remain as a reminder of the town's heyday. The Braceville area still supports some 800 residents.

► **Mazonia/Braidwood Fish & Wildlife Area**  

Built on an old strip mine, the area consists of 1,017 acres dedicated to fish and wildlife management. Mazonia is well known among fossil collectors for its Pennsylvanian fossils. The maze of finger lakes created from surface coal mining is well worth a visit—a rare chance to experience the dramatic physical changes that mining has on the landscape. 815-237-0063



Finger lakes created by strip mining at the Mazonia/Braidwood Fish & Wildlife Area. March, 2007

Gardner

This historic mining town of 1,400 is best known for its two-celled jail dating from 1910. Northeast of town on the Mazon River, stands the Riviera Restaurant, a classic Route 66 roadhouse. It was built in 1928 from structures moved from Gardner and South Wilmington.

Christian Christiansen was born in Norway in 1859, immigrated to the U.S. in 1881, and was ordained as a Lutheran preacher in 1888. He served as a pastor of churches in the Gardner area for much of his life. At the age of 83, his knowledge of the Norway landscape helped defeat Nazi Germany. He showed the Allies a route that allowed commandos to destroy Nazi atomic bomb plants. The King of Norway cited him for his valuable war effort.

► **Two-cell Jail and Christiansen Memorial** 

The Gardner two-cell jail was built in 1906 and is a popular photo opportunity for travelers. A memorial adjacent to the jail honors Rev. Christian Christiansen for his contributions that helped prevent the construction of Nazi atomic bombs.



Plant fossils collected at the Mazonia/Braidwood Fish & Wildlife Area. March, 2007



Two-cell jail, Gardner. March, 2007



The Riviera Restaurant, Gardner. March, 2007



The Riviera Restaurant's basement bar is decorated with stalactites like a cave, Gardner. July, 2007



Historic Streetcar Diner behind the Riviera Restaurant. March, 2007

► **Riviera Restaurant**  

Constructed in 1928 out of a church from Gardner and a mining office from South Wilmington, the Riviera has hosted many famous customers, including Gene Kelly, Tom Mix, Al Capone, and his brother Ralph. A freezer in the basement with a heavy iron door was supposedly built to hide gambling machines and booze during Prohibition in case of a raid. The unique bar in the basement provided comfort before air conditioning and is decorated like a cave. In its heyday, this classic Route 66 roadhouse featured a zoo, picnic area, swimming hole, and gas station. Today, the restaurant still serves good food and inexpensive draft beer. This venerable supper club offers travelers genuine Route 66 adventure. The dark, cool basement exudes odors of bar and kitchen fragrances. Interested customers are given personal tours to see where slot machines and prohibition booze were hidden from raiding revenuers and toilets that were placed on high “thrones” to keep them above periodic river flooding.

► **Historic Streetcar Diner**  

A historic Kankakee streetcar from the early 20th century was moved to Gardner in 1932 to serve as a diner along Route 66. In 1937, the streetcar became a cottage and playhouse. It was moved behind the Riviera in 1955 and is still there today. It was restored by the Illinois Route 66 Association and inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2001.

Dwight

Established in 1854, Dwight was named for a New York railroad investor. It was still a quiet railroad town in 1879 when young Dr. Leslie Keeley opened the doors of the Keeley Institute, the first medical institution to treat alcoholism as a disease. By the 1890s, Keeley Institutes were located in nearly every state in the nation and many oversea countries. Several historic buildings associated with the Keeley

and Oughton (a co-founder of the institute) families still stand in Dwight.

During the heyday of Route 66, Dwight had the first stoplight on the road outside of Chicago. The route skirted around Dwight's downtown district, and several historic businesses continue to serve travelers. Today, Dwight is a town of 4,500 residents and celebrates its connection to Route 66.

► **Keeley Institute/Fox Development Center** 

The former Keeley Institute for the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction is known for its stained glass windows (depicting the five senses) and for the rich and famous patients treated there. With prohibition and the downsizing of the Keeley Institute, the building served as a Veteran's Administration Hospital from 1926-1966. The building today serves as the William W. Fox Development Center. 134 W. Main Street



The Dwight Keeley Institute, now the Fox Development Center. March, 2007

► **First National Bank of Dwight** 

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, this bank was constructed in 1905. It housed the real estate office and bank of Frank L. Smith, a prominent local citizen, U.S. Congressman and Senator. It was remodeled in the 1960s using Wright's original ideas.



First National Bank of Dwight. March, 2007

► **Bank of Dwight** 

The Bank of Dwight, opened in 1855 by David McWilliams, is the oldest state chartered bank still in operation under its original charter and the third oldest bank in Illinois. The current building was built in 1910 and features an original dome mural painted by Viennese artist, Oskar Gross.



Chicago & Alton Railroad Depot, Dwight. March, 2007

► **Chicago & Alton Railroad Depot/
Dwight Historical Society Museum**  

This limestone structure, built in 1891, was designed by famed Chicago architect Henry Ives Cobb. The building was placed on the



Oughton House/Country Mansion Restaurant, Dwight. March, 2007




Oughton Estate Windmill, Dwight. March, 2007



Ambler-Becker Texaco Gas Station, Dwight. March, 2007

National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The depot continues to serve Amtrak passenger traffic between Chicago and St. Louis. It also serves as the Dwight Historical Society Museum, which preserves the history and culture that pertains to the Dwight area. The museum is open Sun. 1-4, and other times by appointment only. 119 W. Main Street

► **Oughton House/Country Mansion Restaurant** 

Built in 1891 on a different site, the Scott Boarding House was moved to the Keeley Estate in 1894. The building was remodeled into a home for John Oughton, a co-founder of the Keeley Institute. When Oughton died in 1925, the home became lodging for patients of the Keeley Institute. When the institute folded in 1965, Oughton's grandson converted the building into a restaurant. The handcrafted oak and maple woodwork and original fireplaces in the lounge area can be seen while eating lunch or dinner.

► **Oughton Estate Windmill** 

The windmill is a prominent landmark on the John Oughton estate property. The 5-story, eight-sided, steel-framed windmill was built in 1896 to help pump water for the Oughton estate, which included the buildings that now house Country Mansion Restaurant and the Public Library. The estate, including the windmill, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. This entire property is an inviting public space.

► **Prairie Creek Public Library** 

The library is located in the carriage house built around 1895 that served the John R. Oughton Estate. It was called the Dwight Public Library from 1926-1992.

► **Ambler-Becker Texaco Gas Station**  

This historic 1933 filling station is identified as the longest operating gas station along

Route 66. It dispensed fuel for 66 continuous years until 1999. Ambler's was the subject of major restoration work from 2005-2007, and reopened as a Route 66 visitor center in May, 2007. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. It features a digital audio player for visitors when the building is closed. 417 W. Waupansie Street

► **Route 66 Java Stop** ☕

A unique modern drive-through coffee shop built of two freight containers, one atop another. 502 West Mazon Avenue



Route 66 Java Stop, Dwight. March, 2007

► **Old Route 66 Family Restaurant** ☕

A modern restaurant with a Route 66 theme located across from the historic Marathon Station. 105 S Old Highway 66, 815-584-2920



Old Route 66 Family Restaurant, Dwight. March, 2007

► **Smaterjax Grill & Pizzeria/ Oldsmobile Car Dealership** ☕

Formerly Feddersen's Garage, this Oldsmobile car dealership was converted into a restaurant. It recently sold a large collection of historic signs, gas pumps, and other automobile-related items. 309 S. Old Route 66

► **Strufe/Arrow/Carefree Motel** 🏠

The Strufe Motel began as a gas station in the 1930s. The owners, Martin and Mehta Paulsen, built six tourist cabins. In 1952, John and Dorothy Strufe purchased the business, removed the gas pumps, and enclosed the cabins. After a remodeling with brick veneer, the name was changed to the Arrow Motel and operated until 1989. It was called the Carefree Motel from 1989 to 1994. Today it is a private residence. The Paulsens were inducted into the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame in 1991.



1958 postcard of the Arrow (Strufe) Motel on Route 66 in Dwight

► **Pioneer Gothic Church** 🏛️

The church was built in 1857 and is known for its rare example of wooden "Carpenter Gothic" architecture. Restored in 1968, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Courtesy of IvoShandor, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Dwight_IL_Pioneer_Gothic_Church7.JPG



Dwight's Pioneer Gothic Church built in 1857.

The Prince of Wales, future King Edward IV, participated in worship here in 1860. 201 N. Franklin Street, 815-584-1959

► **Renfrew Park** 

Renfrew Park is a nearly 20-acre parcel deeded to the Village of Dwight by David McWilliams in 1897. It was named for Baron Renfrew, the title used by future King Edward VII on his visit to Dwight in 1860.

► **Lions Lake**  

This former “borrow pit” was excavated for the expansion of Route 66 into a four-lane highway. In the early 1990s, it was transformed into a small park with fishing, picnic tables, a playground, and walking path.

Odell

Like many small towns on historic Route 66, Odell is a small farming community established in 1854 when the Chicago & Alton Railroad was built.



“The railroad is the foundation of the town and its surroundings. Before the settlers came there was only tall grass where Odell now stands. It was literally a ‘desert waste.’ When the railroad came through it influenced all of the country it ran through.” (Odell History, ca. 1880)

► **Odell “Subway” Tunnel** 

Across from Saint Paul’s church is an entrance to a 1937 pedestrian tunnel under Route 66, known locally as the “subway.” The entrance was sealed in the 1950s. The first 3 steps and the railing were replaced in the spring of 2006 by the Illinois Route 66 Association. That this tunnel was a necessity to safely cross Route 66 is a revelation to anyone standing on this quiet corner today. It is a dramatic reminder of the importance of Route 66 as a national travel corridor.



Odell “Subway” Tunnel. March, 2007

► **Standard-Sinclair/Odell Gas Station**  

On the National Register of Historic Places, this gas station was built in 1932 and served travelers until 1975. It was restored with the help of the Illinois Route 66 Association's Preservation Committee. A digital audio player makes audio messages available to visitors at any time. Southwest side of Odell on Old Route 66, 815-998-2133



The restored Standard-Sinclair/Odell Gas Station offers an audio message for visitors and glimpses into the workings of a historic service station. March, 2007



Cayuga

Cayuga is a small unincorporated farm community on the 1850s Chicago & Alton rail line.

The 18.2 mile stretch of road from Cayuga to Chenoa was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2007. The road is paralleled on its east by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and on its west by I-55. Along the stretch of highway there are 8 contributing buildings for the purposes of the National Register and historic preservation. This section was reconstructed during the 1940s when large parts of Route 66 became badly deteriorated.

► **Meramec Caverns Barn**  

Also known as the Cayuga barn, this is a restored example of early highway advertising (Meramec Caverns is in Stanton, Missouri). IDOT created a pull-off area from Route 66 so travelers could safely exit the road and take photographs. It is one of two remaining advertisement barns along Illinois Route 66. It was restored by the Route 66 Association of Illinois Preservation Committee.



Meramec Caverns Barn, Cayuga. March, 2007

Pontiac

Named for the Ottawa Indian Chief, Pontiac was platted in 1837 and soon became the population center of the area. In the 1870s, Pontiac became an important regional trading center due to its strategic location on the railroad between Chicago and St. Louis. When Route 66 came through in 1926, the town provided services and amenities to the many travelers of the road.



Historic downtown Pontiac. August, 2007



Old Log Cabin Restaurant, Pontiac. March, 2007



North Creek/Route 4 Bridge, Pontiac. March, 2007



Pontiac's old City Hall and Fire Department houses the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum, Old City Hall Shoppes, and Livingston County War Museum. March, 2007



Today, this city of 12,000 provides several historic points of interest. Several old Route 66 alignments and sections of the road can be seen in this region but no longer traveled by vehicle.

► **Old Log Cabin Restaurant**  

Built in 1926, the restaurant originally faced the older Route 66 alignment behind the building (now gone). It is claimed to have been lifted and turned 180 degrees when the alignment changed at the intersection of Pontiac Road (two-lane 66) and the four-lane 66 on the north edge of town. The building was expanded over the years. It is a classic example of the economic significance that Route 66 had on roadside businesses. The restaurant still serves good food to travelers. 18700 Old Route 66, 815-842-2908

► **North Creek/Route 4 Bridge** 

Bridge abutments, the only ones with the original Illinois Route 4 logo on them, are located on either side of North Creek. A 1926 bronze plaque and a 1998 Route 66 Association of Illinois plaque mark this historic bridge.

► **Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum**  


Housed in a historic firehouse, this facility tells the story of the people and places that have been inducted into the hall of fame. The museum displays significant Illinois artifacts from along Route 66. The upstairs features "Route 66—A Photo Journal," a series of pictures by Michael Campanelli that captures the true spirit of Route 66. 110 W. Howard Street, 815-844-4566

► **Livingston County War Museum & Dal Estes Education Center** 


Displays interpret World War I to the present. It is staffed by veterans and is located in the Old City Hall next to the Route 66 Museum. 321 N Main Street, 815-842-0301

► **Old City Hall Shoppes** 

Located next to the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum are several craft and antique shops in Pontiac's Old 1900 City Hall. The shops offer Route 66 souvenirs. 321 N Main Street

► **Livingston County Courthouse** 

Located on the square, the courthouse was built in 1875 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. J.C. Cochrane designed the historic edifice of the county's third courthouse. An Abraham Lincoln statue on the south side of the courthouse lawn memorializes the numerous visits Lincoln made to Pontiac between 1810 and 1860.

► **Three Roses Bed and Breakfast** 

Operates in the Jamison House, a Victorian home from about 1890. The owners, David and Sharon Hansen, are strong supporters of Route 66. 209 E. Howard Street, 815-844-3404

► **Jones House** 

A Gothic Revival brick house built in 1858. It is named for Henry C. Jones, founder of the Pontiac Ice & Fuel Company, and is the oldest brick home in Pontiac. It is maintained by the Livingston County Historical Society and is open by appointment. 314 East Madison St.

► **Catherine V. Yost House Museum** 

A Queen Anne style home built in 1898 by Z.F. Yost, an attorney. The museum contains most of the Yost family possessions dating back to the 1850s. Catherine Yost was an artist who traveled and painted in both Europe and the U.S. Her artwork is on display at the museum.

► **Pontiac Swinging Bridges**  

Pontiac is the only city in Central Illinois with three swinging bridges. The bridges span the Vermilion River and were originally built so residents could get to work. An **1828 bridge** connects Riverview Drive and Play Park. It



Livingston County Courthouse, Pontiac. August, 2007



Jones House (above) and Yost House (right) museums, Pontiac. August, 2007



One of three swinging bridges in Pontiac. August, 2007



Dargon Park Tinsley sculptures, Pontiac. August, 2007



Illinois State Police District 6 gun-shaped headquarters building, Pontiac. August, 2007



Livingston County Poor Cemetery, just outside of Pontiac along Historic Route 66. August, 2007

was first built of iron in 1898 but today is a wooden structure. A **1926 bridge** connects Play Park and Chautauqua Park. A **1978 bridge** connects the south side of the city with Humiston-Riverside Park.

► **Dargon Park Sculptures** 

Large metal sculptures entitled “All Things Change and We Change with Them” depict the changes that humans experience while growing. Barry Tinsley, sculptor and artist, completed the design, construction, and erection of the figures in 1998.

► **Illinois State Police District 6 Headquarters (gun-shaped)**  

Built in 1941, the headquarters was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2000. The building is constructed in the shape of a pistol and served as the base for state troopers who patrolled roads from Dwight to McLean. It was vacated in 2004 when a new state police headquarters was built nearby. In March, 2007, the building ownership was transferred to Livingston County. Plans include creating a Route 66 park next to the building with an observation tower for viewing the shape from above. Its proximity to Route 66 offers an excellent opportunity to tell the State Police story of patrolling the “Mother Road.”

► **Livingston County Poor Cemetery** 

The cemetery is completely surrounded by farm fields. Livingston County residents that had no money were buried here from 1877 to 1934. The site was part of the Almshouse, built by the county in 1859 to provide a home for people who were poor, mentally or physically ill. In 2004, the cemetery was restored by local citizens, which included a marker along Old Route 66.

► **Humiston Woods Nature Center** 

This 400 acre natural area has bottomland and mesic forests along with a 15 acre

restored prairie. It is known for its spectacular display of spring flowers, dominated by Virginia Bluebells. It features six trails, including a wheelchair accessible trail. Located just outside Pontiac, north of 2100 N St. on the east bank of the Vermillion River.

Ocoya

Ocoya is a small, unincorporated farm community that began on the Chicago & Alton rail line.

Chenoa


Located at the crossroads of Routes 66 and 24, and the C&A and TP&W rail lines, Chenoa's motto is "Crossroads of Opportunity." This is a farming center built on rail lines. Matthew T. Scott established the town in 1854. His family's house has been restored and is on the National Register of Historical Places. For Route 66 travelers, Chenoa offered Steve's Cafe with the "Finest steaks between Chicago and St. Louis" and a free tourist camp at the current Red Bird Park.



Matthew T. Scott Home, Chenoa. March, 2007




Chenoa Pharmacy. March, 2007

► **Matthew T. Scott Home** 

The home of agriculturalist, Matthew T. Scott and wife Julia Green Scott, one of the founders of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Scott established Chenoa in 1854. Tours by appointment only. 227 North First Street, 815-945-4555

► **Chenoa Pharmacy** 

Schuirman's Drug Store was founded in 1889. It was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2005. 209 S. Green Street, 815-945-4211

► **Steve's Cafe and Texaco Station** 

A Route 66 original that was named for its chef, Steve Wilcox. Advertising "The finest steaks between Chicago and St. Louis," it became a popular stop for politicians traveling to Springfield. It was closed in the 1950s and reopened in 1975 under new ownership. It



Postcard of Steve's Cafe and Texaco Station in Chenoa, circa 1953



Chenoa Depot. March, 2007

closed again in 1997 and most recently was a used car lot and antique shop.

► **Chenoa Depot** 

Located at the intersection of the Chicago & Alton and the Toledo, Peoria & Western Railroads, this abandoned ornate depot may be worthy of restoration.

► **Chenoa Route 66 Prairie Trail** 

A biking and hiking trail is being developed on two miles of abandoned Route 66 roadway.

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- Sub-theme #6: Coal underlying Illinois shaped the development of many of the communities along Illinois Route 66.
- Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.



A “visitor” sings along with Elvis at the Polk-a-Dot Drive In, Braidwood. March, 2007

Interpretive Resources in the Bloomington Region

Lexington, Towanda, Normal, Bloomington, Shirley, Funks Grove

Regional Overview: *The Heart of Illinois*

This region still exhibits the rich Illinois farming heritage from which it grew. Places like Funk's Grove offer a complete snapshot of Illinois farm life on Route 66. It is a microcosm of prairie farm history linked by generations of the same family. Towns like Towanda and Lexington allow travelers to discover a slice of America that still flourishes in the rural Midwest. Communities like Bloomington-Normal have grown to become large, technologically diverse urban centers, but even these high tech economies have roots in agriculture. Early in the 19th century, Bloomington was a large prairie grove, which, when settled, became Keg Grove and was later renamed Blooming Grove. The agricultural economy gave rise to businesses like State Farm Insurance and eventually evolved into a diverse national center of technological corporations.

Relationship to Route 66:

The Mother Road is celebrated at various locations in this segment. "Memory Lane" in Lexington and "Geographical Journey" in Towanda are walking tours on old sections of the roadbed.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Lexington

One of Illinois' oldest towns founded in 1837, Lexington was named after the Massachusetts battleground. During its Route 66 heyday, it had nine gas stations and numerous eateries and motels. It continues to celebrate its heritage of the Mother Road with murals on its buildings and a walking trail called "Memory Lane." This one mile stretch of



The Walker Store in Funks Grove. December, 2006



Historic neon arrow sign, Lexington. March, 2007




Memory Lane, Lexington. March, 2007

pavement is an original section of Route 66 that has been preserved as a park, complete with billboards and Burma-Shave signs.

► **Memory Lane**   

A one mile stretch of original Route 66 that was dedicated in 1926. It has been restored back to the 1940s era with vintage billboard and Burma Shave signs. It can be walked year-round and is open to vehicular traffic during festivals. 309-365-8105

► **Lexington Neon Arrow Sign** 

Originally erected in the late 1940s on Route 66, the arrow pointed the way east to the central business district of Lexington. The sign has recently been restored and is in the original location. It is reminiscent of the neon era on the road.

► **Lexington Route 66 Park**  

A small wayside park along Route 66 that provides information about historic Lexington and serves as a trailhead for the “Lexington Parkway” Route 66 Bike Trail.

► **Filling Station Restaurant** 

The Mesa Cafe was built in the 1940s and served as a filling station (Skelly) along Route 66. It closed in the 1970s and was brought back for a second life as the Filling Station Restaurant since 1982. 905 1/2 W Main Street

► **Oasis Drive In** 

Located on the edge of town, the Oasis Drive In served travelers from 1960-1976. It was a burger and milkshake drive-in, and was a well known hangout for teenagers showing off their cars. Today, the facility is used for storage. The classic shaped sign still stands, but is in major need of repair. Old photographs of this sign would be needed to restore it.



Filling Station Restaurant, Lexington. February, 2008



Oasis Drive In, Lexington. March, 2007

► **Patton Cabin** 

Located in P.J. Keller Park, the cabin was built by the area's first settler, John Patton in June, 1829 with the help of the Kickapoo and Delaware Indians. This cabin is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Open every Sunday in June, July and August from 2-4pm. 309-365-3091



Patton Cabin, Lexington. March, 2007

► **Scrogin Cemetery** 

The cemetery contains graves from 1850-1916. Restoration began in 1981. The scattered headstones were gathered together to create a monument on a gravel pad.



Scrogin Cemetery, Lexington. March, 2007

Towanda

This farm town is named for the birthplace of Jesse Fell in Pennsylvania. Founder of Normal and Illinois State University, he donated the land for the town in 1853. The settlers found vast stretches of prairie that they broke for prosperous farms.

The railroad line that bisects the village was central to the life of the residents and local farmers. Originally self contained, with doctors, cafes, groceries, blacksmiths, churches, schools, a drugstore and a bank, Towanda has become primarily a bedroom community for the nearby cities of Bloomington and Normal relying on them for employment, entertainment, shopping, health care and other services. And although the railroad still passes through, it no longer makes a stop at Towanda.

► **“A Geographical Journey” Parkway**  

A 1.6 mile stretch of Route 66 (an abandoned lane of the 1954 four-lane alignment) with educational kiosks that interpret each state along the road. The walking tour has fliers printed in several languages for international tourists and a collection of Burma Shave signs. It was created by volunteers from Towanda with students and teachers from the Normal Community High School.



“A Geographical Journey” Parkway, Towanda. March, 2007



Towanda Dead Man's Curve. March, 2007

► **Towanda Dead Man's Curve** 

A dangerous curve on old Route 4, the original Route 66 before the 1940s. Travelers unaccustomed with the curve misjudged its sharpness and narrow width—just 18 feet wide for two-way traffic. The curve was bypassed after WWII. This curve became a familiar site to patrolling District 6 State Highway Police. Many of these accidents were caused by travelers from Chicago speeding on an unfamiliar road. A house located west of the curve was removed after a semi-trailer truck ran off the road, knocking the structure off its foundation. Before this event, the homeowners had replaced the front porch numerous times because of the damage from cars and trucks crashing into it.

► **Towanda Meadows** 



Towanda Meadows. August, 2007

The largest Italianate Farmhouse in McLean County, Towanda Meadows was built in the late 1860s by livestock businessman William R. Duncan nearly a decade after the Civil War. Duncan built his home just east of the Chicago and Alton Railroad Line, situated on the low hill near Towanda and intended for people to admire it. James H. Scott purchased the mansion from Duncan's heirs. Later owners included D. W. Kraft of Normal and his daughter Helen Kraft. It is currently undergoing restoration. South of Towanda, visible from I-55.

Normal

In 1854 the town of North Bloomington was platted in the area which was commonly known as “The Junction,” which was located at the intersection of the Illinois Central and the Chicago & Alton railroads. Jesse Fell is referred to as the “founding father” of Normal.

In 1857, Governor William Bissell signed a bill to create a normal school. The term “normal” was based on the French teaching schools and was the general

name for all schools set up to be teachers' colleges. Jesse Fell found financial backing for the school, which attorney Abraham Lincoln certified, and North Bloomington was chosen. In 1865 the town was incorporated as "Normal."

Normal has become a thriving community of almost 50,000. An effort in 1970 to unify Bloomington and Normal failed.

► **Normal Theater** 🍷

The theater has been completely restored to its original condition when it opened in 1937. The first theater designed for sound films, today it shows classic films and hosts live theater and music. 209 North Street, 309-454-9720 or 309-454-9722



Normal Theater. February, 2008

► **Sprague Super Service** 🚰 🛠️ 🛣️ 66

This two-story Tudor-Revival style building was built in 1931 to serve increasing traveler needs on Route 66. The building housed a cafe, gas station, and garage on the first floor, while the upstairs served as housing for the owner and station attendant. Several different cafe and auto-related businesses utilized the building until 1976, when it ceased auto-related service. The building has been approved by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and nominated by the agency to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rehabilitation plans include an information center, diner/soda fountain, bed and breakfast, and event space. It is the largest gas station/restaurant on Historic Route 66.




Sprague Super Service, Normal. March, 2007

The station still displays great architectural integrity despite minor conversions to other uses. It occupies a commanding location on Historic Route 66 within a very intact cultural landscape. A traveler senses that this streetscape has changed very little since the busy days of Route 66. It has recently received grants from the National Park Service Route



Normal Water Works Tower in Fell Park.
February, 2008

66 Corridor Preservation Project and from the Town of Normal. 305 E. Pine Street. 309-452-5325.

► **Normal Water Works Tower/Fell Park** 


Created in the mid-1850s, this is the oldest park in Normal. Over the years, the park has served as a cow pasture and religious gathering space. The town constructed the Normal Water Works Tower in the park in 1898 to provide water in times of emergency. The brick sidewalks surrounding the park were constructed in the early 1900s.

Bloomington

When McLean County was created in 1830, Bloomington was named as the county seat, but the actual location of the community was to be determined later. James Allen, one of the promoters of McLean County, donated 40 acres of land to the new town. Farmers attracted by the rich soil flocked to the area starting in 1831. The community grew to serve the increasing population. In 1900, a major fire destroyed much of the downtown, but the city was quickly rebuilt.

Bloomington continued to grow in the 1900s with expanding agriculture, the construction of highways and railroads, and the growth of the insurance business. The community is renowned as the place, “Where Lincoln did business and Jesse Fell convinced him to run for president.... Where Adlai Stevenson walked..... Where State Farm Insurance and Beer Nuts were started.....and Mother Jones confronted the scabs” (Downtown Bloomington Association).

Bloomington is now a city of 75,000 and, with its “twin city,” Normal, is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Illinois.


► **Beer Nuts Factory and Company Store:** 

In 1937, Edward Shirk took over Caramel Crisp confectionery store in downtown Bloomington. One of their products was



Beer Nuts Factory and Company Store,
Bloomington. March, 2007


called “Redskins,” glazed peanuts with their red skins intact. The name changed to “Beer Nuts” in 1953 when the Shirks began packaging the nuts for the National Liquors store in Bloomington. The company moved into their current processing plant in 1973. The plant includes a public company store with nuts and souvenirs. A video tour of the plant is also available. 103 N Robinson Street, 309-827-8580

► **David Davis Museum State Historic Site** 

Also called Clover Lawn, this Victorian home was built in 1872 for U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Davis. In his early days, Davis rode the circuit with Abraham Lincoln. As president, Lincoln appointed Davis to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Davis mansion served as a focal point for the social, cultural, and political life of Bloomington. Today, it is operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. 1000 Monroe Drive, 309-828-1084



David Davis Museum State Historic Site, Bloomington. March, 2007

► **First Steak’n Shake** 

Gus and Edith Belt owned a Shell Gas Station in Bloomington in the 1920s. They attached a dining room and began selling “Shell’s Chicken.” Gus quickly realized that the area had plenty of chicken restaurants, however, and changed his line to steak burgers. His first Steak’n Shake was built in Bloomington along Route 66 in 1934. It has since been closed and converted to Monical’s Pizza Parlor. 1219 S. Main Street



Location of the first Steak’n Shake Restaurant. Now Monical’s Pizza, Bloomington. February, 2008

► **Cotton’s Village Inn** 

This historic downtown restaurant was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 1991. 410 N. Main

► **McLean County Courthouse and Museum of History** 

The museum is housed in the Old McLean County Courthouse, built in 1900, which served the McLean County Circuit Court



McLean County Courthouse and Museum of History, Bloomington. March, 2007



The dome inside the McLean County Courthouse and Museum of History, Bloomington. March, 2007



Prairie Aviation Museum, Bloomington. August, 2007



Funk Prairie Home, Shirley. April, 2007

until 1976. This example of monumental architecture is well preserved. National award winning exhibits guide visitors through the county's history. It is also one of the top five genealogical reference libraries in the country. 200 N. Main Street, 309-827-0428

► **Miller Park and Zoo** 

Located in the southwest part of Bloomington, the park features a restored 1906 pavilion, lake, war memorials, and a preserved steam locomotive, coal car, and caboose from the Nickel Plate Railroad. The zoo has an indoor tropical rain forest that houses exotic birds and an outdoor exhibit with lions, red wolves, snow leopards, and more. 1020 South Morris Avenue, 309-434-2250

► **Prairie Aviation Museum** 

Features a collection of preserved aircraft, revolving aviation exhibits and memorabilia, and a mini-theatre. Exhibits include a Bell Sea Cobra, Huey Helicopter, and F-14 Tomcat. The museum's DC-3 Flagship is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 2929 East Empire Street, 309-663-7632

Shirley

Shirley is a small, unincorporated town located south of Bloomington. It was founded in 1854 as a farm and railroad town and currently has a population of 378.

► **Funk Prairie Home** 

This is the restored 1864 home of one of McLean County's most famous citizens, Lafayette Funk. Lafayette was co-founder and director of the Chicago Union Stockyards and served as an Illinois State Senator. The house features memorabilia and antiques owned by the Funk family, including a working Victrola and first ever electric kitchen island. RR. #1, 309-827-6792

► **Funk Gem and Mineral Museum** 

The museum houses a large number of fossils, petrified wood, Native American artifacts and rocks that Lafayette Funk II collected from all over the world. It also interprets the Funk Brothers Seed Company. Eugene Funk, son of Lafayette, pioneered the use of hybrid corn. Tues-Sat, 9-4, or by appointment. Closed January and February. RR. #1, 309-827-6792



Funk Gem and Mineral Museum, Shirley. April, 2007

Funks Grove

Illinois' Grand Prairie was spotted with groves, small patches of land where local terrain discouraged prairie fires and allowed trees to reach maturity. One such grove on Timber Creek was homesteaded by Isaac Funk in 1824 who tapped the maple trees to make sirup. The family has been selling sirup commercially since 1891. The grove, for which the settlement is named, is a National Natural Landmark.

Funks Grove, with its historic buildings and beautiful grove landscape continues to be a favorite stop and photo opportunity for Route 66 travelers.



Historic depot moved from Shirley and the Walker Store, Funks Grove. December, 2006

► **Walker Store and Historic Depot** 

The Walker Store was a grocery store and gas station until the late 1970s, when it became an antique store. The abandoned rustic storefront complete with rusting gas pump is a nostalgic introduction to the community. Across the road is an abandoned historic depot that was moved from Shirley. The original Funks Grove Depot is located at the Maple Sirup Camp.

► **Funks Grove Cemetery** 

A beautiful site nestled beneath the large maple trees of Funk's Grove. It includes an outdoor "Chapel of the Templed Trees." Visitors can enjoy the sanctuary-like peace of the grove and stroll through the cemetery and get a feel for the span of generations that have called this place home.



"Chapel of the Templed Trees" in the Funks Grove Cemetery. April, 2007



Funks Grove Church. April, 2007




Sugar Grove Nature Center. April, 2007



Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup. April, 2007

► **Funks Grove Church** 


Built in 1864-65, this is where the families of Isaac Funk and Robert Stubblefield worshipped.

► **Sugar Grove Nature Center** 

The center is located among over 1,000 acres of high quality natural areas. Funks Grove is the largest remaining intact prairie grove in the state of Illinois. It contains four dedicated nature preserves and has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of Interior. Over five miles of well maintained trails take visitors through prairie, forest, and riverine habitats. The center has interpretive exhibits, sensory displays, and live animals. Open Tuesday through Saturday, year-round. 4532 N. 725 East Road, 309-874-2174

► **Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup**  

Debby and Mike Funk continue the family traditions laid down by the previous six generations. Funk descendants have been making maple sirup here since the town was founded in 1824. The Funk's Grove Maple Sirup business was established in 1891. Sirup is correctly spelled this way to distinguish it from sugar-based syrup. This was and continues to be a major stopping point along Route 66. The gift shop features maple sirup seasonally and Route 66 souvenirs. 5257 Old Route 66, 309-874-3360

► **Funks Grove I-55 Rest Area** 

This modern rest area along I-55 features interior historical exhibits about Abraham Lincoln and Route 66. Metal silhouette statues outside tell the story of traveling in automobiles, picnicking, and the beginnings of Route 66. Historic Route 66 runs directly behind the rest area. There are no connecting access roads but off-ramps are nearby.

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- ▶ Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- ▶ Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- ▶ Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- ▶ Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.



The Funks Grove I-55 Rest Area interprets Route 66 with metal silhouettes, interpretive panels, and an interior display of artifacts. December, 2006



Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup. April, 2007



Railsplitter Covered Wagon, Lincoln. August, 2007

Interpretive Resources in the Lincoln Region

McLean, Atlanta, Lawndale, Lincoln, Broadwell, Elkhart

Regional Overview: *Prosperous Prairie Towns*

This is another succession of towns built along the Chicago & Alton Railroad with some of the most productive farms in the world. Abraham Lincoln tourism on Route 66 begins here.

Relationship to Route 66:

This segment has always been important as a farm-to-market corridor, whether by rail or road.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

McLean

McLean, a farming community of about 800, features a downtown area with several historic buildings and a restored train depot that houses an antique shop. This small town of 800 residents still continues to attract visitors at the Dixie Truckers Home, the oldest truck stop in Illinois. Filled with Route 66 memorabilia, the truck stop has been serving up burgers and fries since 1928.

The truck stop began as a mechanic's garage that also sold sandwiches to passing motorists. They capitalized on the notion that southern states were known for their hospitality and called their business "The Dixie." Starting with little more than a counter and six stools, it quickly gained popularity and by the mid 1930s had developed into a full-fledged restaurant complete with cabins in the back. Staying open 24 hours a day increased the trucker clientele.



The Dixie Truck Stop, McLean. April, 2007

► **Dixie Truck Stop**

In 1928, J.P. Walters and John Geske rented part of a mechanic's garage here to

sell sandwiches to Route 66 travelers and truckers. By the 1930s, the operation had grown to a full-fledged restaurant, cabins, and a cattle pen. The Dixie was owned and operated by the Geske family from 1928-2003 and was only closed one day after a fire in 1965. The truck stop has changed hands, but still serves travelers along Route 66 and I-55, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The original Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame was housed here in from 1990-2004, when it moved to Pontiac. 309-874-2323



The Dixie Truck Stop, McLean. April, 2007

Atlanta

Atlanta was established in 1853 when its founder, Thomas Gill, recognized where the path of the Chicago and Alton Railroad would be laid from St. Louis to Chicago.

This picturesque town is located near the midway point on Route 66 between Chicago and St. Louis. It is noted for its many murals on the historic buildings. At 107 Vine Street is a vintage country market that has long been a mom and pop grocery store. The city has many other historic landmarks such as The Carriage Shed, where Abraham Lincoln stayed with the Hoblit family, Turner's Grove where Abraham Lincoln attended a July 4, 1859 celebration, and Gold Springs, an 1800s resort.

The city is also home to a giant fiberglass muffler man holding a hotdog, which stood for more than 38 years in front of Bunyon's Hotdog Stand in Cicero. When the restaurant was sold in 2003, the famous Bunyon's Statue was placed by the family on permanent loan to the town of Atlanta. The 19-foot tall statue underwent months of renovation and repairs before being installed.

► J.H. Hawes Grain Elevator Museum

Built in 1904 to serve area farmers, the elevator continued to operate until 1976. The City of Atlanta purchased it in 1988 and completed full restoration in 1993. The



Atlanta's smiley water tower greets Route 66 travelers. April, 2007



Hawes Elevator, Atlanta. December, 2006




Atlanta Public Library and Clock Tower. April, 2007



Atlanta's "Midway on Illinois' Mother Road" mural in Route 66 Park. December, 2006

wooden grain elevator is the only one of its kind in the State of Illinois and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, this museum demonstrates the unique systems used to empty horse-drawn wagons, and later unload grain trucks. Grain elevators are a signature landmark of Illinois Route 66. They were the beacons that marked towns and a promise of gas, food and lodging. The museum also includes a brick engine house and a wooden scale house/office.

► **Atlanta Public Library and Clock Tower** 

Built in 1908, this octagon-shaped building is on the National Register of Historic Places. It features 1840s neo-classic details such as high ceilings, a domed rotunda, high narrow windows, the original solid oak woodwork, and an old fashioned fireplace. A Seth Thomas clock tower is on the library lawn; it must be hand cranked every 8 days. A museum was established in the basement in 1973 that houses pieces of local history. Corner of Race and Arch Streets. 217-648-2112

► **Route 66 Park** 

This modern roadside park was built by Atlanta for Route 66 travelers to relax. An information booth is staffed seasonally to provide information about sites in Atlanta (once was a Ticket Office for the Atlanta Fair). It also includes the cornerstone of Atlanta High School (1909) and a memorial to the veterans of WWI (1921).

► **"Atlanta: Midway on Illinois' Mother Road" Mural** 

Located inside the Route 66 Park, the mural celebrates Atlanta's location approximately 150 miles from both Chicago and St. Louis. The 20'x6' mural was designed by Bill Diaz of Pontiac, Illinois. It was completed in June, 2003 by the Letterheads.

► **Palm’s Grill Cafe**  



Originally operated from 1934 to the late 1960s, the cafe is being refurbished as a working restaurant. It is noted for its beautifully restored neon sign. Historically, a customer would turn on a light at the bottom of the sign to notify the Greyhound bus driver to stop. This quaint procedure conjures images of humble travelers waiting patiently to journey to distant cities. It underscores the importance that Route 66 played in connecting scattered communities. The cafe is located in the historic Downey Building along with the new Atlanta Museum featuring local history.



Palm’s Grill Cafe, Atlanta. March, 2008

► **Palm’s Grill Cafe Mural** 

Across the street from Downey Building, the mural was painted by Letterheads in 2003.

► **Bunyon’s Statue Giant**  

This fiberglass giant was made in the 1960s by International Fiberglass of Venice, California. Approximately 150 of these giants were made and put into service to advertise auto service. They became known as “Muffler Men.” In 1965, this ex-Muffler Man was purchased by Hamlet Arthur Stephens. The muffler was replaced by a hotdog and the statue was placed in front of Stephen’s restaurant, “Bunyon’s” on Route 66 in Cicero, Illinois. For 38 years, “Bunyon’s Statue” was a Route 66 landmark. In January 2003, the Bunyon’s restaurant closed. The statue was relocated to downtown Atlanta, so that it could stay on historic Route 66.



Palm’s Grill Cafe mural, Atlanta. April, 2007

► **Smiley Water Tower** 

Atlanta’s bright yellow water tower with a smiley face painted on it is an inviting welcome to Route 66 travelers.

► **J.M. Judy and Sons, Grocer mural** 

J.M. Judy operated a grocery store in Atlanta in the 1890s. This mural is a reproduction of



Bunyon’s Statue Giant, Atlanta. March, 2008



J.M. Judy and Sons Grocer Mural, Atlanta. December, 2007



“Reisch Beer” Mural, Atlanta. April, 2007



Site of the “Bucket of Blood” Roadhouse, Atlanta. March, 2008


a mural that adorned the side of this building. It was painted in June, 2002 as part of the “Route 66 Firecracker Walldog Jam” by Letterheads.

► **“Reisch Beer” Mural** 

Wall mural for 1894 building that served as an outlet for the Resich Brewing Company from Springfield. It was painted in June, 2003 by Letterheads.

► **“Wisteria Cafe” Mural** 

Mural for the Wisteria Cafe & Confectionery, a place for ice cream soda, cigars, and candy in the 1920s. The mural was painted in June, 2003 by the Letterheads.

► **“Bucket of Blood” Roadhouse**  

The roadhouse will be interpreted on the original Route 66 pavement that ran past the roadhouse and residence where a notorious murder-suicide occurred in the 1930s. The construction of the historical roadbed will also be interpreted on this concrete slab.

Lawndale

This small farm town has one tavern, no gas station, and a converted mobile home as its post office. It is regionally known for “the Lawndale Incident.” On July 25, 1977 two giant unidentified birds, commonly known in Crypto-Zoology as “Thunderbirds,” passed over Lawndale, Illinois. One swooped down and grabbed ten-year-old Marlon Lowe from his backyard, dropping him soon after, most likely due to the loud screams of his mother who was watching along with six other witnesses.

Lincoln

This is the only town named for and christened by Abraham Lincoln before he became president. First settled in the 1830s, it was officially named for Lincoln on August 27, 1853. Lincoln had assisted with the platting of the town and worked as counsel for the C. & A. Railroad newly laid through the

community. During the naming ceremony, Lincoln chose a ripe watermelon from a nearby wagon, broke it open, and squeezed the juice onto the ground as an informal rite of baptism.

Lincoln College was founded in early 1865. This is the only college to be named after Lincoln while he was living. From 1926-1977, four different alignments of Route 66 ran through the community. Today, the community celebrates its close ties to both Abraham Lincoln and Route 66.

► **Heritage In-Flight Museum** 

Located at the Logan County Airport, the museum is filled with memorabilia from all the military conflicts dating back to World War I. 1351 Airport Road, 217-732-3333

► **Abandoned Route 66 Pavement** 

A small stretch of original Route 66 alignment pavement, located behind a car dealership, once connected with a curve to the north. It is now used by the auto lot to park cars.

► **Lincoln College Museum** 

The museum is a repository of a large collection of manuscripts, artifacts, and other memorabilia relating to the life of Abraham Lincoln. The college also houses the Museum of Presidents, to honor the Chief Executives from Washington to the present day. 300 Keokuk Street, www.lincolncollege.edu/museum

► **Krotz and Sons Antiques & Stuff** 

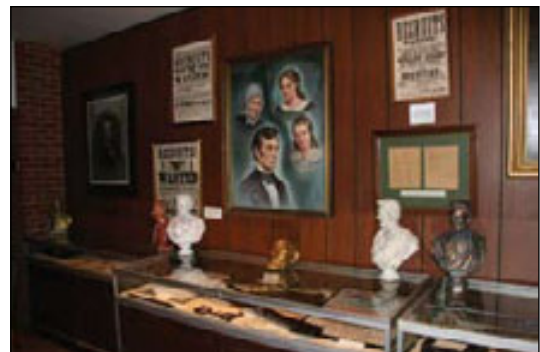
Originally built in the early 1900s, some of the materials were salvaged from the 1858 Logan County Courthouse where Abraham Lincoln practiced law. G. Frank Krotz bought the building in 1919, and created the “Krotz and Sons Grocery Store,” which operated until the early 1970s. Today, this curiosity shop is more of a historic museum, displaying vintage auto parts, merchandise from other bygone businesses, and old photos of the city of Lincoln. 1010 N. Kickapoo



Town christening site, Lincoln. March, 2007



Heritage In-Flight Museum. April, 2007



Lincoln College Museum. April, 2007



Logan County Courthouse. April, 2007



Phone booth on top of Lincoln City Hall.
February, 2008



Hallie's Restaurant, Lincoln.
February, 2008



Postville Courthouse, Lincoln. March, 2007

► **Logan County Courthouse** 

Erected in 1905, the courthouse is located on the square, which is a historic district. The stone, three-story, domed structure is considered the second most architecturally spectacular historic courthouse in Illinois' 102 Counties (after Carlinville in Macoupin County, another Historic Route 66 town). It houses a statue of Lincoln, murals, plus historical display cases. 217-732-8687

► **Lincoln City Hall** 

Built in 1895, the red brick for the building came from the Lincoln Coal Company. A unique telephone booth on the roof was added later and was used by weather spotters to phone in sighted storms. Lincoln City Hall anchors the downtown National Historic Registered District and is one of the city's most visible symbols. 700 Broadway Street

► **Hallie's Restaurant** 

Owned and operated by a grandson of the Huffmans, who began making their famous Schnitzel in the Mill Restaurant in 1945. The original Schnitzel is now served here in downtown Lincoln. 111 S. Kickapoo Street, 217-732-6923

► **Lincoln Christening Site** 

The site where Abraham Lincoln christened the town with the juice of a watermelon on August 27, 1853. A watermelon statue and interpretive panel mark the site. Intersection of Broadway and Chicago Streets

► **Route 66 Chapel** 

Built by the Zion Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, this small log cabin chapel next to Route 66 is open for travelers. It has a working bell tower.

► **Postville Courthouse State Historic Site** 

The building is a reproduction of the first Logan County Courthouse in use from 1840 to

1847. Abraham Lincoln served as a lawyer on the Eighth Judicial Circuit. 914 Fifth Street, www.postvillecourthouse.com

► **The Mill Restaurant**  

Opened in 1929 under the name of the Blue Mill, it served grilled sandwiches at any hour of the day or night. The Dutch themed building with blue trim featured a revolving windmill and waitresses dressed in blue with white aprons. In 1945, Albert and Blossom Huffman purchased the building, added a barroom and dance hall, and then painted the building barn red. Over the years, the restaurant became famous for its fried schnitzel, originally made of veal, and later of pork. The Mill closed in 1996. In 2007 work began to restore the building as a museum. www.SaveTheMill.org



The Mill Restaurant, Lincoln. April, 2007

► **Tropics Restaurant** 

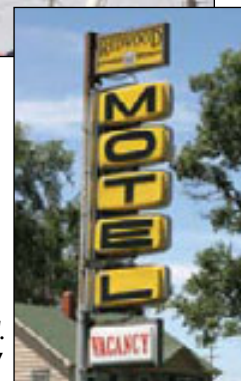
Opened in 1950 by Vince Schwenoha (son of Coonhound Johnny). He had served in Hawaii during his tour of duty and came up with the name “The Tropics.” The original neon sign with palm tree still stands. 1007 Hickox



The Tropics Restaurant, Lincoln. March, 2007

► **Railsplitter Covered Wagon**  

Recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the “World’s Largest Covered Wagon,” the Railsplitter and its driver, Abe Lincoln, welcome visitors throughout the year. J&S Auto Centre, 1006 Woodlawn Road



Redwood Motel, July, 2007

► **Redwood Motel** 

The Redwood Motel was built in 1955 at the junctions of Route 66, 10, and 21. This had previously been the site of a Standard Oil station built in 1934. The current owners are maintaining the motel in its 1950s-60s era.

► **Lincoln Ghost Bridge**  

Ruins of a bridge over Salt Creek south of Lincoln—part of the 1926 alignment. Concrete



Lincoln Ghost Bridge. March, 2007



Madigan (Railsplitter) State Park, Lincoln. March, 2007

piers still remain. A covered wooden bridge spanned the creek here previously.

► **Madigan (Railsplitter) State Park** 

Formerly known as Railsplitter State Park, the land was acquired by the State of Illinois in 1970 from the Department of Mental Health. It is home to the largest sycamore tree in Illinois. Seven miles of trails, picnic tables, shelters, and playground equipment are available to visitors. The park was renamed in 1995 to honor Edward R. Madigan.

Broadwell

The Village of Broadwell was laid out on the Chicago & Alton rail line in 1856 by William Broadwell and Jacob Eisiminger. Broadwell became a shipping point for hogs, corn, wheat and later soybeans.

The Village of Broadwell featured the well-known “Pig Hip” Restaurant, operated by Ernest L. (“Ernie”) Edwards and family from 1937 through 1991 and as a museum after that. Unfortunately, it burned down in March, 2007.



Pig Hip Restaurant Museum shortly after the fire. Broadwell. March, 2007

► **Pig Hip Restaurant**  

An icon of Route 66, the Pig Hip Restaurant was open from 1937 to 1991, and served as a popular museum from 1991 to 2007. The building caught fire on March 5, 2007 and was destroyed. Ernie Edwards, creator of the Pig Hip sandwich and owner of the restaurant, still lives next door. The site is now simply identified with a stone marker.

► **Pioneer’s Rest Motel** 

In the 1940s, the Edwards family expanded their successful Pig Hip restaurant business. Next door, Ernie’s sister built tourist cabins that were later enclosed as the Pioneer’s Rest Motel. The motel closed in 1991 at the same time as the Pig-Hip Restaurant. The building still stands, as does the classic block letter motel sign.



Pioneer’s Rest Motel, Broadwell. March, 2007

Elkhart

Elk Heart Hill is a tree covered glacial moraine that rises 777 feet above sea level, contrasting with the surrounding flat prairie land. The first American came in 1819 and settled what was then known as Elk Heart Grove on the stage route from Springfield to Bloomington. With the coming of the railroad in 1853, Elkhart was established on the west edge of the hill. For many years Elkhart was one of the largest shipping points on the C. & A. railroad, due to the large stock raising farms nearby.

► Elkhart Hill

A glacial moraine that rises above the surrounding prairie. Native tribes used this natural landmark for navigation. It was once owned by John Dean Gillett known as the “Cattle King” of Illinois.

► Elkhart Cemetery

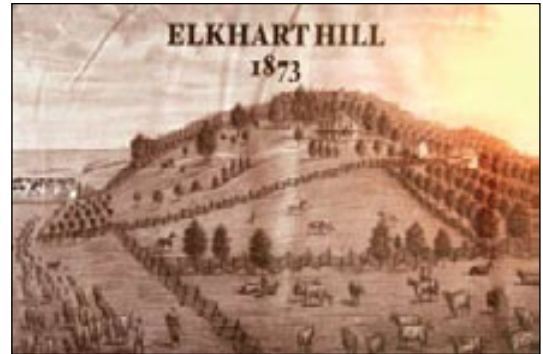
This beautiful wooded 1874 cemetery is the last resting place of Captain Adam Borgardus, expert marksman and performer in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, John Dean Gillett, the cattle baron, and Governor Richard Oglesby. It is said to be haunted by the ghost of Emma Gillett Oglesby.

► St. John the Baptist Chapel

In 1890, John Dean Gillett’s wife, Lermira, had a chapel built in the Elkhart Cemetery in honor of her husband. This chapel, known as Chapel of St. John the Baptist, is the only privately owned chapel in the state of Illinois.

► Gillett Memorial Arch Bridge

Commissioned by former Illinois first lady Emma Gillett Oglesby in 1915 as a memorial to her brother, this cast-concrete bridge serves as a link between the family cemetery and the grounds of the historic estate. The single-arch bridge is a unique visual feature along a scenic stretch of roadway. Over the years, family members and local residents have



Artist's rendering of Elkhart Hill in 1873.



St. John the Baptist Chapel in the Elkhart Cemetery. March, 2007



Gillett Memorial Arch Bridge, Elkhart. March, 2007

Courtesy of the Old Gillett Farm (oldgillettfarm.org/photo_gallery.shtml)



Photo montage of the Old Gillett Farm, Elkhart.



Elkhart Gas Station. April, 2007

made efforts to maintain the bridge, which shows only minimal signs of wear.

► **Old Gillett Farm** 

The Old Gillett Farm is a historic seventh generation farm on Elkhart Hill. It has 700 acres with gardens, the Elkhart Grove Forest Preserve, and open fields. Accommodations in the Brick House guest house and tours of the Big House and Chapel are available by appointment only. Visit oldgillettfarm.org for rates and reservations.

► **Elkhart Gas Station** 

Now closed, this was a 1940s era landmark of Route 66. Its exterior was covered with colored glazed block, which can be seen on the back of the building. It is currently available for purchase.

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.

Interpretive Resources in the Springfield Region

**Williamsville, Sherman, Springfield,
Glenarm, Chatham, Auburn, Divernon**

Regional Overview: *The Capital Communities*

The history of these prosperous farm towns are intimately connected to the history of the state capital. This is the nexus of Abraham Lincoln tourism. Springfield and the surrounding area are the traditional pilgrimage sites celebrating the life of the martyred President Lincoln. The old Hard Road, 66 has always carried travelers to his home and tomb. The restaurants, filling stations, motels and the region have always capitalized on the Lincoln theme.

Springfield has the ambience of a state capital. The venerable capitol building, the stately architecture of government, the grand Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library, and the immense state fairgrounds combine to create a feeling that this is a center of culture and politics.

Relationship to Route 66:

These communities in Sangamon County are among the oldest farm settlements in Illinois. They are aligned on the old Pontiac Trail, SBI 4, and all of the various alignments of Route 66. This is an excellent segment to see old brick pavement and the evolution of highway engineering on the road.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Williamsville

Established as another of the many villages along the railroad, the town was originally platted in 1853 as Benton. When the residents petitioned for a post office, they found that the name was already taken and the village was renamed Williamsville in honor



Illinois State Capitol, Springfield. August, 2007



Williamsville Historic Depot Museum. March, 2007



Williamsville Box Car History Museum. March, 2007



Die Cast Auto Sales, Williamsville. March, 2007



Route 66 Dream Car Museum. March, 2007

of Colonel John Williams, a local land owner. Today, this primarily agricultural town with about 1,500 residents features a number of historic buildings along Route 66.

► **Williamsville Historic Depot and Box Cars**



Collection of photographs and other memorabilia reflecting the history of Williamsville. Open every Wednesday 10-2pm.

► **Die Cast Auto Sales**



This 1930s service station is a collector's dream with vintage gas pumps and signs on the outside of the building. Although the building is now closed, it is a classic photo opportunity for Route 66 travelers. 117 N. Elm Street, 217-566-3898

► **Route 66 Dream Car Museum**



A private vintage car collection of owners Phil and Pat Hawley. They have assembled a sampling of some of the most admired autos in history, and displayed them in a Route 66-themed museum. 1950s-style sock hops and cruises are offered throughout the summer months. Open seasonally—call first. Old Route 66, 217-566-3799

Sherman

In 1858, four men bought, surveyed and platted what is now called Sherman. The town's name was a result of the luck of the draw. The four men placed their names in a hat and David Sherman's name was drawn. Early settlers were predominately Italian coal miners. Because of its proximity to Springfield and I-55, the village has grown rapidly over the last three decades to about 3,500 residents.

► **Carpenter Park Route 66 pavement**



An abandoned stretch of early Route 66 (1926-1936) forms the eastern border of Carpenter Park. Now listed on the National

Register of Historic Places, the curbed concrete provides a peek into the Mother Road’s vintage past. It preserves the two-lane highway design, original cross-section with curbing, and original surface. The road travels past scenic bluffs to the Sangamon River.

► **Flagg Farmstead B & B** 

This attractive historic home is surrounded by stately oak, maple, and hickory trees. The Farmhouse was built in 1871 for Cornelius Flagg, one of four entrepreneurs who platted the town of Sherman. The Italianate structure offers four antiqued finished bedrooms with private baths. The Flagg Farmstead is in the National Register of Historic Places. Located on Old Tipton School Road, one mile north of the Rail Golf Course

► **Double H Bar** 

The Double H Bar was built in 1946 from handmade concrete blocks, and has served Route 66 travelers continuously since that time. 121 N 1st Street, 217-496-3811

► **Route 66 Memorial Rest Area** 

This is an original preserved rest area along Route 66 next to the Double H Bar. Historic rest areas had few amenities; they were places to stretch legs and eat at picnic tables.

► **Ray’s Route 66 Diner** 

Modern diner with inexpensive breakfast and lunch specials. An unusual shrine with a statue of Mary is located on a brick patio adjacent to the diner and visible from the road. The statue is elevated on bricks with a skylight above; true Route 66 kitsch. 110 Villa Parkway, 217-492-9379

Springfield

Springfield was settled by trappers and traders who came to the Sangamon River in 1818. In 1821, Calhoun became the county seat of Sangamon



Carpenter Park Pavement, Sherman. August, 2007



Double H Bar, Sherman. August, 2007



Memorial Rest Area, Sherman. March, 2007



A unique shrine adjacent to Ray’s Route 66 Diner, Sherman. March, 2007



“Visitors” pose with the Lincoln family at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield. March, 2007

Courtesy of the Ace Sign Company



Mel-O-Cream Donuts was founded in 1932 in Springfield.

County; due to the fertile soil, and trading opportunities, settlers from Kentucky, Virginia, and as far as North Carolina came to the city. By 1832, Senator Calhoun had fallen out of the favor with the public and the town was renamed Springfield. By 1837, the capital of Illinois was moved from Vandalia to Springfield. The designation was largely due to the efforts of Abraham Lincoln and his associates.

Lincoln arrived in the Springfield area in 1831, lived for six years in New Salem where he began his legal studies, joined the state militia, and was elected to the Illinois General Assembly. In 1837 Lincoln moved to Springfield and spent the next 17 years rising in political importance.

The city has always been a significant tourist destination with numerous historic sites relating to Abraham Lincoln. The recent opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum has spawned a new influx of tourists, and several more museums are planned for the future.

Since Route 66 was the primary artery funneling travelers into the city, a diversity of diners, motels, and gas stations sprung up to serve their needs. Many of these facilities still exist and serve as important tangible connections to the old road. The city is renowned for its affiliation with food—this is the birth place of the corn dog on a stick (Cozy Dog), the horseshoe sandwich, Mel-O-Cream Donuts, Joe Roger’s Chilli, and the drive-thru window (Maid-Rite Sandwich Shop). Springfield celebrates its Route 66 heritage with its popular International Route 66 Mother Road Festival held in September each year.

► **1908 Race Riot Self-Guided Historical Tour** 

Visitors to Springfield can take a self-guided tour of nine historical markers that describe key moments in the Springfield Race Riot of 1908. As a direct result of the Springfield Race Riot, a coalition of black and white citizens established the NAACP in New York City on February 12, 1909, Lincoln’s birthday.

► **Pioneer Motel** 

Located on the north side of Springfield, the Pioneer Motel was built in the 1940s, and consisted of 12 units arranged in a classic L-shape style. The name was never changed and the classic motel sign tower still greets guests. 4321 N. Peoria Road

► **Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation and Museum**   

Honors the men and women who have served on Illinois’ highways since their establishment in 1922. Route 66 (“Bloody 66” as it was called) was a major patrol venue. The museum has pictures, uniforms, equipment and vintage cars dating back to the earliest years of the Illinois State Highway Patrol. It is open on Thursday and Saturday from 10 AM to 2 PM or by appointment. Admission is free, donations are accepted. 3936 N. Peoria Road, 217-525-1922



Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation and Museum, Springfield. August, 2007

► **Lazy A Motel (Prairie Village Apartments)** 

A 1949 motel built with a Southwest Vernacular style—unusual for this part of the country. It represents the typical 1930s to ‘40s “mom and pop” motor court with garages between the units, and is the last remaining structure of its type on Illinois Historic Route 66. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. The motel has been converted into apartments, but the original style is well maintained. 2840 N. Peoria Road



Lazy A Motel (Prairie Village Apartments), Springfield. August, 2007

► **Illinois State Fairgrounds/ The Railsplitter Giant**  

The Fairgrounds, as well as some of the exhibition buildings, date to 1894. Located on the state fairgrounds, “The Railsplitter” Abraham Lincoln giant statue was created and built by Carl W. Rinnus in commemoration of the State of Illinois’ 150th Anniversary of its statehood (1968). 801 Sangamon Avenue, 217-782-6661



“The Railsplitter” giant at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield. March, 2007



Shea's Gas Station Museum, Springfield.
March, 2007



Jungle Jim's Cafe, Springfield. February, 2008



Mel-O-Cream Donuts on North Grand,
Springfield. February, 2008

► **Shea's Gas Station Museum**  

A private museum loaded with gas station and oil company collectibles. It has been operated by Bill Shea for over half a century and has become an internationally renowned landmark on old 66. 217-522-0475

► **Jungle Jim's Cafe** 


Just down from Bill Shea's museum, this cafe serves up racing nostalgia and Springfield's famed "Horseshoe Sandwich"—toast on a warm platter, meat over the toast smothered with cheese sauce and French fries. 1923 Peoria Road, 217-789-6173.

► **Capitol City Motel** 

A classic motel (still in operation) that was active during the heyday of Route 66. 217-528-0462, 1620 N. 9th St

► **Watt Brothers Pharmacy** 

First open in 1938, Watt Bros. is the oldest pharmacy in the Springfield area. Located on the north side of the city, near the Ill.State Fairgrounds, it was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2001. 830 N. Grand Avenue East, 217-522-3711

► **Mel-O-Cream Donuts** 

Founded in 1932 as a retail shop in Springfield, Illinois. Created during the height of the Great Depression, the founder, Kelly Grant Sr., decided to sell donuts at wholesale to restaurants and corner grocery stores. Mel-O-Cream became a household word in the Springfield area, with distributions expanding in the late 40s and early 50s. In 1964, the first franchise was opened. The North Grand location is the only one with classic signage and building. 525 N. Grand Ave

► **Lincoln Tomb** 

On the day President Lincoln died, April 15, 1865, Springfield citizens began raising funds to build a memorial. On May 3, the body was delivered to Springfield and stored in a receiving vault at Oak Ridge Cemetery. The tomb, built of granite with a 117-foot high obelisk, was completed in 1874. This is the final resting place for Abraham Lincoln, his wife Mary Todd, and three of their four sons. Oak Ridge Cemetery, 217-782-1717



Lincoln Tomb, Springfield. March, 2007

► **War Memorials: Vietnam, WWII, Korean** 

The **World War II Veterans Memorial** was dedicated on December 4, 2004 to honor the 987,000 men and women from the State of Illinois who served in the war, including 22,000 who lost their lives. The design centerpiece is a globe 12 feet in diameter with metal buttons that show the locations of major battles.

The **Korean War State Memorial** was dedicated on June 16, 1996 to honor the 1,748 Illinoisans killed during the war. It consists of a 12-foot tall bronze bell mounted on a granite base with a carillon system that plays music.

The **Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial**, dedicated in 1988, honors the 3,000 Illinois troops killed or listed as missing during the war. The center of the monument is an eternal flame supported by five vertical gray granite walls.



Korean War State Memorial, Springfield. August, 2007

► **Ace Sign Company** 

Established in 1940, this business constructed many of the classic neon signs that advertised businesses throughout Springfield. Joe Bringuet (father) and Dennis Bringuet (son) currently run the business. A large number of vintage neon signs from Springfield are stored in the company's warehouse. 217-522-8417, 402 N. 4th Street



Ace Sign Company, collection of neon signs, Springfield. February, 2008



Springfield Union Station. March, 2007



Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. March, 2007



Maid Rite Sandwich Shop, Springfield. February, 2008



Old State Capitol, Springfield. March, 2007

► **Union Station Visitors Center** 

Designed in the Richardson Romanesque style in 1896 as a combined passenger terminal for several railroads serving Springfield. The station closed in 1971 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building has been extensively restored, including its beautiful three story clock tower, as a state visitor center. 500 E. Madison (adjacent to the Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library Complex), 217-557-4588

► **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** 

This 200,000 square foot complex includes an Archive, Library, and Museum. It features interactive exhibits, lifelike statues of Lincoln's life, and innovative theater presentations. It is over 50% larger than any other presidential library, and is the most visited. 112-212 N. 6th Street, 217-558-8844

► **Maid Rite Sandwich Shop** 

On the National Register of Historic Places, this is one of America's oldest drive-ins, dating to 1924. It claims the first drive-up window in the country. It serves the original specially seasoned loose meat hamburger with mustard, pickle relish, and onion on a steamed bun. 118 N. Pasfield Street, 217-523-0723.

► **Old State Capitol** 

This is considered by many to be Lincoln's capitol as it was here that he argued cases before the Illinois Supreme Court, served in the state legislature, first confronted Stephen Douglas, and where he delivered his famous "House Divided" speech. It is open daily for tours. 217-785-7961

► **Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices** 

Lincoln and his partner, William Herndon, occupied this building from 1843-1852. This is the only surviving building where Abraham

Lincoln worked as a lawyer. It has been restored and tours are provided. 217-785-7960

► **Coney Island Restaurant** 

Opened in 1919, patrons have enjoyed chili dogs (the “best in town”) and hamburgers here for nearly 90 years. The restaurant’s decor features old mirrors hanging above wooden booths dating from the 1940s. 210 S. 5th St. 217-528-1193



Coney Island Restaurant, Springfield. February, 2008

► **Lincoln Depot**  

Three months after his election in November 1860, Abraham Lincoln left Springfield from this depot for Washington, D.C. to become the 16th President of the United States. The special train that would take him there left the Great Western Depot on the rainy morning of Monday, February 11, 1861, the last day Lincoln spent in Springfield. 10th & Monroe Streets, 217-544-8695 or 788-1356



Lincoln Depot, Springfield. August, 2007

► **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** 

Free ranger-led tours of the Lincoln Home are the central feature of the site. The Visitor Center offers orientation and interpretive films. Exhibits are located within the neighborhood. Stroll through the four-block historic area to see some houses in the Lincoln neighborhood. You should plan on 1½ to 2 hours for a comprehensive visit. 217-391-3226



Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield. March, 2007

► **Illinois State Capitol**  

The capitol has served the people of Illinois since 1877. Many murals, plaques, paintings and statues depict significant people and events in Illinois history. You can watch the legislature when in session. 2nd and Capitol, 217-782-2099

► **Illinois State Museum** 

Houses interactive exhibitions that tell the story of the land, life, people, and art of Illinois. Capitol Complex on the corner of Spring and Edwards Streets, 217-782-7386



Widow at Windsor Antique Shop, Springfield. August, 2007



Dana-Thomas House, Springfield. March, 2007




Sonrise Donuts sign, Springfield. August, 2007



Bel-Aire Motel, Springfield. August, 2007

► **Widow at Windsor Antique Shop** 

Located in an old ornate Cadillac dealership building, the shop offers “fine European antiques and architectural.” 711 South Fifth Street, 217-744-3735

► **Dana-Thomas House** 

A famous Frank Lloyd Wright prairie-style home, open for tours. In 1902, architect Frank Lloyd Wright was commissioned to design a home for Susan Lawrence Dana, a forward-thinking socialite in Springfield. The building is the best preserved and most complete of the early prairie-style homes. It contains the largest collection of site-specific, original Wright art glass and furniture. Wright traveled Route 66 with his entourage of students to reach Taliesin West (in Arizona), and would periodically stop by the house. 300 East Lawrence, 217-782-6776

► **Joe Roger’s Original Recipe Chilli Parlor** 

Serves chilli “just the way you like it”—with or without beans, mild, medium, medium/touch, medium hot, hot and the J.R. Special (if you survive a bowl of the Special, you get a second one free). 820 S. 9th Street, 217-522-3722.


► **Sonrise Donuts** 

The original Sonrise Donuts was built on South Grand in 1947 by Byron Figuera. The shop was moved to 9th Street in the 1980s and is no longer open. It has a classic neon sign created by Ace Signs that deserves consideration for preservation. The old diner is still intact inside the building.

► **Bel-Aire Motel** 

A luxurious 80-unit motel built around 1949 that catered to travelers. The Bel-Aire features a Sputnik-style sign on its roof, which used to spin and flash. According to the Ace Sign Company, the original sign (without the Sputnik) was constructed out of wood, since

metal was not immediately available after WWII. A pool and seal statue fountain are still on the property but no longer used. 2636 S. 6th Street

► **Route 66 Kicks Family Entertainment Center** 

A family entertainment center with a Route 66 theme. It features a pizza buffet, bowling, go-karts, video games, laser tag, and bumper cars. The organization supports preservation projects along Illinois Route 66, including the Mill restoration in Lincoln. 2744 S. 6th Street, 217-753-2000

► **Cozy Dog Drive-In**  

The restaurant is a shrine to Route 66 and to itself, packed with mementos, clippings, and old signs, as well as with Mother Road souvenirs for sale. The “corn dog on a stick” was invented during World War II by Ed Waldmire when he was in the Air Force stationed in Texas. Cozy Dogs were officially launched at the Lake Springfield Beach House in 1946, and a stand was opened on Ash and MacArthur. The Cozy Dog Drive-In is now situated where the old Abe Lincoln Motel used to be, 2935 S. 6th Street, 217-525-1992

► **Route 66 Hotel & Conference Center** 

Includes a “mini museum” with an unusual array of vehicles, signs and articles from the Route 66 era, and a family-style restaurant dubbed the “Filling Station Bar and Grill.” The hotel is an enclosed old Holiday Inn. 625 E. Saint Joseph Street, 217-529-6626

► **Curve Inn** 

Opened on Route 66 south of Springfield in 1945. The original owner, Guido Mancini, served the public in the main tavern area, while “special” customers could ring a buzzer at the bottom of the back stairs to gain entrance to the gambling and prostitution parlor on the upper floor. In 1972, Neil McGillivray



Cozy Dog Drive-In, Springfield. March, 2008



Artifacts on display inside the Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center, Springfield. December, 2006



Curve Inn, Springfield. August, 2007



Site of Southwest Airport, Springfield. August, 2007



Route 66 Drive-In at Knight's Action Park, Springfield. February, 2008




Abandoned brick road curve on North Cotton Hill Road, Springfield. August, 2007

purchased the Inn and kept the name. Current owners Ray and Ami Merchant and Don Thompson purchased the Inn in 2002. It was inducted into the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2007. 3219 S 6th Street Rd.

► **Southwest Airport/Springfield's Original Municipal Airport** 

This airport was Springfield's original municipal airport, built in the 1920s with 2 runways in an X-shape and several buildings on the east side of the field. Charles Lindbergh, famous for completing the first solo, non-stop flight across the Atlantic, likely landed here regularly as part of his Chicago to St. Louis airmail route in 1926. He was renowned for delivering the mail on time, despite several mechanical problems and twice having to bail out of a crashing mail plane. The airport closed in the early 1960s, but a few historic buildings including a hangar still stand. Chatham Road and Westchester Blvd.

► **Knights Action Park/Route 66 Drive-In** 

Knights Action Park started in 1952 as a golf driving range by George Knight Sr. It has evolved into a diverse family fun park with water slides, bumper boats and batting cages. The Green Meadows Drive-In opened in 1978 and lasted just 4 years. Restored in 2002 as the Route 66 Drive-In, it now shows double features nightly from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day and on weekends through October. 1700 Recreation Drive, 217-546-8881

► **Abandoned Brick Road Curve** 

An abandoned curve of the 1930-1933 Route 66 alignment that is still paved in bricks. It is currently on private property on North Cotton Hill Road.

► **Abandoned Pavement under Lake Springfield** 

From 1930-1933, Route 66 followed North

Cotton Hill Road. In 1933, Lake Springfield was created by damming Sugar Creek, and the water level rose to cover a large segment of the highway. Route 66 was moved to the current location of I-55 to cross the lake. Old pavement still leads through the woods here to where the road disappears under the lake.

► **Abandoned Snake Bridge/"Schuster" Bridge over Lick Creek** 

The 1926-1930 alignment of Route 66 (old Route 4) traveled over this bridge. It was abandoned when IL-4 was rerouted. Under the bridge lives the harmless Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*), which is an endangered and protected species.



Abandoned pavement under Lake Springfield. March, 2007

► **Washington Park Botanical Gardens and Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon**  

The Botanical Gardens is a domed conservatory with tropical foliage and more. The Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon is one of the largest carillons in the world and one of the few open to the public. View bells and playing mechanisms during a narrated tour with video presentation. 217-753-6228



Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon in Washington Park, Springfield. August, 2007

► **Lincoln Memorial Gardens** 

Founded in 1936 as a living memorial to Abraham Lincoln. All plants in the garden are native to the three states Lincoln lived in— Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky. Located on Lake Springfield, the gardens were designed by famed Chicago landscape architect, Jens Jensen. Because of this association with Jensen, the gardens were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. A nature center and gift shop are open every day except Monday. 2301 East Lake Shore Drive, 217-529-1111



Lincoln Memorial Gardens, Springfield. March, 2007

► **Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site** 

About 2 miles south of Petersburg and about 20 miles northwest of Springfield is a reconstruction of the pioneer village



Lincoln's New Salem Historic Site, Petersburg.
August, 2007



Lauterbach Tire and Auto Service giant, Jerome.
April, 2007



Sugar Creek Covered Bridge, Glenarm. March, 2007

where Abraham Lincoln spent his early adulthood. The six years Lincoln spent in New Salem formed a turning point in his career. Twelve log houses, the Rutledge Tavern, ten workshops, stores, mills, and a school where church services were held have been reproduced and furnished as they might have been in the 1830s. Daily demonstrations and special events make this a wonderful half-day visit. 15588 History Lane, Petersburg, 217-632-4000

Jerome

This village of almost 1,500 is surrounded by the city of Springfield, the state capital. Jerome is positioned on the west side of Springfield and shares a common boundary on the east and south sides. Also, on the north side, Jerome shares a common boundary with the Village of Leland Grove.

► Lauterbach Giant

Lauterbach Tire and Auto Service has a fiberglass “muffler man” giant standing in the parking lot. He used to hold a tire, but was recently upgraded to be more patriotic with a U.S. flag. In 2006, the muffler man lost his head during a twister, but was skillfully repaired by the station. 1569 Wabash Avenue

Southern View

This village of almost 1,700 is surrounded by Springfield on the southern edge of the city.

Glenarm

This is a small unincorporated community in Sangamon County near Sugar Creek Bridge.

► Sugar Creek Covered Bridge

This historic 1880 bridge was built by Thomas Black. It spans 60 feet across Sugar Creek. The bridge has been restored and is open to foot traffic. A quaint park adjacent to the bridge and creek is an ideal place for a picnic.

Chatham

The first farm settlers arrived in the area in 1816. The village received its name October 22, 1836. Chatham is located in what was once open prairie between Lick Creek and Panther Creek in Sangamon County, which at that time was about the center of the new state of Illinois, approximately ten miles south of Springfield. Splendid fields of corn, almost without exception from ten to fifteen feet high sprang up over the area. The high degree of fruitfulness attracted many to settle here.

► Chatham Railroad Museum/Depot

The first train from Alton to Springfield went through Chatham on September 9, 1852. The current station was built in 1902 to replace an earlier station that had burned. Western Union Telegraph and United States Express services were both available at the station and local residents could ship and receive freight such as furniture and farm supplies. After 70 years of service, the station was closed in 1972. The station is owned by the Village of Chatham and was restored by the Friends of the Depot in 1991. In 1999, the Chicago & Illinois Midland Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society signed an agreement with Chatham to re-restore the station and create the Chatham Railroad Museum.



Chatham Railroad Depot Museum. April, 2007

Auburn

Only minutes from the State Capital, Auburn can trace its roots back to the earliest settlers in Sangamon County and all of Illinois.

► Historic Brick Road

This original 1.4 mile hand-lain brick road was completed in 1931, and curves through corn fields near Auburn. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Snell Road and Curran Road



Historic brick road near Auburn. September, 2007




Divernon Depot. April, 2007



Thomas Country Estate (Punkie's Palace) between Divernon and Farmersville. April, 2007

Divernon

This is another farm community near Springfield established in the early years of Sangamon County.

▶ **Divernon Depot** 

Small depot that serves as a railroad and community history museum.

▶ **Thomas Country Estate/Punkie's Palace** 

Located about halfway between Divernon and Farmersville on the east side of I-55. This country mansion was designed in 1863 by Springfield Architect, Elizah Meyers. Nearly 300,000 bricks form the walls. Lewis Thomas lived on the estate until his death in 1909. It served as a B&B called Punkie's Palace for several years, but it recently burned and was gutted. It is currently for sale.

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- ▶ Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- ▶ Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
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- ▶ Sub-theme #5 : Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.

Interpretive Resources in the Carlinville Region

**Thayer, Virden, Girard, Nilwood,
Carlinville, Gillespie, Mount Clare, Benld,
Sawyerville**

Regional Overview: *Mining Towns of Macoupin County*

Coal mines were developed in the county in the late 1800s. By 1910, there were 22 shaft mines, 17 of which were shipping coal by rail to industrial centers. Virden had 4, Girard 1, Nilwood 1, Carlinville 1, Gillespie 3, and Staunton had 4. The “pit villages” of Mt. Clare, Benld, and Sawyerville had become overnight boom towns.

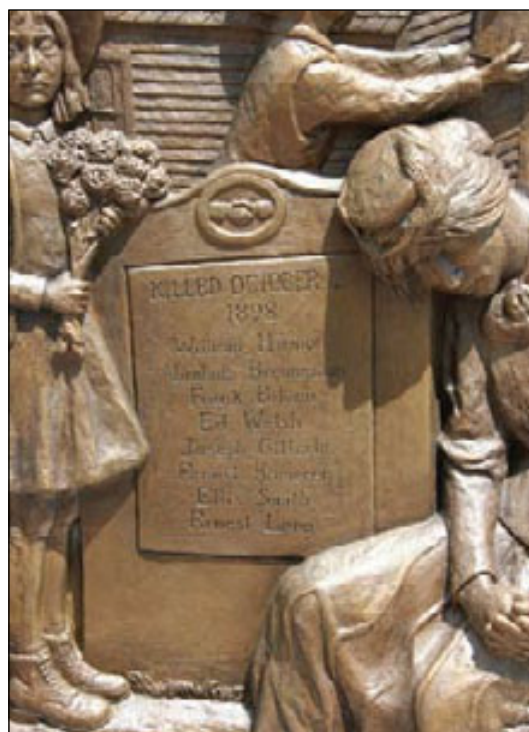
These new, deeper mines brought in immigrants from throughout Europe. Miners who came from the British Isles were strong union and labor activists. The Virden mine riot of 1898 is a significant event in the American labor movement. Miners from all of these towns joined in the battle. A monument in Virden and the Union Miner’s Cemetery in Mt. Olive commemorate this event and the fight to end “industrial feudalism” in the mines. Some of those killed in the riot and their leader, “General” Alexander Bradley, a British coal miner from Mt. Olive, are buried in this cemetery. Also buried here is “Mother” Jones, a famous union activist who asked to be buried “under the same clay” as the martyred Virden miners.

The struggle of immigrant miners and their conflict with mine owners is a story that resonates across time to the present. Even 9 and 10 year old children labored in the mines with their fathers. Mother Jones and the labor movement responded to this suffering to give us the 40 hour work week, child labor laws, and minimum wage laws.

These towns still reflect their coal mining roots. The diverse ethnic make-up of these communities



*Macoupin County Courthouse, Carlinville.
March, 2007*



Virden Miner's Riot Memorial. August, 2007



Virden Miner's Riot Memorial. August, 2007



Soldiers and Sailors Monument to World War I veterans, Virden. August, 2007

is evident in their cultural and social values and traditions.

Relationship to Route 66:

These towns are located on the original Route 4 alignment which was Route 66 from 1926 to 1930. Many are classic, small town, middle-American communities with autonomous downtown businesses, schools, grocery stores, gas stations and other amenities. Their public squares are still the center of civic activities.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Thayer

This farm/mining village of 750 in Sangamon County sprang up on the Chicago & Alton Railroad.

► **Maggie's In Thayer**

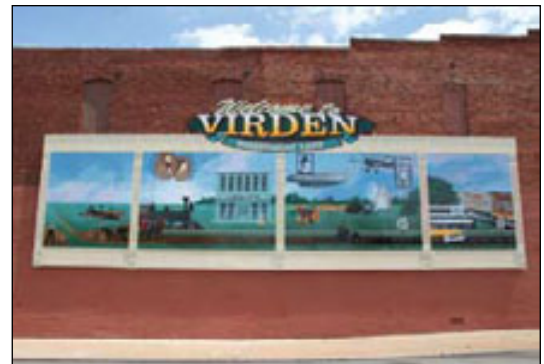
A restaurant that celebrates the region's past with historic photographs on the walls and lots of local flavor and customers. 100 E. Ebony Street, 217-965-9860.

Virden

Laid out in 1852 along the Chicago and Alton Railroad, it was named for John Virden, a local innkeeper. A coal-mining town, Virden was the scene of a mine riot on October 12, 1898. Violence erupted between guards and miners following the arrival of some 200 African American workers from Alabama who were hired by the Chicago-Virden Coal Company in an attempt to break a strike by local workers affiliated with the United Mine Workers of America. Some 15 people (mostly local miners and guards hired to protect the train carrying the arriving workers) died. The city was under martial law for several days, and the union movement credited the incident as an important milestone, especially in the winning of the eight-hour day. Virden is now the center of an agricultural area with corn and soybeans as the chief crops. Macoupin County remains one of the state's largest producers of coal.

► **Virden Miner’s Riot Memorial/ Central Park**  


The town’s central park has a large granite and bronze three-dimensional memorial depicting the 1898 Virden Miner’s Riot. The memorial was dedicated in October of 2006. The park has a historic bandstand that recalls an era of Saturday night band concerts and ice cream socials. A Soldier’s Monument commemorates local veterans who served in WWI.



Virden History Mural. August, 2007

► **Virden History Mural**  

A mural on the side of the Sav-Mor Building depicts events in the history of the town, including Route 66.

► **Post Office Mural by James Daugherty** 

The Virden post office has a New Deal era mural painted by James Daugherty entitled “Illinois Pastoral” is in the U.S. Post Office on Route 4. It is the only post office mural by Daugherty, a noted author and illustrator.




Virden Post Office Mural. February, 2008

Girard

In 1852, the Chicago & Alton Railroad Company built a railroad through section 32 of Girard Township. The following year, Girard was laid out near the railroad and was incorporated in February, 1855. The coal mine was sunk in 1869 and closed in 1922. By 1891, the mine employed 200 men.

► **Whirl-A-Whip** 

This classic 1950s drive in restaurant still offers travelers food and 50 flavors of ice cream in the summer. It is family owned and non-franchised. 309 S. 3rd Street, 217-627-3210

► **Doc’s Soda Fountain/Deck’s Drug Store** 

This drug store was operated continuously from 1884 to 2001 by three generations of the Deck family. It became a community gathering place with the addition of a soda

Courtesy of Whirl-A-Whip (whirl-a-whip.com)



Whirl-A-Whip Drive In, Girard.



Turkey tracks imprinted in pavement near Nilwood. White paint helps mark the location. April, 2007



Macoupin County “Million Dollar” Courthouse, Carlinville. March, 2007

fountain in 1929. In 2007, the store reopened offering soda fountain ice cream and a free drug store museum. 133 S. Second Street, 217-627-2311

Nilwood

This is a small farming and mining town along the Chicago & Alton Railroad.

► Turkey Tracks in Pavement

An original piece of the narrow 1926-30 Route 66 alignment winds south of Nilwood, parallel to the current straight configuration Ill-4. Turkey tracks were imprinted in the 1920s when the original Route 4 concrete was poured, prior to its designation as Route 66. The story varies from a local farmer’s escaped turkeys to wild turkeys as being the owners of the prints.

Carlinville

Named after a former governor of Illinois (Thomas Carlin, governor 1838-1842), this is a site of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. The most important edifice is the courthouse, built in 1870, and designed by famous state capitol building architect Elijah E. Myers. An entire neighborhood of Sears Catalog Homes was funded and constructed in 1918, by Standard Oil of Indiana for its mine workers in Carlinville (at a cost of approximately \$1 million). Today, 152 of the original 156 homes still exist, the largest single repository of Sears Catalog Homes in the United States.

► Macoupin County “Million Dollar” Courthouse

Designed by E.E. Meyers in 1867, the court house began as a \$50,000 project supported by bonds and taxes. By the time it was completed in 1870, the cost was over \$1.3 million, and it was one of the largest courthouses (second perhaps to one in New York) in the U.S. It took 40 years for the county to pay it off. The scandalous cost inspired the nickname of

“Million Dollar Courthouse.” It is recognized as the most magnificent courthouse in Illinois. Block between East and High Streets

► **Macoupin County Historical Museum** 

Housed in the Victorian-style Anderson Mansion, the museum consists of two stories of antiques and collectibles from Macoupin County’s past. Open Wed., 10am-2pm or by appointment. 432 Breckenridge Street, 217-854-8916 or 217-854-8500



Macoupin County Historical Museum, Carlinville. April, 2007

► **Standard Addition/Sears and Roebuck Mail Order Houses** 

This largest U.S. collection of 156 Sears and Roebuck mail order houses, built in 1918 for the mine workers of the Standard Oil Company, can be toured using a guide available from most shops. The neighborhood is known as the Standard Addition and 152 of the 156 homes are still standing. Around Charles and Rice Streets



Standard Addition/Sears and Roebuck Mail Order Houses, Carlinville. April, 2007

► **Macoupin County Jail** 

The historic jail was open from 1869 to 1988. This Gothic Revival stone structure has cannonballs embedded within the walls to help prevent jail breaks. Only one person ever escaped and was apprehended a few blocks away. Across from courthouse, 215 East Street



Macoupin County Jail, Carlinville. March, 2007

► **Carlinville Square** 

The downtown square is lined with 1890s shops that maintain their historical appearance. The street around the square is brick. Main and Broad Streets

► **Loomis House Hotel** 

A former 50 room hotel designed by E.E. Meyers, the architect of the “Million Dollar Courthouse.” Judge Thaddeus Loomis contracted with Meyer for the construction of the hotel at the same time that he oversaw the construction of the controversial courthouse and jail. When the \$50,000 construction



Loomis House Hotel on Carlinville’s square.
August, 2007



Carlin Belle paddle boat at the Best Western-
Carlinville. April, 2007



Deerfield Drive original pavement and bridge, south
of Carlinville. March, 2007

project began to spin out of control, people publicly charged Judge Loomis with corruption. Although never fully responding to the charges, Loomis did admit that the hotel limestone was indeed taken from the courthouse project—but only from the leftover scrap! He survived the scandal with his reputation somewhat intact. His town clerk and associate, George Holiday, skipped town at the peak of the controversy, never to be seen again. A 1909 pharmacy on the first floor is beautifully preserved but the upper floors of this big building are deteriorating from water damage. Main and Broad Streets

► **Best Western-Carlinville / Carlin Belle Riverboat** 

This hotel is located several miles east of Carlinville on the 1940-77 alignment, just off of I-55 between Waggoner and Litchfield. A large paddle boat called the Carlin Belle is located in a pond on the hotel grounds. The owner has a passion for boats, which shows in the decorating scheme and restaurant names (“Captain’s Table,” “Yacht Club Lounge”).

► **Deerfield Drive Historic Bridge** 

Several miles south of Carlinville along Ill-4, a small original section of Route 66 survives called Deerfield Drive. A small concrete bridge built in 1920 was saved from destruction.

East Gillespie

This mining village in Macoupin County had a 2000 population of 234.

Gillespie

This is another mining town in Macoupin County with a current population of almost 3,500. Three mines operated there in 1910.

► **Zion Church Neon Cross** 

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church adjacent to Route 66 in Gillespie has a neon

cross that is lit up at night. The church was built in 1901. Train tracks once ran next to the church. On November 25, 1967, a train wreck destroyed the church steps and entrance canopy, while one freight car leaned dangerously close to the sacristy. Services were still held the next day.

► **Post Office Mural by Gustaf Dalstrom** 

The Gillespie post office has a mural called “Illinois Farm” painted by Gustaf Dalstrom in 1936.

Mount Clare

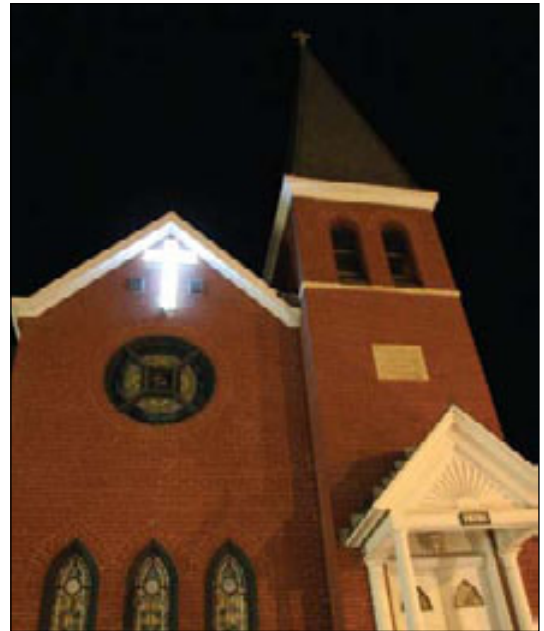
This is a small mining town which began in 1904 when the Superior Coal Company sank shaft number 3 (see Benld history). It currently has just over 400 residents.

Benld

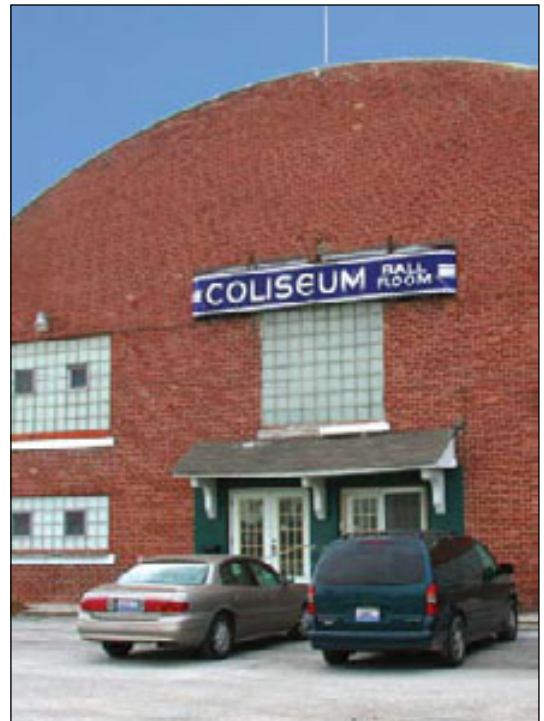
The name derives from Benjamin L. Dorsey, who was responsible for gaining the land and coal mining rights on which the town was built. According to legend, the sign painter making a sign for the town fell when he got to the D, and so the town became Benld. Miners and their families came from Austria, Bohemia, Croatia, England, France, Galecia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, and Sweden.

Superior Coal Company, a subsidiary of Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Company, bought 40,000 acres of coal and mineral rights in 1903 from the Dorsey family and began to sink mines to furnish coal for their locomotives. Benld was in the center of three mines. Number 1 was opened in August of 1903 to the north and east of Benld at what is now Eagerville. Number 2 opened in October of 1903 to the south of Benld at Sawyerville. To the west, at Mount Clare, Number 3 was opened in 1904.

When the Eighteenth Amendment to the U S Constitution was ratified on January 16, 1920, it provided an opportunity for lucrative illegal



Neon cross on the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Gillespie. February, 2008



Coliseum Ball Room, Benld. March, 2007



Coliseum Ball Room, Benld. March, 2007



Russian Orthodox Church, Benld. March, 2007

activities. A wooded area to the east of Benld along Cahokia Creek was a prime location for a still. It has been said that gangsters from St. Louis and Springfield were the owners of what was one of the largest stills operated during Prohibition. This still was locally referred to as “Number 5,” maybe even stated in a somewhat affectionate tone. This large distillery was more like a manufacturing facility with three fifty-foot high smokestacks, and produced many gallons of alcohol. “Number 5” was in operation until late March of 1928, when it was raided by U S Treasury agents who seized and destroyed the still.

► **Coliseum Ball Room**



Opened in 1924, this ball room in its heyday featured the biggest dance floor (10,000 square feet) between Chicago and St. Louis. Stars such as Tommy Dorsey, Fats Domino, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Ike and Tina Turner, Ray Charles, and the Everly Brothers played here. It is currently an antique mall.

► **“Number 5” Still**



A wooded area to the east of Benld along Cahokia Creek harbored one of the largest stills operated during Prohibition. This still was locally referred to as “Number 5”—a play off of the numbering system for mine shafts. With three 50-foot high smokestacks, this large distillery was more like a manufacturing facility that produced many gallons of alcohol. “Number 5” was in operation until late March of 1928, when it was raided by U.S. Treasury agents who seized and destroyed the still.

► **Russian Orthodox Church**



Benld is noted for its Italian and Russian miners, and the picturesque onion-domed Russian Orthodox Church was established there in 1907. The parish has become a historical site because it is the only Russian Orthodox Parish under the Moscow Patriarchate in the state of Illinois.

Sawyererville

This is a small mining town which began in 1903 when the Superior Coal Company sank shaft number 2 (see Benld history). It currently has just over 200 residents.

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- ▶ Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- ▶ Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- ▶ Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- ▶ Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #6: Coal underlying Illinois shaped the development of many of the communities along Illinois Route 66.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.



Looking up Main Street from Carlinville's historic square at sunset. March, 2007



Our Lady of the Highways Memorial, near Waggoner.
April, 2007

Interpretive Resources in the Litchfield Region

Farmersville, Waggoner, Litchfield, Mount Olive, Staunton, Williamson, Livingston

Regional Overview: *Farming and Mining Towns of Montgomery, Macoupin, and Madison Counties*

These towns began as farming communities, typically along a rail line, and in the late 1800s developed coal mines. There were two associated periods of immigration from Europe—first came the farmers and later the miners.

The Illinois Labor History Society best describes the significance of this region:

As Muslims go to Mecca, there is a shrine in Illinois that deserves a pilgrimage by all labor-minded persons. It is the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive, Illinois.

It offers no miraculous visions or cures; but each one who visits will be touched, for this is the resting place of that “grandmother of agitators,” Mary “Mother” Jones; and this is a place filled with the spirit of good union men. They are the coal miners she called “her boys,” among whom she asked to be buried at the time of her death in 1930, at the age of 100. Beyond the wrought iron gate to the little burial ground rises a granite obelisk on which is a great medallion bearing the likeness of Mother Jones. She is guarded on either side by a larger-than-life bronze statue of a coal miner with his sledge. At the base is a simple stone nestled in the grass, Mother Mary Jones.

Among the tombstones in the Union Miners Cemetery is that of “General” Alexander Bradley, surely the most flamboyant figure in all of labor history. Bradley got his military nickname as a reference to his service in Coxey’s Army, that fabulous cross-country march of the

unemployed which culminated in a march down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. on May 1, 1894.

Home again in Mt. Olive, Bradley became a self-appointed organizer for the United Mine Workers of America, which had scarcely 400 members in Illinois at that time. Yet, Bradley and a handful of area miners resolved at a secret meeting in the woods to join in a nation wide strike called by the UMWA for July 4, 1897.

With Bradley at their head, the miners marched to coal camps in Belleville, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Collinsville exhorting the men to “pour the oil from their lamps” and join the strike, which they did. Wearing his favorite outfit, a top hat and Prince Albert coat, an umbrella in hand, “General” Bradley took the train, alone, to DuQuoin, 75 miles away. Again, his eloquence (and perhaps his appearance) was rewarded. DuQuoin’s miners agreed to join the strike.

The Union Miners Cemetery is linked to an episode in the strike known as “The Virden Riot,” in which four Mt. Olive men (and still others from nearby towns) were killed in a shoot out with mine guards on October 10, 1898, as a train carrying 180 black strike-breakers recruited from the south, attempted to pass through a band of armed strikers, and reach safety within a fortified stockade at Virden.

—“The Union Miner’s Cemetery.”
www.kentlaw.edu/ihs/minecem.htm

Relationship to Route 66:

These farming and mining towns were on the 1930 to 1977 alignment of Route 66. The rural nature of these communities and landscape has changed little from the heyday of the highway. This is a direct connection to the historical ambience of traveling Route 66.



A tombstone and statue in the Union Miners Cemetery, Mt. Olive. April, 2007



Water tower and historic town square of Farmersville. April, 2007



Art's Motel and Restaurant, Farmersville. August, 2007




Our Lady of the Highways Memorial, near Waggoner. April, 2007

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Farmersville

This is a farming village of about 750 in Montgomery County.

► **Water Tower and Historic Town Square** 

A stand pipe water tower, reminiscent of a tall silo, stands prominently in the town square. The town has a central park with several historic buildings around the square, including a brick opera house. Buildings are in need of renovation and preservation.

► **Hendricks Chevrolet Building** 



Historic car dealership building, now an antique store.

► **Art's Motel and Restaurant**  

Art McAnamey opened a restaurant and gas station here in 1937 and rented six cabins to overnight guests. In 1952, his two-story building caught fire, and he rebuilt a single-story restaurant. After he died in 1960, his sons replaced the cabins with a 13-room L-shaped motel. The motel and restaurant are still open to travelers. In 2007, the Route 66 Association restored the classic motel sign, including the replacement of neon on the "Art's." 101 Main Street, 217-227-3277

Waggoner


This is a small farming village of about 250 just south of Farmersville.

► **Our Lady of the Highways Memorial**  

Built in 1959 as a high school project, the shrine harks to an era when "Bloody 66" was a dangerous drive. The Carrara marble statue is inscribed, "Mary, Loving Mother of Jesus, Protect us on the Highway." Along the road from this site is a trail of Burma Shave style signs of the Hail Mary.

► **Green Diamond Rail-Trail Depot**  

The wooden Waggoner Depot was restored in 2000 and now serves as a trailhead for the Green Diamond Rail-Trail. The trail runs for 4 miles from Farmersville to Waggoner.

► **Waggoner Community High School** 

An attractive brick school built in 1921.

Litchfield

Litchfield began with the arrival of the Terre Haute, Alton and St. Louis Railroad in 1854. Some two miles to the southwest, a group of people founded Hardinsburg, expecting that the railroad would “boom” the town. The railroad, instead, came through Litchfield and doomed Hardinsburg. The Hardinsburg natives hedged their bets, however, and built their buildings on runners. When they realized the inevitable, they hitched teams of oxen and hauled the buildings over the slick prairie grass into Litchfield.

As the years progressed, Litchfield was blessed with six railroads. Two remain- the C.B. and Q., and the Norfolk Southern. The discovery of oil and gas in the 1880s created a brief boom and two coal mines were sunk. This town of almost 7,000 is today a regional shopping and manufacturing center.

► **Ariston Cafe**  

Pete Adam started the Ariston Cafe in nearby Carlenville in 1924. When the Mother Road was rerouted in 1929, Pete leased a new building in Litchfield. The Ariston’s great reputation for service, excellent food and unbelievable desserts led Pete to relocate across the street in 1935 to his own building that still stands today. The family still offers the same wonderful food and great service that it has for more than 80 years. It is said to be the oldest cafe on Route 66. The Ariston was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006 and is in the Route 66 Hall of Fame. 413 Old Route 66 North, 217-324-2023



Waggoner Depot and Green Diamond Trailhead. April, 2007



Waggoner Community High School. April, 2007



Ariston Cafe, Litchfield. August, 2007




SkyView Drive-In Theatre, Litchfield. April, 2007



Belevidere Cafe and Motel, Litchfield. April, 2007




Carnegie Public Library, Litchfield. April, 2007

► **SkyView Drive-In Theatre** 


A Route 66 Hall of Fame inductee, the SkyView opened in the spring of 1951 and has been in seasonal operation since. It is the last remaining original operating drive-in theatre on Route 66 in Illinois. 1200 N Old Route 66.

► **Niehaus Cycle Sales** 


A family-run business since the early 1970s, Niehaus Cycle Sales sells motorcycles, trailers, clothing, and accessories. It is housed in a retro building with exterior neon trim, themed to Route 66. The owners plan to create a cycle museum in the building. 718 N Old Route 66, 217-324-6565

► **Vic Suhling Gas for Less sign** 

Classic sign for Vic Suhling Gas across the street from the Ariston Cafe. The gas station no longer stands.

► **Belevidere Cafe and Motel** 

The Belevidere Cafe and Motel was built by Lester and Edith Kranich in the mid-1930s. The motel was a plain clapboard building with a series of attached units, unusual in an era of roadside cabins. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in March, 2007. The cafe and motel are closed. Rooms are rented to residents. The buildings are for sale. 817 Old Route 66 (Sherman St.)

► **Skinny's Cafe and Truck Stop** 

Established in 1935 by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Large, the cafe was rebuilt in 1939 at its present location following a fire. During the 1940s and 50s, it offered full course meals for just 35 cents and fuel pumps. It was a regular stop for truckers along Route 66. Several businesses have occupied the buildings since the cafe closed in 1958. 1117 N. Old Route 66

► **Carnegie Public Library** 

The public library is housed in an original 1904 Carnegie building. It was placed on the

National Register of Historic Places in 1999.
400 N State Street, 217-324-3866

► **Elks Building** 

Located in downtown Litchfield, this ornate former Elks Lodge was built by Oliver Steigemeyer in the early 1900s in the Classical Revival style. It features an elk head statue above the main entrance. 424 N. Monroe Street



Elks Building, Litchfield. April, 2007

► **Lake Lou Yaeger Park** 

Lake Lou Yaeger is a 1,200 acre lake popular with boaters and fishers. A 300 acre park along its shores includes picnic areas, playgrounds, campgrounds, and a beach.

► **Henry Eilers Shoal Creek Nature Preserve** 

A 250-acre savanna/woodland owned by the City of Litchfield and located on the east side of the Lake Lou Yaeger dam. The area includes a nature trail and is superb for bird watching.



Henry Eilers Shoal Creek Nature Preserve, Litchfield. August, 2007

► **Manske-Niemann Farm** 

Established in the 1850s by Michael Mankse, an immigrant from Prussia, the site has some of the region’s most complete examples of 19th and early 20th-century farm architecture. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. 13 Franks Lane

► **Old billboard-Heritage House Smorgasborg** 

A crumbling billboard for the “Heritage House Smorgasborg” in Springfield along one of the abandoned four-lane stretches of Route 66 south of Litchfield (likely beyond restoration).



Old “Heritage House Smorgasborg” billboard on an abandoned lane of Route 66, south of Litchfield. February, 2008

Mount Olive

A German immigrant named John C. Niemann bought forty acres in 1846 and sent for his brothers, Fred and Henry, who bought property adjoining



Union Miners Cemetery, Mt. Olive. April, 2007



Mother Jones Monument, Mt. Olive. April, 2007

John's farm. Soon more Germans came to the area and Niemann built the first store and post office to service the many settlers in what was then known as Niemann's Settlement. In 1868 a town plat was laid out on Niemann's original forty acres. The name given to the town was Oelburg, which means "Mount of Olives." In 1870 when the railroad came through, the settlement's name changed once again to Drummond Station. A few years later in 1874, Neimann sold his interest in the store to C.J. Keiser. It would be more than a decade that the town would finally settle upon the name Mt. Olive. Keiser began to build an empire, opening the first coal shaft in 1875, establishing a milling business in 1876, and one of the first banks in 1882. Keiser was one of twelve original stockholders who owned the mine works. Coal mining in the area began to attract immigrants by the hundreds to work in the many mines.

► **Union Miners Cemetery** 

Miners killed in the Virden Mine Riot were denied burial in the established cemeteries. In response, the local union purchased a one acre site and the bodies were moved to the new Union Miners' Cemetery in 1899. Over the years, additional land was acquired and a monument was dedicated on October 11, 1936. The cemetery is the final resting place of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, a fierce advocate for the rights of both miners and children. Before her death at the age of 100 in 1930, Mary Jones requested to be buried with "her boys" – the coal miners that she championed for decades. The cemetery, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is on the northwestern edge of town, just off I-55.

► **Mother Jones Monument** 

Located in the Union Miner's Cemetery, the granite monument was added in 1936. Mary "Mother" Jones is buried here at her own request, as is Alexander "General" Bradley who organized the strike leading to the incident.

► **Flour Mill (1876)** 

In the late 1800s, the Mennel Milling Company (based in Ohio) purchased a flour mill in Mt. Olive. The company has been milling wheat into specialty flours for over 120 years. The Mt. Olive mill is still in operation and housed in the original 1876 brick building.

► **Soulsby’s Service Station**  

In 1926 Henry Soulsby and his son Russell built a Shell gas station. Today it ranks as one of the oldest filling stations still standing on Route 66. The original 1926 station was a mere 13 by 20 feet wide and had just enough room for a desk, cash register, battery charger, and a few supplies. The Soulsbys doubled the size of the station in the 1930s, but it was never big enough to be called a garage. There is a drive up ramp located outside of the station that was used for oil changes and minor repairs—it now has a large tree growing inside it. Russell learned about electronics in the Navy during WWII and started a TV repair business in the 1950s, which allowed him to survive the opening of I-55. After Henry died, Russell and his sister Ola ran the station until 1991, and continued to greet visitors until 1997. The new station owner is working with the Soulsby Station Society and the Illinois Route 66 Association to maintain this classic filling station as a historical and educational attraction.



1876 Flour Mill, Mt. Olive. April, 2007



Soulsby’s Service Station, Mt. Olive. April, 2007

Stanton

This is one of the first farm areas settled in Macoupin County in 1835. A man named Stanton donated land for a village square, but when the new settlers applied for a post office the name was approved as “Stanton.” In the 1880s, coal mining became the principal industry in the area. Hundreds of European immigrants came to the city to work in the four mines. Although mining ended in the 1950s, Stanton today, with a population of about 5,000, celebrates its “small town” feel and connection to historic Route 66 and I-55.



A tree now grows through the Soulsby’s Service Station drive up ramp, Mt. Olive. April, 2007





DeCamp Junction Roadhouse, Staunton.
February, 2008




Henry's Rabbit Ranch, Staunton. April, 2007

► **Decamp Junction Roadhouse**  

This historic roadhouse on Route 66 had tourist cabins, a dance hall, gambling, and a brothel. In 1930, gangsters arrived in a black sedan with guns drawn and robbed the bar of slot machines, alcohol, guns, and cash. This historic tavern displays the photographs of the old dance hall that was here. Decamp Junction also has a wide variety of beers as well as a popular homemade apple cider. 8727 State Route 4, 618-637-2951

► **Henry's Rabbit Ranch**  

This modern attraction celebrates Route 66 and the people along the highway with its emporium of highway and trucking memorabilia that includes a collection of Campbell's 66 Express "Humpin' to Please" trailers next to a replica of a vintage gas station. This attraction offers all things about rabbits: Volkswagens or the furry kind. 1107 Historic Old Route 66, 615-635-5655

► **Country Classic Cars** 

A family owned and operated business along historic Route 66 that features classic cars and trucks displayed outside and in an indoor showroom. The gift shop is loaded with reproduction collectable and Route 66 memorabilia. A fee is charged for viewing the cars. 2149 E. Frontage Road, 618-635-7056, www.countryclassiccars.com

► **Post Office Mural by Ralph Henricksen** 

The Staunton post office has a mural entitled "Going to Work" painted by Ralph Henricksen in 1941.

Williamson

This is a village in Madison County with a population of about 250.

Livingston

This community was founded as a coal mining town in 1905. It has a population of nearly 800 people. The Pink Elephant Antique Mall, housed in the old Livingston High School, is visible from I-55.

► Pink Elephant Antique Mall

This unique antique mall sports larger than life sculptures of a pink elephant, a male swimmer, and two normal-colored elephants emerging from an exterior wall of the old Livingston High School building. A visit inside the building reveals another “shorter” muffer man of Route 66 fame. These were originally at the Coliseum Antique Mall in Benld.



Pink Elephant Antique Mall, Livingston. February, 2008

Significance to Themes and Messages:

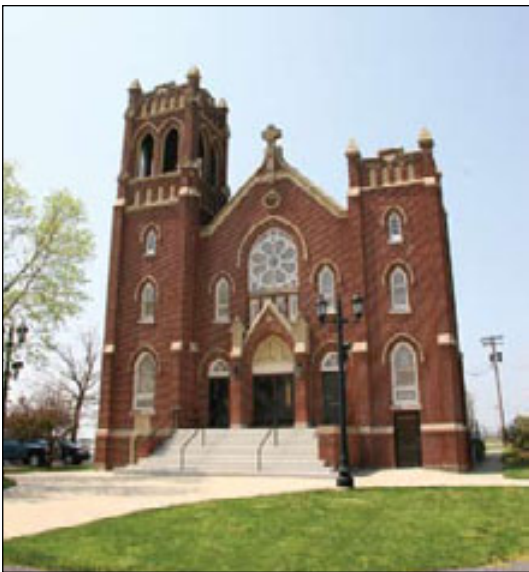
- Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.
- Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- Sub-theme #6: Coal underlying Illinois shaped the development of many of the communities along Illinois Route 66.
- Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.



Pink Elephant Antique Mall, Livingston. February, 2008



Bikers enjoy the Chain of Rocks Bridge over the Mississippi River, Madison. April, 2007



A neon cross is lit nightly for Route 66 travelers at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Hamel. April, 2007

Interpretive Resources in the East St. Louis Region

Hamel, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Troy, Maryville, Collinsville, Fairmont City, Mitchell, Pontoon Beach, Granite City, Madison, Venice, Brooklyn, E. St. Louis

Regional Overview: *Old Mississippi River Towns*

Southwestern Illinois came under control of the American colonies following capture of British posts by Gen. George Rogers Clark's forces during the Revolutionary War. By the early 1800s there were still relatively few settlers along the western border of United States' Indiana Territory. Many of these towns were established in those early years.

Relationship to Route 66:

Through its history, Route 66 spanned the Mississippi River to St. Louis across five historic bridges: McKinley Bridge (1926-29), MacArthur Bridge (1929-36), Chain of Rocks Bridge (1936-55), Martin Luther King, Jr. (formerly Veterans Memorial) Bridge (1955-67), and the Poplar Street (Bernard F. Dickmann) Bridge (1968-77). Each time the highway shifted to a new crossing, the road was rerouted through several different communities.

Communities and Interpretive Resources:

Hamel

This is a town that proudly proclaims its heritage with banners, calling itself "The Best Little Town on Route 66." Established in 1818, this small town of less than 600 people wasn't even an incorporated village until 1955. The community was named for Jack Hamel, a farmer who owned a large amount of land and built a general store at the crossroads in 1869. The intersection was called "Hamel's Corner.

► **Church of the Neon Cross** 

North of town is St. Paul Lutheran Church and its large blue neon cross. Placed there during WWII by the Brunnworth family in memory of their son killed at Anzio, the large cross has signified safe travels for those driving Route 66. Route 66 was always dangerous. Lonely and vulnerable travelers sought guidance along the road. This cross offered that guidance.

► **Meramec Caverns barn near Hamel**  

The Meramec Caverns Barn is a restored example of early highway advertising (Meramec Caverns is in Stanton, Missouri). Located north of Hamel across the Interstate from St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, it is one of two remaining barn advertisements along Illinois Route 66. Restored by the Route 66 Illinois Preservation Committee. It speaks to our longing for the old individualism and entrepreneurial spirit of classic Route 66 signage.



Meramec Caverns Barn near Hamel. April, 2007

► **Scotty’s Route 66 Bar & Grill**  

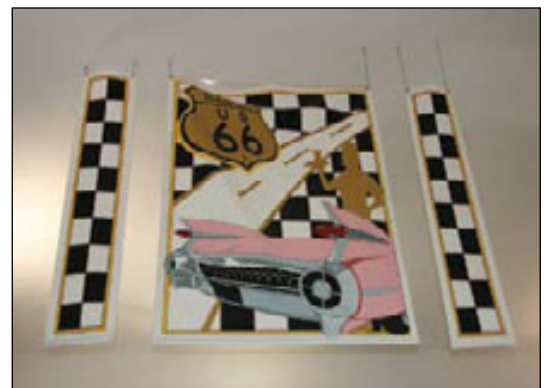
This roadhouse at the intersection of old 66 and Ill. 140 has been serving travelers since the late 1930s. In the past, it was named “Tourist Haven,” “Village Inn,” and “Earnie’s Roadhouse;” the old signs still decorate the walls along with historic photographs. The dining room has a Route 66 theme, and the beautiful, exterior brickwork connotes its place in the evolution of travel on the old Mother Road. 108 S. Old Route 66



Scottys Route 66 Bar & Grill, Hamel. April, 2007

► **Homestead Rest Area** 

A rest area off of I-55 that is themed for Route 66. The 1957-1977 alignment actually follows I-55 at this point. This rest area does not currently have any interpretation, but does feature Route 66 ceiling banners, a floor map, and three-dimensional etchings in the brick wall.



Illinois Route 66 ceiling banners decorate the Homestead Rest Area off of I-55. April, 2007



Springers Creek Winery, Edwardsville. February, 2008

Edwardsville

The third oldest city in Illinois, Edwardsville was first settled in 1805 when Thomas Kirkpatrick built a one-room log cabin on the ridge above Cahokia Creek. Edwardsville's namesake, Ninian Edwards, was appointed territorial governor in 1809 when the Illinois Territory was established. He built a home here in 1819-20. Edwards served as governor of the state of Illinois from 1826-1830.


When President James Madison announced the formation of Madison County in 1812, the first seat of government was Kirkpatrick's cabin. The city's first public square was located in the 1200 block of North Main Street. By 1814, the square contained a log cabin that served as the county jail. The square became home to the first courthouse, also a log structure, in 1817.

Kirkpatrick's wood mill is an example of early industry; flour mills, clay mining, and brick manufacturing were also established. Richards Brick Company is still in operation. As the center of government and commerce with abundant visitors, Edwardsville was home to numerous hotels. At one time five railroad lines came through, including an electric line. There have been several coalmines in and around town. Edwardsville currently has 39 buildings designated as historic landmarks. There are also three historic districts.

► Springers Creek Winery

Owned and operated by Sam Makler, The Springers Creek Winery is housed in a historic 1910 storefront grocery and an adjacent historic house. Many classic decorative features still exist, including an awning over the entrance with original pressed metal enhancements. The residence has a unique copper Lincoln head embedded into its front steps. Locally produced wine, like a semi-sweet Route 66 blush, is served and sold in this cozy, restored environment. The old building is full of antiques, comfortable spaces, and a wine garden where the owner,

a professional musician, provides evening entertainment with acoustical instruments. This is an opportunity to interact with locals and travelers in a friendly atmosphere. 817 Hillsboro Avenue, 618-656-0815

► **Wildey Theatre** 

Opened in 1909 as an opera house and a second floor meeting hall for the Independent Order of Oddfellows, the Wildey has undergone many transformations throughout the years. Located in Downtown Edwardsville on Main Street, the Wildey closed as a movie theatre on March 8, 1984. The Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission designated the Wildey Theatre as a “Local Landmark” in 1986. Recognizing the importance of the Wildey Theatre to the overall downtown development efforts, the City acquired the theatre in 1999 with a state grant. The City has now finished the exterior improvements and is working with a developer to solicit proposals for the reuse of the second and third floors. Future goals include renovating the auditorium – with hopes to resurrect the theatre to once again be a venue for live performances and classic films. 618-650-3158



Wildey Theatre, Edwardsville.

► **St. Louis Street Historic District** 

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in the 1880s and 90s, the homes on St. Louis Street represent several architectural styles. Located on St. Louis Street, just west of where Route 66 turns to the east.



► **Leclaire Village Historic District** 

In 1890, industrialist N.O. Nelson chose a tract of land just south of Edwardsville to locate his plumbing manufacturing company. He would also create a model “utopian” village here called Leclaire, where everyone had their own home, access to schools, parks, lectures, recreation and employment. Nelson believed in profit-sharing and all employees had a



St. Louis Street Historic District, just off of Route 66, Edwardsville. February, 2008



Mustang Corral, Edwardsville. April, 2007



Town & Country Motel/Cabins, Edwardsville.
February, 2008


stake in the company. Nelson was a visionary and is considered to be a renaissance man, years ahead of his time. Today, the Village of Leclaire has been incorporated into the City of Edwardsville. It remains a vibrant area with a beautiful lake and park, baseball field, the Edwardsville Children’s Museum that is located in the former Leclaire Academy, and the factory buildings that are now the home of Lewis and Clark Community College. In 1979 the village was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Each year in October, the “Friends of Leclaire” host an annual Parkfest with food, live music, activities, a tractor parade, pony rides, a book sale, and much more.

► **Cascarts Diner Storefront** 

The Cascarts Diner on old 66 dates to the 1920s. The building is gone, but the storefront is preserved by the City Historic Preservation Commission. The interior was documented through a collection of photos.

► **Mustang Corral** 

Located just south of Edwardsville along Old Route 66, the Mustang Corral sells Mustang cars and parts. It opened in 1980.

► **Town & Country Motel/Cabins** 

This is a motor court with several small Mom and Pop era cabins surrounding an office building from the heyday of Old Route 66. The office now serves as a private residence, and a weathered “Town & Country Motel” neon sign stands in the front lawn. The buildings are well maintained. Located just south of Edwardsville before crossing the I-255 overpass. Owned by Charles and Otto Baumann. 5345 Chain of Rocks Road

Glen Carbon

In 1799, David Bagley, a Virginia Baptist minister passed through the Glen Carbon area and determined that it was a land of such expanse and

luxuriant vegetation that he compared it to the Biblical “Land of Goshen.” In 1801, Colonel Samuel Judy received a military grant for 100 acres of land near the base of the bluffs, just north of Judy’s Creek and became the first permanent settler of Madison County. The area became known as the Goshen Settlement. In 1808, the Goshen Road trail was built as a wagon road from the Goshen settlement to the Ohio salt works at Shawneetown on the Ohio River. The existing Goshen Road running from Illinois Route 159 to the intersection of Route 143 is part of the original road. A territorial government was formed and Madison County was organized in 1812 with its northern border reaching to Canada. There were 7 major veins of coal in Glen Carbon which literally means “coal valley.”

► **Yanda Log Cabin** 

This historic cabin is believed to have been built by blacksmith William Yanda in 1853. William Yanda (1818-1885) and his wife Annie Zeola (1823-1901) were immigrants from Bohemia, Austria. William and Annie and their ten children lived in the cabin. Frank (1846-1912), their oldest son also became a blacksmith. He practiced his craft in other towns in the area and eventually moved back to the “homeplace” in 1882 with his wife Anna Benda (1845-1912). Frank and Anna raised eleven children in the cabin. Frank sold the cabin to his son Frank Jr. (one of the early mayors of the Village of Glen Carbon). Frank Jr. did not have any children. He sold the cabin and eventually the Village of Glen Carbon bought the lot and cabin in 1989. A cabin renovation was begun the 1989 and was concluded in time for the Village’s Centennial Celebration in June 1992.



Yanda Log Cabin, Glen Carbon. April, 2007

► **Glen Carbon Covered Bridge** 

The bridge was constructed in 1976 to celebrate the 200th birthday of the United States. Today, it serves as a Village focal point.



Glen Carbon Covered Bridge. April, 2007

Courtesy of the Village of Maryville, www.maryville-il.us/gallery/2007_Fishing_Derby



Local park in Maryville.

Troy

In 1819, settler John Jarvis sold ten acres for \$100 to James Riggen and David Hendershott. The community formerly known as Columbia was then mapped out, surveyed, and renamed Troy. Within a year, the village was populated by 120 people. Troy's humble beginnings started with just a band mill, storehouse, taverns, and housing. Troy officially became a city on April 12, 1892 with a population of over 1,000. Troy's small town charm along with convenient location to St. Louis helped Troy grow to 8,500 by 2000.

Maryville

German farmers started settling in the area near St. John Lutheran Church between 1840 and 1845. The area on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River was known as Ridge Prairie. The specific area near the church was called Pleasant Ridge.

Collinsville

Collinsville, a historic town on the bluffs of the Mississippi River, has a sweeping view of downtown St. Louis and the Gateway Arch, only ten miles to the west. In recent years, this town of 24,000 has evolved into a fast growing, "bedroom community" for St. Louis commuters.

It is renowned for having the world's largest ketchup bottle, a former water tower just south of Main Street. It is also said to be the horseradish capital of the world because it reputedly produces 85% of the earth's horseradish crop. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, the largest Pre-Columbian settlement north of Mexico, is here. Downtown Collinsville boasts a well preserved historic district with quaint shops and beautiful architecture.

► Brooks Catsup Bottle Water Tower

Standing proudly next to Route 159, this unique 170-foot water tower is the world's largest catsup bottle. It was built in 1949 for the bottlers of Brooks old original rich and



Brooks Catsup Bottle Water Tower, Collinsville. April, 2007

tangy catsup. In 1995, due to the efforts of the Catsup Bottle Preservation Group, this landmark roadside attraction was saved from demolition and beautifully restored to its original appearance. In August of 2002 it was named to the National Register of Historic Places. 800 Morrison Avenue

► **Historic Downtown Collinsville** 

Collinsville’s downtown has a well preserved historic district with quaint shops and beautiful architecture. Visitors can experience the area by taking a self guided tour that interprets a 1908 Bull Durham Tobacco sign, the 150 year old Blum House, the D.D. Collins House, and the old Miner’s Theater.



Restored 1908 Bull Durham mural in historic downtown Collinsville. April, 2007

► **Bert’s Chuck Wagon Bar-B-Q** 

Classic 1950s-60s small diner that serves barbeque sandwiches and is known for its enchiladas and tacos. The sign is in the shape of a covered wagon and was once decorated in neon. 207 E. Clay Street, 618-344-7993



Bert’s Chuck Wagon Bar-B-Q. Collinsville. April, 2007

► **Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve** 

This 40-acre farmstead dates from the 1900s and is the last significant tract of open space along the Collinsville bluff line. It is currently being restored and maintained by the Collinsville Area Recreation District (CARD). The goal of the project is to educate the public about the family farm of the 1920s-50s, as well as the region’s natural history. A restored barn, historic farm house, chicken coop, gardens, and interpretive trails are located on the site. This is an opportunity to experience local farm heritage and feel the geographic transition from Illinois prairies to Mississippi bluffs. Located behind Summit Elementary school on Willoughby Lane, 618-346-7529



Willoughby Farm. Collinsville. February, 2008

► **Fairmount Park Racetrack** 

Opened in 1925, this popular horse racing track is the only one in Illinois outside of the



Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site Visitor Center, Collinsville.

Chicago metro area. It currently offers 90 live racing days per year, but is struggling with competition of St. Louis riverboat casinos. 9301 Collinsville Road, 618-345-4300

► **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** 


The largest Pre-Columbian settlement north of Mexico. It is a prestigious UNESCO World Heritage Site and preserves Monk’s Mound, the largest prehistoric earthwork in the America’s. 30 Ramey Street, 618-346-5160

Fairmont City

A village in St. Clair County with a population of almost 2,500, Fairmont City has the highest percentage of Hispanic population (55%) in the entire St. Louis Metropolitan area.

► **Classic Neon Signs** 

Fairmont City has a number of significant 1950s-era neon signs along the Route 66 alignment. The Nite Spot Cafe, now closed, features a classic arrow neon sign. Becky’s Carpet and Tile Superstore has a neon Veterans Carpet sign attached. A “Surrey Restaurant” sign with an antique car on top is hidden by vines. These are ideal candidate for restoration.

► **Gateway Classic Cars** 

Classic car consignments sales house that sells cars for private owners, collectors, and estates. The 105,000 square-foot showroom and museum houses hundreds of classic cars. 5401 Collinsville Road, 800-231-3616



Nite Spot Cafe neon arrow sign, Fairmont City. February, 2008

Mitchell

This is an unincorporated community located at the junction of Interstate 270 and Illinois Route 203, part of former U.S. Highway 66. It is located about twenty miles north of East St. Louis. Neighboring towns include Granite City, Pontoon Beach, Edwardsville, and Hartford. A few years ago, Mitchell tried to become an independent city, but that vote failed.



Gateway Classic Cars, Fairmont City. February, 2008

► **Luna Cafe**  

The cafe was built in 1924, two years prior to the establishment of Route 66. It is rumored to have been frequented by gangsters like Al Capone. The Luna did operate as a cafe on the main floor, but had a gambling operation in the basement and a house of ill repute upstairs. The neon sign out front, still standing, has a cherry which used ruby glass to enhance its red glow. It is said that if the cherry was lit, the girls were in. At one time, the cafe was a “fine dining establishment” and so expensive that most law-abiding citizens could not afford to eat there. The Luna is now a working man’s bar frequented by locals. There is an ongoing effort to have the neon sign restored to its former glory. 201 E. Chain of Rocks Road



Luna Cafe, Mitchell, April, 2007

► **Bel-Air Drive In sign** 

A historic drive in theater sign along Route 66. The drive in was opened in the 1950s and showed movies until 1987. The theater no longer exists, but the landmark sign was saved when the land was converted to other uses. It is in need of restoration.



Bel-Air Drive In sign, Mitchell, April, 2007

► **Apple Valley Motel** 

Classic 18-room motel that continues to cater to Route 66 travelers. This building also serves as the office for the Greenway Motel, just a few buildings down the road.

► **Greenway Motel** 

Motel on Chain of Rocks Road with a classic arrow sign. Currently operated by the same owners as the nearby Apple Valley Motel. The sign is in good shape, but could use some restorative work.



Greenway Motel, Mitchell, April, 2007

Pontoon Beach

The Village of Pontoon Beach is located approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown St. Louis in Madison County, Illinois. A community of



Trailer Court neon sign, Pontoon Beach. April, 2007

6,000 people, Pontoon Beach is bordered by the 2,300 acre Gateway Commerce Center, I-270 and I-255 and the communities of Granite City and Madison.

► **Trailer Court Neon Sign** 

Classic, simple, neon “Trailer Court” sign along Route 66.

Granite City

The first European settlers began arriving in the Granite City area in the 1830s attracted by the rich bottom land east of the Mississippi River. Granite City was originally called Six Mile Prairie because its farmers had to travel six miles to St. Louis to sell their produce and buy supplies. An early ferry operated in the area and the Six Mile House, a stage coach stop on the old National Road was built during this time period. The National Road was built of planks and connected St. Louis to the east and assured travelers that they would not be bogged down by mud after a heavy rain. The first railroad, an extension of the Terre Haute and Alton, arrived in 1856 and by 1904 ten railroads serviced the community.

The face of Six Mile Prairie was destined to change when two German immigrants, Frederick and William Niedringhaus, arrived in St. Louis in the 1850s. In 1857, they began a small but profitable business producing kitchen utensils. During a visit to Germany in 1874, William came across a process where utensils were coated with an enamel that was mixed with powdered granite. He brought this knowledge back to St. Louis and soon the Niedringhaus brothers were producing a line of kitchen utensils called Graniteware. In 1892 they purchased 3,500 acres near Six Mile Prairie and platted the area in order to build a company town. Granite City was incorporated in 1896, named for the graniteware that had made the Niedringhaus brothers wealthy. The Niedringhaus plant was called NESCO (National Enameling and Stamping Company) and operated until 1956 when it closed because it couldn't compete with aluminum, glass and stainless steel cookware.



Former Chain of Rocks Motel, now an Economy Inn. An iconic motel sign topped with colored balls was sold to a collector. April, 2007



Former Land of Lincoln Motel, now an Budget Motel. This motel's 1950s era neon sign was also sold. April, 2007

Granite City thrived in the early 20th century and many industries including United Lead Company, Corn Products Refinery, Wagner Brewery, and Granite City Steel. Immigrants from Central Europe came to Granite City to fill the jobs created by these industries. Granite City Steel remains one of the city’s leading industrial firms.

► **Land of Lincoln Motel / Budget Motel** 

A Route 66 era motel near the Chain of Rocks Bridge, now called the Budget Motel. It had a unique classic sign, but it was sold. 3220 Chain of Rocks Road, 618-931-1414

► **Chain of Rocks Motel / Economy Inn** 


A Route 66 era motel on the Chain of Rocks Road now called the Economy Inn. Also had a well-photographed classic sign until 2006 when it was sold to a collector. 3228 Chain of Rocks Road, 618-931-6600

► **Sun Motel/Debby’s Route 66 Frozen Custard**  

Debby and Bernard Birger are in the process of restoring the Sun Motel, a vintage 1940s court on the Chain of Rocks Road. They also opened a small frozen custard stand called “Debby’s Route 66 Frozen Custard.” The 1958 pink Cadillac, parked outside the shop, draws in crowds from the Mother Road. 3241 Chain of Rocks Road, 618-797-3305

► **Canal Motel & Cafe** 

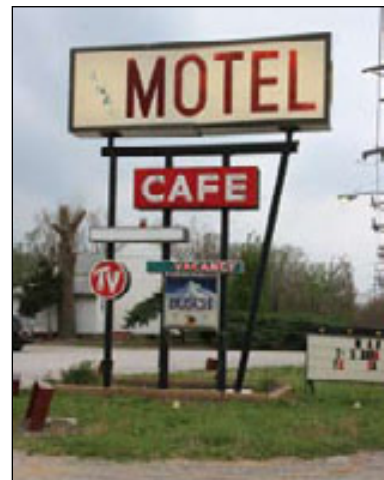
This Route 66 era motel still has several neon signs. 3317 Chain of Rocks Road, 618-931-0744

► **Twin Oaks Gas for Less sign** 

Located on Chain of Rocks Road, this classic “Gas for Less” sign was damaged in a storm in 2006. It is an ideal candidate for restoration and relocation. The building says the “Future Home of D.R. Lawrence Consulting and Marketing, 618-216-4070.”



Debby’s Route 66 Frozen Custard and Sun Motel. April, 2007



Canal Motel and Cafe, Granite City. April, 2007



Twin Oaks Gas for Less sign, Granite City. February, 2008

Courtesy of Mark Chase (computerwallpapervault.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html)




Evening light on cypress trees, Horseshoe Lake, Illinois



Full-scale replica of keel boat. Lewis & Clark State Historic Site Visitors Center, Hartford. July, 2003



Chain of Rocks Bridge, Madison. April, 2007

► **Horseshoe Lake State Park** 

This 2,960 acre park is situated around an oxbow lake formed from a cut-off meander of the Mississippi River. This was an important resource for Native Americans. The park is an ideal place for bird watching. A 4-mile self guided nature trail on Walker Island features several observation areas. Fishing, boating, picnicking, and camping are popular activities. 3321 Highway 111, 618-931-0270

► **Lewis & Clark State Historic Site Visitors Center** 

This state-of-the-art interpretive center is located at the winter camp area of the Lewis and Clark expedition. It focuses on the often-untold Illinois story, where the expedition was prepared and launched. The focal point exhibit is a 55-foot full-scale replica of the expedition's keel boat. This is the starting point for the National Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail. The visitors center is open Wed.-Sun., 9am-5pm. Located about 3 miles north of Route 66 on Highway 3 out of Granite City. One Lewis and Clark Trail, Hartford, 618-251-5811

Madison

Madison is a city located in Madison County. A city of about 4,500, it is home to Gateway International Raceway and the first Bulgarian Orthodox church in the United States.


► **Chain of Rocks Bridge**  

The third alignment of Route 66 crossed the Mississippi River here from 1936-1955. The eastern end of this scenic bridge is on Chouteau Island (part of Madison, Illinois), while the western end is on the Missouri shoreline. Its most notable feature is a 22-degree bend occurring at the middle of the crossing, necessary because of difficulties in finding solid footings. Originally a motor route, it now carries walking and biking trails

over the river. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

The bridge's name comes from a rock-ledged reach of river literally described as a chain of rocks, stretching to the north of St. Louis. The Mississippi's water, narrowed by these ledges, roars down a decline of 11 feet in seven river miles. The bridge was privately built as a toll bridge in 1929 at a cost of \$3 million and later turned over to the city of Madison, Illinois, the current owner of the bridge. Eventually, the toll was removed from the bridge due to a law prohibiting the collecting of tolls on U.S. Highways. In 1967, the New Chain of Rocks Bridge was built immediately to the north in order to carry I-270 traffic; the old Chain of Rocks Bridge was subsequently closed in 1967.

The bridge walk offers an immersive experience of strolling high above the Mississippi River, feeling river breezes, while peering down into river bottom forests and watching floating logs as they ride south with the current. The structural engineering of the bridge with its unique bend in the center and the immensity of the problems of crossing such a huge natural feature can be appreciated when seen close-up on this high bridge.

► **Gateway International Raceway** 

In 1967, an eighth-mile drag strip was built on swampy land and called St. Louis Raceway Park. The big names in drag racing attracted 8,000 fans to a facility designed for 3,000. In 1971, the track was expanded to a quarter-mile strip and renamed St. Louis International Raceway. In 1997, the new Gateway International Raceway was opened to sellout crowds. Today, it is the site of more than 250 racing events. 700 Raceway Blvd., 618-482-2400



Historic water intake towers from the Chain of Rocks Bridge, Madison. April, 2007



Swirling water rushes over the "chain of rocks." Chain of Rocks Bridge, Madison. April, 2007

Courtesy of CyberBikers.com, www.cyberbikers.com/PhotoGallery/Harley+Nationals/default.aspx



Gateway International Raceway, Madison.



McKinley Bridge, Venice. February, 2008



"Salute to Steel" sculpture in the McKinley Bridge Roadside Park, Venice. February, 2008

Venice

This Madison County river town of 2,500 is in the St. Louis metropolitan area. It is joined to the city by the McKinley Bridge, the first crossing of Route 66. The bridge was owned by the city of Venice and operated as a toll bridge. After decades of disrepair due to the lack of toll revenues, the McKinley Bridge was closed in 2001. In an agreement reached in June 2003, the states of Illinois and Missouri agreed to take over ownership of the bridge from the city of Venice. After rehabilitation, the bridge reopened in 2007.

► McKinley Bridge

The first Route 66 alignment crossed the Mississippi River here from 1926-1929. The steel truss bridge connects the city of St. Louis with Venice, Illinois. It opened in 1910 and was taken out of service on October 30, 2001. The bridge was reopened for pedestrian and bicyclists on a November 17, 2007 with a grand re-opening celebration. The bridge carried both railroad and vehicular traffic across the Mississippi River for decades. By 1978, the railroad line over the span was closed, and an additional set of lanes were opened for vehicles in the inner roadway. It is commonly assumed that the bridge was named for President William McKinley; but in reality, it was named for the builder, William B. McKinley, chief executive of the Illinois Traction System interurban electric railway, which accessed St. Louis via the bridge.

► McKinley Bridge Roadside Park

Located on the east side of McKinley Bridge, this small roadside park commemorates the history of McKinley Bridge and Madison County. A kiosk with interpretive panels describes the region's cities, transportation, geography, and industry. A modest interpretation of Route 66 is included in the panel text. A tall metal sculpture called "Salute to Steel" is topped with intertwined rings (that represent Venice, Madison, and

Granite City). The park also features benches and picnic tables. The sculpture and park were dedicated in November, 2007 when the McKinley Bridge was re-opened.

Brooklyn

Brooklyn (popularly known as Lovejoy), is a village in St. Clair County, just north of East St. Louis. It is the oldest black town in the United States and was named for Elijah P. Lovejoy (1802-1837), an abolitionist from St. Louis.

In 1829, led by “Mother” Priscilla Baltimore, a group of eleven families composed of both fugitive and quasi-free Blacks fled slavery in St. Louis, crossed the Mississippi River, and established a maroon community in the wilderness of southwestern Illinois. In 1830, five white abolitionists platted the land and created an unincorporated nearly all-black town. In 1873, the virtually all-black town was incorporated as a village. In 1886, the overwhelming African American majority gained complete political control, which initiated a process of white flight and soon converted Brooklyn into an all-black town. The population was 676 at the 2000 census.

East St. Louis

Originally known as Illinoistown, this town is located in historic St. Clair County, along the Mississippi River opposite St. Louis, Missouri. About 1797 a ferry station was established on the site by Captain James Piggott, a pioneer and Illinois territorial judge, and in 1818 a village was laid out. The home of giant packing houses and stock yards, steel and aluminum mills, the population grew to over 80,000 in what became known as “the hog capital of the nation.” However, these industries have closed since the 1950s and the city began a decline to about 30,000 residents. It is currently undergoing urban renewal and redevelopment.

Courtesy of Rob Powers, Built St. Louis, www.builtstlouis.net/eaststlouis



A view west from Hwy. 3 into Brooklyn. November, 2007

Courtesy of Rome of the West, www.romeofthewest.com



Immaculate Conception Church in East St. Louis. Built in 1956, the church is noted for its Lithuanian folk interior and exterior.

Courtesy of Rob Powers, Built St. Louis, www.builtstlouis.net/eaststlouis



Collinsville Avenue, East St. Louis. November, 2007



MacArthur Bridge closed ramp that once connected to bridge (above) and end of ramp (below), East St. Louis. February, 2008



Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge, East St. Louis. February, 2008

► **MacArthur Bridge** 

The second Route 66 alignment crossed the Mississippi River here from 1929-1936. It was also known as the St. Louis Municipal Bridge and the Free Bridge. Built in 1909, it wasn't opened for traffic until 1917 (due to lack of funds to complete the approaches). In 1928, the bridge was also opened to trains. It was closed to cars in 1981, but trains still use it.

► **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge** 

The fourth Route 66 alignment crossed the Mississippi River here from 1955-1967. Formerly called the Veterans Memorial Bridge when built in 1951, it was originally a toll bridge. The bridge is still open to traffic.

► **Poplar Street Bridge** 

The fifth and final Route 66 alignment crossed the Mississippi River here from 1968-1977. The bridge is officially named the Bernard F. Dickmann Bridge for a former St. Louis mayor. The bridge crosses the south end of "Bloody Island," connected to the mainland with landfill by Robert E. Lee in the 1850s. Several Missouri politicians fought duels here. Today, the island is a train yard. This was also the bridge featured in "National Lampoon's Vacation." The bridge is still open to traffic (I-70, I-64, I-55, Hwy. 40)

Significance to Themes and Messages:

- Sub-theme #2: Route 66 has an idiosyncratic personality that is expressed in commercial and folk art and is celebrated in other art forms.
- Sub-theme #3: Route 66 evolved dramatically in its fifty years of fame, serving as a prototype for advancements in road engineering and safety, which lead to its replacement by the interstate highway system.

- ▶ Sub-theme #4: Geography shaped development along the Illinois corridor from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
- ▶ Sub-theme #5: Illinois Route 66 is uniquely defined by its vast prairie/farm landscape, which is dotted with small towns, marked by grain elevators and historic, public squares.
- ▶ Sub-theme #6: Coal underlying Illinois shaped the development of many of the communities along Illinois Route 66.
- ▶ Sub-theme #7: Small towns and businesses on Route 66 relied on automobile traffic for their social and economic well-being.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Poplar_Street_Bridge.jpg)



Poplar Street Bridge, East St. Louis.



The Mississippi River serves as a dramatic physical transition between the states of Illinois and Missouri on Route 66. Chain of Rocks Bridge, Madison, Illinois. April, 2007

Interpretive Resource Database

A byway that is as long and diverse as Illinois Route 66 is always fluid—some resources disappear while others change or are created anew. A digital Interpretive Resources Database has been developed as a supplement to the master plan. As the byway changes in the future, the database provides a simple way of updating, adding, and deleting specific resources.

Database Requirements

- ▶ PC Computer: Running Windows XP
- ▶ Microsoft Access: Database software
- ▶ Internet Connection (for mapping)
- ▶ Microsoft Internet Explorer (for mapping)
- ▶ All files and sub-folders in the database package should be kept in the same locations.

Using the Database

Open the “Route 66 Database and Photos” folder. Double-click “Rte 66 Database.mdb.” A window like the one below appears.

The screenshot shows the 'Interpretive Resources : Form' window for the 'Illinois Historic Route 66 Interpretive Resources Database'. The interface includes a search section on the left, a 'Currently Selected Resource' section in the center, and a 'Resource Description' section at the bottom. Callouts provide instructions on how to use these features:

- Browsing and selecting a resource to view:** Points to the 'Select Resource:' list on the left.
- Choose a region:** Points to the 'Select Region:' dropdown menu.
- Choose a community:** Points to the 'Select Community:' dropdown menu.
- Choose an interpretive resource from the list:** Points to the 'Select Resource:' list.
- Currently selected resource is listed here. Information about the resource is below:** Points to the 'Currently Selected Resource' section, which displays details for 'Rich & Creamy on Broadway'.
- Interface Options:** A general label for the right-side controls.
- View the resource on Google Maps:** Points to the 'View on Database Map' button.
- View any photos associated with resource:** Points to the 'Link to Photos' button.
- To add a new resource to the database, click:** Points to the 'Start a New Record' button.
- To modify an existing resource, select it from the list and click:** Points to the 'Modify Current Record' button.
- To delete a resource, select it from the list and click:** Points to the 'Delete Current Record' button.

Dynamic Mapping with Google Maps

The Illinois Route 66 database interfaces with Google Maps, a free interactive mapping program. The digital map has all Route 66 alignments through Illinois indicated by different colored lines. Each time the map is

opened, resources are read from the database and dynamically plotted onto the map. You can access the map by clicking “View on Database Map” when a resource is selected (the map will zoom to that resource), or by directly opening “Rte_66_Map.htm” in the main folder (the map will show all of Illinois).

Map Controls

- Show or hide resource icons
- Pan the map up, down, left, right
- Zoom in and out of the map

Viewing Resources

- Each resource in the database is marked by its Interpretive Resource Category icon. Click on an icon for more information about the resource.
- Various Route 66 alignments are marked by colored lines. A key is located under the map.

Map Interface Elements:

- Switch between street map and satellite views (see below)
- Selecting a resource to view
- Choose a region
- Choose a community
- Choose an interpretive resource from the list

Map Content:

Illinois Route 66: Database Map
Interpretive Resources along Historic Illinois Route 66

Map resources Do not map resources

Tropics Restaurant
1007 Hickox
Lincoln, IL
(217) 735-5226

Opened in 1950 by Vince Schwenoha (son of Coonhound Johnny). He had served in Hawaii during tour of duty and came up with the name...

Choose a Region:
[8] Lincoln Region: Museum to Elkhart

Choose a Community:
Lincoln

Select a Resource to Map:

- Hallies Restaurant
- Heritage In-Flight Museum
- Lincoln Christening Site
- Lincoln City Hall
- Lincoln College Museum
- Lincoln Ghost Bridge
- Logan County Courthouse
- Madigan (Railsplitter) State Park
- Original Pavement
- Postville Courthouse State Historic Site
- Railsplitter Covered Wagon
- Redwood Motel
- Route 66 Chapel
- The Mill Restaurant
- Tropics Restaurant

All map graphics copyright of Google Maps.
www.google.com/intl/en_ALL/help/terms_local.html

Actual GPS coordinates were collected for each resource and added to the database as part of the master planning process. These are more accurate for mapping than address-based coordinates generated by online maps.

For some areas, high quality satellite images show actual resources. Photos are updated by Google Maps. “Hybrid mode” overlays roads onto the satellite image.

The Launching Pad Drive In (right) and Gemini Giant (left) are visible in the “Hybrid” map viewing mode.

Digital Photo Library

A library of digital photographs was created as part of the comprehensive resource inventory. Over 3,300 images are available that document most resources listed in the plan.

The library can be found in the main “Route 66 Database and Photos” folder, and in a sub-folder called “Photo Library.” The pictures are organized by individual Route 66 communities. Resources not in an actual community (in the country or off of Route

66) are included in the nearest Route 66 community.

Pictures can also be accessed directly from the database by selecting a resource and clicking “Link to Photos.” A browse window will open showing the different images available for that resource.

All pictures were taken with a high quality 8.2 MP camera (3,504 x 2,336 pixels) and are saved in JPEG format.

Accessing Photos through Database

Select a resource on database

Click the blue “Link”

A window opens showing all photos in that resource’s sub-folder

Accessing Photos through Windows

Photos are located in the “Route 66 Database and Photos” folder...

Inside the “Photo Library” sub-folder...

Every community with photographed resources has a sub-folder...

Each resource inside a community has a sub-folder...

High-resolution images are stored in each resource sub-folder

The screenshot shows a Windows Explorer window titled "Macoupin County Million Dollar Courthouse". The address bar shows the path: C:\Route 66 Database and Photos\Photo Library\Carlinville\Macoupin County Million Dollar Courthouse. The left pane shows a folder tree with "Route 66 Database and Photos" expanded to "Photo Library", which contains sub-folders for various communities like Atlanta, Auburn, and Carlinville. The right pane shows a grid of JPEG images with filenames like IMG_1306.JPG. A callout points to a "Link to Photos" button in a dialog box.

Core Route 66 Experiences



The following list combines all of the resources in the inventory marked as “Core Route 66 Experiences.” These significant primary resources represent original businesses, preserved structures, and museums that best provide opportunities for visitors to connect with the meanings of Route 66 in Illinois.

The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project should make every effort to assist communities in preserving, maintaining, and enhancing these important sites for the benefit of travelers.

- ▶ Buckingham Fountain, Chicago
- ▶ Lou Mitchell’s Diner, Chicago
- ▶ Henry’s Drive-In, Cicero
- ▶ McCook Quarry (if viewing tower is built), McCook
- ▶ Dell Rhea’s Chicken Basket, Willowbrook
- ▶ White Fence Farm, Romeoville
- ▶ “Kicks on 66” Tours, Joliet
- ▶ “Route 66 Experience” at the Joliet Area Historical Museum, Joliet
- ▶ Route 66 Park, Joliet
- ▶ Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Welcome Center, Wilmington
- ▶ Launching Pad Drive-In and Gemini Giant, Wilmington
- ▶ Polk-a-Dot Drive In, Braidwood
- ▶ Riviera Restaurant, Gardner
- ▶ Historic Streetcar Diner, Gardner
- ▶ Ambler-Becker Texaco Gas Station, Dwight
- ▶ Standard-Sinclair Gas Station, Odell
- ▶ Meramec Caverns Barn, Cayuga
- ▶ Old Log Cabin Restaurant, Pontiac
- ▶ Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum, Pontiac
- ▶ Illinois State Police District 6 Headquarters (if media is created), Pontiac
- ▶ Memory Lane, Lexington
- ▶ “A Geographic Journey” Parkway, Towanda
- ▶ Sprague Super Service, Normal
- ▶ Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup, Funks Grove
- ▶ Dixie Truck Stop, McLean
- ▶ Palm’s Grill Cafe, Atlanta
- ▶ Bunyon’s Statue Giant, Atlanta
- ▶ The Mill Restaurant, Lincoln
- ▶ Railsplitter Covered Wagon, Lincoln
- ▶ Ghost Bridge, Lincoln
- ▶ Pig Hip Restaurant, Broadwell
- ▶ Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation and Museum, Springfield
- ▶ Shea’s Gas Station Museum, Springfield
- ▶ Bel-Aire Motel (if an interpretive center is created), Springfield
- ▶ Cozy Dog Drive-In, Springfield
- ▶ Historic Brick Road, Auburn
- ▶ Coliseum Ball Room (if media is created), Benld
- ▶ Art’s Motel and Restaurant, Farmersville
- ▶ Our Lady of the Highways Memorial, Waggoner
- ▶ Ariston Cafe, Litchfield
- ▶ Soulsby’s Service Station, Mt. Olive
- ▶ Decamp Junction Roadhouse, Staunton
- ▶ Henry’s Rabbit Ranch, Staunton
- ▶ Meramec Caverns Barn, Hamel
- ▶ Scotty’s Route 66 Bar & Grill, Hamel
- ▶ Brooks Catsup Bottle Water Tower, Collinsville
- ▶ Luna Cafe, Mitchell
- ▶ Chain of Rocks Bridge, Madison



Chapter 4—

Route 66 Travelers



Children enjoy the interactive Route 66 exhibits at the Joliet Area Historical Museum. July, 2007



Joliet caters to Route 66 tourists with its “Joliet Kicks on Route 66” marketing program. The “Route 66 Experience” features interactive exhibits inside the Historical Museum. “Route 66 Park” offers views of the Joliet Prison and ice cream at a vintage stand. Replica gas pumps and interpretive panels encourage visitors to explore the city.

Cultural Heritage Tourism in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) Bureau of Tourism developed the Heritage Tourism Program to boost cultural/historical tourism throughout Illinois. DCCA Director, Pam McDonough explained the importance of heritage tourism:

Research shows that heritage travelers spend more per trip, take longer trips, visit more attractions and stay overnight more often than the typical leisure traveler. The Heritage Tourism Program enhances our ability to capitalize on the economic impact these travelers have on the communities they visit.

Historic Illinois Route 66 became a State Heritage Tourism Project in 2001 to aid economic development for the communities on the corridor. This made possible its designation as a National Scenic Byway in 2005. Route 66 is the one of the most visited tourist attractions in Illinois.

Interest in preserving, interpreting, and traveling Route 66 is increasing. This is evidenced by the efforts of the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, the U.S. Department of Transportation support through the National Scenic Byways Program, and by the local, grassroots efforts to keep the spirit of Route 66 alive and flourishing.

Illinois Tourism Facts: 2006 University of Illinois Laboratory for Tourism and Commerce

- ▶ The Illinois travel and tourism industry, in 2006, contributed a total of \$28.3 billion to the Illinois economy.
- ▶ Travelers spent more than \$77 million dollars every day in Illinois businesses.
- ▶ The Illinois travel and tourism industry employed 301,600 people in Illinois, who earned almost \$8.3 billion.
- ▶ In 2006, Illinois welcomed a record breaking 91 million domestic visitors: 19 million for business and nearly 72 million for leisure purposes. Illinois attracts most leisure visitors from its close and neighboring states, and from Illinois in particular. More than half (54%) of the leisure travel in the State is done by Illinoisans. The neighboring states contributing to Illinois' leisure travel base comes from Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, and Ohio (in ascending order of each state's contribution of visitors). New York, Texas, and California travelers round out Illinois' top ten originating states for leisure visitors, each contributing less than 2% of Illinois' total Leisure travelers for the year.
- ▶ In 2006, Illinois hosted 1.6 million overseas visitors. Top markets were Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and Germany.
- ▶ The primary activities of leisure travelers to Illinois included dining, shopping, sight-seeing, entertainment, visiting a museum/art exhibit.
- ▶ On average, visitors to Illinois spent \$129 per day, the average visitor was 46, married, and had a household income of \$74,000.
- ▶ For "getaway weekend visitors," 38.5% made day trips, 48.3% stayed 1-2 nights, and 11.4% stayed 3-4 nights.



Attending museums, like the popular Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield, is one of the primary activities of leisure travelers. March, 2007



Another primary activity of leisure travelers was shopping. The Pink Elephant antique mall in Livingston serves Route 66 travelers. February, 2008



The planning team talks with Nick Adam, owner of the Ariston Cafe in Litchfield. Travelers spend over \$77 million every day in Illinois businesses. August, 2007

- ▶ For “getaway weekend visitors,” 46.7% toured in the summer, 27.7% spring, 19.9% winter, and 5.7% fall.
- ▶ Round trip distances traveled by “getaway weekend visitors” were:
 - 1-100 miles, 41.3%;
 - 101-200 miles, 27.8%;
 - 201-300 miles, 13%;
 - 301-400 miles, 5.6%;
 - 401+ miles, 15.7%.

To fully communicate the industry’s true benefit to Illinois, we also need to look at the qualitative attributes such as improving Illinoisans’ quality of life by expanding resident’s amenity base and accelerating all forms of economic development.

Matthew Ashby, community development specialist for the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, reports on the Illinois Cultural Heritage Tourism Program:

Cultural heritage tourism is expected to be the fastest growing segment of the market. Because of aggressive marketing to attract new visitors, heritage tourism is stimulating economies, generating new jobs and creating renewed pride and recognition of the value of Illinois communities. Cultural heritage tourism focuses on making history come alive and experiencing life in a community as it used to be. In other words, visitors can learn about the past while exploring the present. In a practical sense, it means maintaining and preserving tangible community assets like traditions, customs and folklore. Local communities identify and share their stories through museums, theaters, historic sites, fairs, festivals, ethnic diversity, music and the arts.

www.stlouisfed.org/publications/br/2000/a/pages/tourism.html



Cultural tourism focuses on making history come alive and is expected to be the fastest growing segment of the market. It is exemplified at places like Lincoln’s New Salem State Historic Site. August, 2007

The Route 66 Tourist

Who are the people touring Historic Illinois Route 66 and what are they seeking? The answers to these questions are fundamental to planning products, services, and experiences that meet their needs. But these questions are not easily answered. Tourists can enter and exit at any point along the route and pick and choose from hundreds of opportunities along the way. Few empirical studies have been done to investigate tourism on Route 66 because of these challenges. Many writers suggest that Route 66 enthusiasts tend to be motivated by nostalgia for their youth, the romance of the open road, and a desire to connect with simpler times. If these assumptions are correct, then an aging generation of tourists will dwindle and the Route will lose recognition and importance. However, there is little data to support these assumptions.

“Heritage Tourism on Route 66: Deconstructing Nostalgia”

One study was conducted by Kellee Caton and Carla Santos of the University of Illinois Laboratory for Tourism and Commerce (May, 2007, *Journal of Travel Research*). The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with five European and four American Route 66 tourists who had traveled the entire road. The main conclusions about Route 66 tourists were:

- ▶ They are not seeking nostalgic confirmation of the collective mythology of Route 66 as a symbol of an idealized, romanticized American past.
- ▶ Route 66 is viewed as a living, evolving entity that offers a different, and highly valuable, set of experiences for tourists today than it offered in the past.
- ▶ An interest in history is a motivating factor. Tourists value “informative placards” (interpretive panels). They also compare their experiences with what travelers of the past might have experienced.



“Tourists” enjoy a hearty meal at Dell Rhea’s Chicken Basket along Route 66 in Willowbrook. July, 2007



The planning team talks to Jim Jones of the Route 66 Association of Illinois in the Pontiac Hall of Fame and Museum. Travelers enjoy interacting with ordinary people and interesting local characters along the road. March, 2007

- ▶ They value the unusual type of driving experience the road offers, especially the opportunity to experience a changing landscape in a more intimate, sensory way.
- ▶ They value the vast assortment of “amazing and amusing” attractions, both natural and man-made. They also value the “unique and individual mom and pop” establishments which capitalize on local lore and landscapes.
- ▶ They value the Interstate highway that parallels the route because it relieves congestion from the old road, provides a speedy alternative route in certain less interesting locations, and offers franchise accommodations and restaurants for large tour groups.
- ▶ Interacting with ordinary people and interesting local characters was a particularly meaningful element of the trip (“people before places”).
- ▶ They considered their journey to be an odyssey combining adventure, challenge, cooperation, serendipity, reflection and personal growth.

The most important implications of these findings is that Route 66 is not just an attraction for an aging generation of “roadies” reliving a mythologized past. Rather, it offers all generations, and those to come, a truly unique American experience that celebrates its culture and its geography.

Visitor Logs—Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum

Another source of visitor information that holds great potential are the guest registries at Route 66 attractions. In November 2007, American Express awarded \$150,000 to the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program to conduct a comprehensive economic study of U.S. Route 66 using these visitor logs. This will be a valuable source of data for planners.

One attraction in Illinois that caters specifically to Route 66 tourists is the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum in Pontiac. Their guest registry gives

insight into who is touring the road. Visitors in 2007 came from 27 foreign countries and 48 states (data summary in Appendix 2).

The Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum visitor log data closely parallels the “Illinois Tourism Facts 2006” reported in the previous section. Of the 6,466 registered visitors:

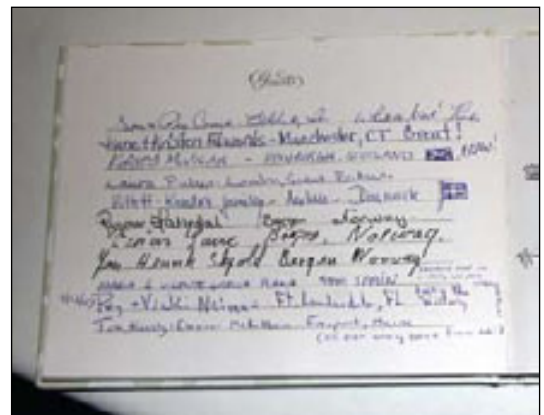
- ▶ More than 50% (3,523) were from Illinois. After Illinois, the largest visitation was from Indiana (214), Michigan (164), Ohio (133), California (125), Wisconsin (103), and Texas (95).
- ▶ A total of 856 international visitors registered at the Route 66 Museum. Most were from Europe (810) and Asia (42). The principal countries were the United Kingdom (197), Germany (110), Italy (62), Canada (59), and the Netherlands (52). The Scandinavian countries (Finland, Norway, and Sweden) had 106 registered visitors.

A sampling of comments gives anecdotal insight into why they are touring Route 66 (2007 Route 66 Museum visitor logs):

- ▶ “Greatest road in the world.” (UK)
- ▶ “The greatest thing in my life.” (Elmshorn, Germany)
- ▶ “It’s a history.” (Turin, Italy)
- ▶ “Fantastic nostalgia, long may the Mother Road continue.” (Isle of Man, UK)
- ▶ “We are both 66 this year, so what better way to celebrate—Chicago to LA.” (Vancouver, B.C.)
- ▶ “A lifelong dream trip.” (Dublin, Ireland)
- ▶ “I am 72 years old. It’s always been my dream to get my ‘kicks on 66’ before I kick the bucket. Now I’ve lived my dream.” (Lincolnshire, England)
- ▶ “A taste of real America!” (Lousane, Switzerland)
- ▶ “Thanks for saving a part of the Good ol’ USA!” (West Palm Beach, FL)



Guest registries, like the one in the Joliet Area Historical Museum (above) and the Ariston Restaurant in Litchfield (below) can provide valuable information about Route 66 travelers.



Existing Illinois Route 66 Target Markets

Courtesy of Reuthers Motorcycle Tours, www.reuther-entertainments.de



Tourists from Germany stop for a photo break along Historic Route 66.

1. International Tourists

According to the article from The Journal of Travel Research cited above, about half of the tourists on Route 66 come from abroad, although this was a guess. The visitor log data at the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum suggests that about 1/3 of non-Illinois visitors come from abroad. Inspired by old re-runs of the television series *Route 66* and more recently the animated film *Cars*, a mythology has developed about Route 66 throughout Europe and even some parts of Asia. This is expressed in nightclubs, restaurants and even a GPS travel system named for this famous road. International travel companies, vintage auto clubs, and motorcycle clubs offer Route 66 experience packages for this niche market.

Route 66 is the only U.S. listing on the Lonely Planet’s Blue List “Best road trips.” In addition, the Montreal-based website [Ask Men.Com](http://AskMen.Com) lists it as one of its “Top 10 Unique Vacation Experiences,” the only one from the U.S. Their description summarizes the lure of ’66 for international tourists:

Those yearning for a slice of old-time American culture should consider a road trip along Route 66. Made famous by the ‘60s television series of the same name, as well as John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath (Steinbeck dubbed it the “Mother Road”), Route 66 was frequented by families California-bound during the ‘20s, ‘30s and ‘40s. The interstate highway, now labeled Historic Route 66, begins in Illinois and runs through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and the Texas panhandle, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Best traveled during the summer, the route will give you a healthy dose of Americana as it bypasses such things as the World’s Largest Catsup Bottle, the National Route 66 Museum,

Courtesy of Vivisto, www.vivisto.co.uk



Tourists from the United Kingdom travel Route 66 as part of a once-in-a-lifetime adventure

and dozens upon dozens of quaint diners. For a true American pilgrimage, Route 66 is the way to go.

www.askmen.com

It was suggested by several people attending the 2007 community meetings that international Route 66 tourists are pilgrims out to experience the “Real America.”

International tourists come here to see “America.” They are here to meet the people. (Pontiac community meeting, Appendix 1)

This would seem to be confirmed by comments in the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum guest registry (previous section).

A Norwegian website marketing Route 66 motorcycle tours gives the following description:

*Take a trip on the legendary Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles—a journey of 4,000 kilometers passing through eight states and three time zones. Experience the **real America** [their emphasis] just like we remember it from the television programmes and books of our childhood. Like modern-day cowboys, we travel through deserts, across prairies and high mountains, through large and small towns, farming country and deep forests.”*

www.twolaneadventure.com

Targeting international tourists for Historic Illinois Route 66 must address their desire for a truly American experience. A Google search of packaged Route 66 tours by coach, rented motorcycles, or other vehicles proves that many bypass Illinois entirely, beginning in Los Angeles or Denver and touring only New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Some others that do begin in Chicago quickly pass through Illinois stopping overnight in Springfield before moving on to St. Louis. A focused effort must be made to promote a longer stay in Illinois.

Courtesy of Ride Free Motorcycle Tours, www.ridefree.com



Tourists from the United Kingdom participate in motorcycle tours on Historic Route 66.

Courtesy of Two Lane Adventure, www.twolaneadventure.com



A Norwegian motorcycle tour crosses the Rainbow Bridge in Kansas.

Courtesy of Two Lane Adventure, www.twolaneadventure.com



Norwegian tourists rent motorcycles in Chicago and begin their journey on Route 66.



A place like Shea's Gas Station in Springfield is a significant part of the Route 66 experience for international travelers, providing an opportunity to interact with people who lived and worked along the highway. March, 2007

Targeting International Tourists

- ▶ Develop the Chicago interpretive opportunities including an International Route 66 Travel and Interpretive Center.

Chicago holds enormous potential to draw tourists with more than a million international annual visitors. It can easily become a “must see” icon on most Route 66 tours since it is ‘Where the road begins’. Currently no agency or institution is addressing the Route 66 stories in the Chicago area. The size of the city is daunting to a traveler. Additionally, dense traffic makes driving, wayfinding, and sight seeing unpleasant, and parking is difficult and hard to find. However, it could provide a welcome contrast to rural Illinois and heighten the relaxed pace and leisurely exploration of the small towns.

- ▶ Focus on the small town character of downstate Illinois on a high quality website and tourist guide.

Illinois tourism will benefit by identifying its Route 66 niche and market its unique experiences. Qualitative and anecdotal information indicates that international travelers enjoy interacting with friendly citizens of Midwestern towns. The prairie-farm landscapes and the prevalence of small town culture in Illinois provide casual opportunities to meet Americans that not as available along most sections of Route 66.

- ▶ Capitalize on the Lincoln opportunities in Springfield.

Pilgrims have always driven Route 66 to visit Lincoln's tomb and home. Lincoln is well known to people from around the world. Today there are expanded Lincoln attractions to draw and hold visitors longer. In addition, there are concentrations of unique Route 66 attractions conveniently available for leisure travelers such

as *Shea's Gas Station*, *the Cozy Dog*, *the Route 66 Motel* and others.

- ▶ Emphasize the unique prairie experiences that are only available in Illinois.

Tall grass prairie lines the route along significant stretches. Midewin Prairie Preserve and other prairie restorations offer opportunities to stop and explore the “Grand Prairie Natural Division” of Illinois.

- ▶ Improve wayfinding and access to visitor services and attractions.

Improving wayfinding and visitor access were the needs most frequently expressed in the community meetings. To do this, provide pre-visit information that prepares international travelers to optimize their time in Illinois. This includes a detailed website, user-friendly travel guides and maps, education of and networking with travel planners. It includes improved signing of routes and attractions and improved interpretive media at those attractions.



A comprehensive wayfinding system, including websites, signs, and publications, is important to all Route 66 travelers—especially international tourists. March, 2007

2. Regional and National Tourists

Route 66 continues to have great name recognition across the country. The largest domestic markets for Illinois Route 66 tourism are from the neighboring states (*Illinois Tourism Facts* and *Route 66 Hall of Fame visitor log data*) and from national tourists who are making a pilgrimage on the route. Promotional literature and websites should emphasize getaway opportunities that include Illinois Route 66 and Lincoln sites. All of the recommendations for targeting international tourists would also enhance tourism for these target markets.

3. Illinois Residents

The Historic Road offers citizens of the Route an opportunity to feel a part of a greater community; one that changed American culture. The history and identity of each community is tied to and has been shaped by its location on the road. A sense of

community pride and commitment can be generated as each town rediscovers its unique connection to movements and eras that shaped the history of our nation.

Illinois residents are following the national trend of taking extended weekend getaways relatively close to home. More than half of Illinois tourism is domestic (Illinois Tourism Facts). All of the above recommendations for targeting international tourists would also enhance tourism for Illinois residents.

4. Special Interest Groups

There are a host of special interest groups that have a natural affinity to Route 66: car clubs and collectors, motorcycle clubs, bicycle clubs, culinary interests, state police, truckers, architecture buffs, nature lovers, and highway engineers. Many of these groups have created their own Route 66 tours and experiences. Antique car clubs and motorcycle clubs ride the route each year. The Illinois State Police Museum in Springfield is located on this route to which it is most intimately tied.

Special interest packages should be developed that target these special interest groups. For example:

- ▶ A “Culinary Guide to Historic Illinois Route 66” could be downloaded from the Internet for a weekend dining excursion that stops at famous eateries along the route.
- ▶ A thematic architectural guide to significant structures on Historic Route 66: Public buildings such as court houses, railroad stations, business districts and public squares, gas stations, service garages, trucking companies, and motels.
- ▶ A Route 66 guide to eccentric antique malls with a description of what makes them unique antique boutiques.
- ▶ Bicycle tour groups should be involved with the development of the Route 66 bike trail including a guide to roadside camping, motels, diners, etc.



Many special interest groups are drawn to Route 66. Car enthusiasts, for example, may visit numerous classic car showrooms along the road, attend classic car festivals, or visit transportation artwork, like the “Car Spindle” in Berwyn. November, 2007

5. Families and School Children

A reoccurring recommendation from the community meetings was to teach children about the history and significance of Route 66.

*Find a way to let the younger generation and community learn more about Route 66.
(Lincoln community meeting, Appendix 1)*

A lesson plan package on Route 66 could engage children in learning about their communities and could easily be tied to all aspects of the school curriculum.

Special children’s materials should also be developed for families touring the route. *Route 66 for Kids* by Emily Priddy is a good directory aimed at parents. Other materials should be developed specifically for children’s enjoyment.

See “Media and Activities for Children” in Chapter 5 for more ideas.



Families enjoy engaging and interactive experiences that encourage physical activity and social opportunities. The “Route 66 Experience” exhibits in the Joliet Area Historical Museum encourage hands-on exploration. July, 2007



The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield is successful because of its orientation to families. Immersive tactile environments, realistic statues of Abaham Lincoln as a child, and dynamic statues of his children playing directly relates to the interests of children. March, 2007



Effective marketing uses goods and services to create a positive personal experience for Route 66 travelers.

Marketing the Illinois Route 66 Experience

American Marketing Association Definition

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.

The key idea is that marketing is an exchange between customer and provider. The provider must tailor the “product” to the wants and needs of the customer. For Historic Illinois Route 66, experiences are what tourists are seeking and therefore experiences are the products that must be delivered. If the customer is satisfied with these experiences, then the goals of community economic development will be met through increased tourism.

The Experience Economy

In their book, *The Experience Economy*, authors B. J. Pine II and James Gilmore argue that, in the “progression of economic value,” the American economy has progressed as follows:

Extracting commodities ► Making goods ►
Delivering services ► Staging experiences

As an example, they describe the four stage evolution of the birthday cake:

In an agrarian economy, mothers made birthday cakes from scratch, mixing farm commodities (flour, sugar, butter, and eggs) that together cost mere dimes. As the goods-based industrial economy advanced, moms paid a dollar or two to Betty Crocker for premixed ingredients. Later, when the service economy took hold, busy parents ordered cakes from the bakery or grocery store, which, at \$10 or \$15, cost ten times as much as the packaged ingredients. Now, in the time-starved new

millennium, parents neither make the birthday cake nor even throw the party. Instead, they spend \$100 or more to “outsource” the entire event to Chuck E. Cheese’s, the Discovery Zone, the Mining Company, or some other business that stages a memorable event for the kids, and often throw in the cake for free.

The implications of this economic progression are clear for Historic Illinois Route 66 tourists—if planners stage themed immersion experiences, the road will grow as a popular tourist getaway for people.

It is important to distinguish between experiences and services. As Pine and Gilmore point out, “Experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods.” The idea is to intentionally use services as the stage, goods as props, to engage Illinois Route 66 tourists in a way that creates a memorable event. Goods are tangibles, services intangible, and experiences memorable. Goods and services are external to the tourist. Experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level.

Pine and Gilmore’s Nine Keys to Staging Experiences and Applications to Historic Illinois Route 66:

1. *Create a rich portfolio of experiences—create a series of related experiences that flow one from another.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** Develop interpretive media, attractions, festivals, and events that incorporate the resources of the corridor and its communities.
2. *Use experience hubs in locations where people naturally congregate.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** Place interpretive kiosks and panels at strategic locations and attractions on the byway and along I-55 and travel crossroads where motorists stop for gas, food, and restrooms.



Tourists are seeking themed experiences along Route 66. Polk-a-Dot Cafe, Braidwood. March, 2007

Courtesy of the International Route 66 Mother Road Festival



Community festivals, like the popular International Route 66 Mother Road Festival in Springfield, are important components of an “experience portfolio” for tourists.



Visitor centers, like the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum in Pontiac, can serve as rewarding experience hubs along the byway. March, 2007



Murals, like this one in Atlanta, illustrate the history and culture of communities along the Route 66 corridor. December, 2006

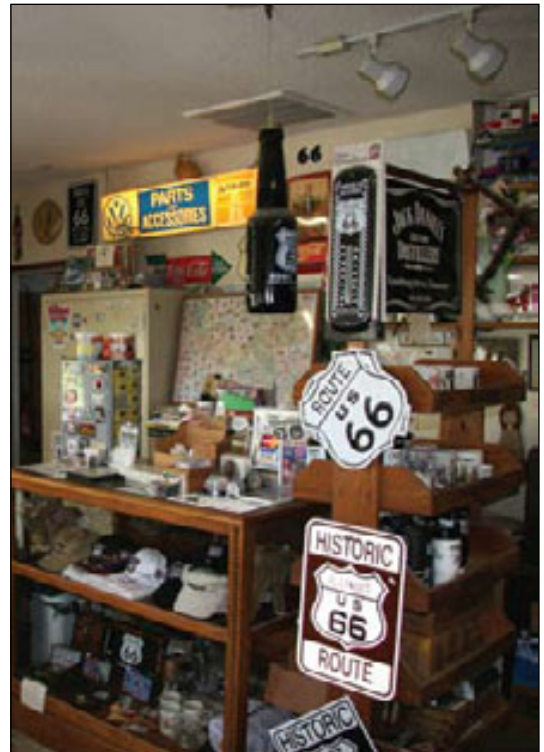
3. *Create a flagship location—a singular place where you stage the very best, most dynamic experience.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** Develop visitor centers that have rewarding media experiences. This should include state-of-the-art audio-visual programs and exhibits and quality personal services which feature the unique attractions of Illinois and provide orientation and incentives to visit specific sites and attractions on Illinois Route 66.
4. *Integrate physical and virtual experiences.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** Use the website as an interactive venue for holistically exploring the highway and its experiences, and to help people plan their getaway on the corridor. Promote the website on all media.
5. *Theme the experience. The theme must drive all the design elements and staged events of the experience toward a unified story line that wholly captivates the customer.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** Create thematic experience packages that integrate tours (self-guided or conducted), interpretive media, special events and festivals, programs, shopping, dining, and sleeping accommodations. Attractions that date to the “era of significance” and are enshrined in the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame should be featured on route signage and on the tourist guides and website.
6. *Harmonize impressions with positive cues—render the experience with indelible impressions. Impressions are the “takeaways” of the experience, they fulfill the theme.* **IL Rt. 66 application:** As much as possible, preserve and restore the period character of the corridor. Where the passage of time has obliterated this character, interpretation will help travelers to mentally fill the gaps. Create a strong identity for Route 66 communities, which could include entrance signs to each community identifying it as a Route 66 Heritage Community. Also, consider murals that celebrate the unique history and culture of each community and thematic kiosks with panels and maps that

interpret the human stories, buildings, and artifacts found there.

7. *Eliminate negative cues. Ensure the integrity of the customer experience by eliminating anything that diminishes, contradicts, or distracts from the theme. IL Rt. 66 application:* Each community must be committed to enhancing the visual character of the corridor. Enhancing wayfinding of historic alignments and to principal attractions must be top priority. All interpretive and wayfinding media should use unified graphics and other visual cues.
8. *Mix in memorabilia. Certain goods have always been purchased primarily for the memories they convey—a physical reminder of the experience. IL Rt. 66 application:* A wide range of theme related memorabilia is available and sold at various tourist attractions. Some are consumable, such as milk duds at Lou Mitchell's or a cozy dog in Springfield. Route 66 T-shirts, clocks, and refrigerator magnets are currently offered for sale in service areas. Antique malls line the historic corridor. Route 66 soda, produced in Wilmington, can be both consumed and collected.
9. *Engage the five senses. IL Rt. 66 application:* Plan for perceptually exciting areas for travelers to see and create “get-out-of-the-car” activities for them to do. Capitalize on the slower pace of the old highway as a contrast to the high-speed monotony of I-55. Accentuate contrasts by advertising activities that vary the tempo of travel. Invite visitors to feel the sway of the suspension bridges in Pontiac or hike an abandoned stretch of old roadway to a river in Sherman. Use the sensuality of food to entice visitors to experience the local cuisine such as cozy dogs, chilli and “horse shoes” in Springfield, schnitzel in Lincoln, breakfast at Lou Mitchells, or the huge buffet at the Dixie Truck Stop. Consider creating a marketing network of Route 66 restaurants that publicize each other (poster of roadside restaurants).



Berwyn celebrates its Route 66 heritage with glowing colored lights and banners. Each community should strive to enhance the visual character of the corridor. March, 2007



Route 66 souvenirs, like the multitude found at Henry's Rabbit Ranch in Staunton, are physical reminders of the experience. April, 2007



Chapter 5—

Interpretive Media and Facilities



Interpretive media, like this mural being painted at the Joliet Area Historical Museum, and interpretive facilities, like the museum's "Route 66 Experience," help connect travelers to the diverse stories of Illinois Route 66 on a personal and meaningful level. April, 2007



The planning team talks with Richard Henry at Henry's Rabbit Ranch in Staunton. Real people talking to travelers about their experiences on Route 66 is the best form of interpretation. April, 2007



When an attraction is closed or when a real person isn't available, interpretive media tells the story in a thematic and visual way, like at the Fitzpatrick House in Romeoville. April, 2007

Telling the Stories of Route 66

Illinois Historic Route 66 tourists seek fun and meaningful experiences. It is our role as interpreters and hosts to help them find connections to the highway that are important to them. Travelers are seeking themed experience packages to fill their time—every experience is related and helps tell the immersive story of the Mother Road. Thematic interpretive media enhances the visitor's experience and helps them make connections to Route 66. However, the Route 66 themed amenities like motels, shops and restaurants are as important to the experience as the museums, attractions, and communities they encounter.

The purpose of these media and facility recommendations is to provide a conceptual framework for best interpreting the Route 66 story in Illinois. The total Illinois Historic Route 66 experience should invite exploration of the communities along the corridor and tie their local histories and attractions to the themes and messages. Site specific media will best suit the needs of a particular place and situation.

A real person interacting with tourists is the most effective form of interpretation. Many opportunities exist along Route 66 for travelers to interact with knowledgeable people connected to the road—diners, historic museums, roadside attractions, visitor centers—but interpretive media supplements these personal experiences by tying together the sites and stories. Wayside exhibits, brochures, visitor guides, websites, self-guided trails, audio tours, audiovisual programs, kiosks, museums and interpretive centers provide the links between the cultural and natural resources of the highway and intangible meanings that people may find in them.

Holistic Approach to Media Development

The Illinois Route 66 corridor contains multiple access points and hundreds of attractions spaced at irregular intervals along its 421 miles. A wide range of travelers are drawn to the road with different ideas, interests, and needs.

A comprehensive interpretive media package is needed to connect the greatest number of people to the stories of the highway. This holistic approach includes:

- ▶ **Diversity:** Multiple delivery techniques are important to connect with the diverse Route 66 audience. Media should be targeted to various learning styles (visual, auditory, physical), age groups, and nationalities. The large proportion of international tourists on Route 66 makes a diversity of media especially important.
- ▶ **Accessibility:** Even the best designed media won't be successful if people can't access it. Route 66 interpretive messages should be shared with the greatest number of people possible. Media should be planned to connect with all tourists, whether they are part of a tour group, individuals who planned their trip ahead of time, or serendipitous travelers who happen upon a resource.
- ▶ **Integration:** For a byway as long and diverse as Route 66, the integration of stories into a holistic media package is important. Unified design standards (colors, fonts, logos, styles) visually connect the various types of media. Each media opportunity should also direct visitors to other potential media options. For example, the visitor guide should highlight experience hubs, audio tours, or passport stations for a resource. An interpretive panel would connect visitors to the website or other nearby interpretive opportunities.



The Crowley's Ridge Nature Center in Jonesboro, Arkansas is located along the Crowley's Ridge Parkway National Scenic Byway. Media was designed for

audiences of diverse learning styles by incorporating photographs, tactile models, push-button audio clips, and unique wildlife cutout supports.



Each community along the byway should have at least one unified welcome sign that recognizes it as a Route 66 Heritage Community.



If regulations permit, adding neon to the Heritage Community signs would make them attractions in themselves and contribute to a “neon corridor.”

Create a Strong Visual Identity

It is challenging to develop recognition with so many access points on a linear corridor of 90 communities. Currently, the standardized brown IDOT signs initiate this process of symbolic repetition. The banners and signs hung along some main streets and on commercial establishments also help in this identification process. Many Illinois Historic Route 66 communities have developed thematic Route 66 visitor centers, museums, statues, plaques, trails, and murals that relate to their own respective stories. More such efforts are needed to create each community’s individual identity with the highway.

The Route 66 concept is a powerful “brand.” It enjoys universal recognition and appeal as hip, fun, and adventurous. As part of its marketing program, the Heritage Project should consciously develop a logo that can be incorporated into its media including signs, printed materials, and websites. The simple highway shield with “US 66” conveys the essential message.

Route 66 Heritage Community Signs

Illinois Route 66 travels through at least 90 communities between Chicago and St. Louis. Some of these communities currently advertise their connection to Route 66 on welcome signs. To achieve a strong identity, each community that is part of the scenic byway should be identified with a standardized “Illinois Route 66 Heritage Community” welcome sign. The sign should represent the idiosyncratic nature of the route (perhaps a 1950s era shape and font) and display the highway shield brand.

If regulations permit, adding neon to these welcome signs would create a unique “neon corridor” that would in itself become an attraction. Precedents exist in other states. New Mexico, for example, has instigated a number of Highway Department/Tourism projects that include both new neon and

restored neon signage along Route 66. They have also developed a model template for city ordinances as they relate to neon signs.

“Interpretive” neon signs could also be created that express some unique aspect of Route 66 that relates to each individual community. For example, an animated Abraham Lincoln squeezing a watermelon in Lincoln would introduce travelers to this little known story. Should Illinois highway regulations restrict this form of signage along Route 66, towns could create “neon waysides” in appropriate locations at a distance from the road right-of-way.

Thematic Route 66 Streetscapes

Visitors are seeking immersive experiences while traveling Route 66. A “streetscape” represents all of the elements that make up the overall appearance of the byway corridor. Each byway community should consider ways of enhancing their corridors that connect travelers to Route 66.

Downtown Atlanta is an ideal example of streetscape design. Historic building fronts facing the road have been beautifully restored. An iconic neon sign was restored and placed in its original location on the Palm’s Grill Cafe. Colorful murals have been painted on the side of buildings representing the community’s history. Each business proudly displays their connection to Route 66 with signs in the window. A muffler man giant, moved from Bunyon’s Restaurant in Cicero, completes the immersive streetscape.

Due to funding and ordinances, not every community can design a streetscape as complex as Atlanta’s. Every community can, however, enhance the corridor through simple additions. Banners hanging from street lamps, like those in Berwyn, are an inexpensive method of connecting a community to the road. Unique banners in every community along Route 66 would help identify the corridor for travelers and showcase the proud association they have with the Mother Road.



Communities may consider investing in individualized neon signs that help tell their story. For example, Lincoln might have an animated Abe squeezing a watermelon. Drops of juice would fall to the bottom of the sign and light up the pink border.

March, 2008



Atlanta has spent considerable effort on its streetscape. A park, murals, historic buildings, a restored neon sign, and Bunyon’s Giant immerse travelers in the Route 66 ambience of the community.



A Route 66 shield painted on the street marks an alignment through Chenoa. February, 2008.



Chicago marks its Old Town district with decorative arches over the sidewalk, antique street lamps, and tree-lined streets. Similar techniques can enhance city corridors along Route 66. October, 2007

Other possible ways of enhancing the streetscape include:

- ▶ Painting Route 66 on the street pavement
- ▶ Incorporating the Route 66 symbol on planters, benches, curbing, streetlights, and businesses along the road
- ▶ Planting colorful flower beds in a “66” formation
- ▶ Installing Route 66-era streetlights, neon signs, benches, and brick sidewalks
- ▶ Creating thematic sculptures that represent the road, perhaps constructed out of old car parts
- ▶ Renovating historic building facades that face the road
- ▶ Accenting architecture with neon and lighting
- ▶ Painting murals on the sides of buildings that represent the community’s historic connection to the Mother Road (see next section)
- ▶ Designing interpretive statues that illustrate the people who lived, worked, and traveled or significant events that occurred along the road (see next section)

The concept of thematic streetscaping was recommended in the Springfield meeting with city staff, as well as in the Chicago community meeting. Springfield would benefit by designing a comprehensive streetscape plan for its 6th and 9th Street corridors. Ideally, the design should correlate to the time period that these streets were officially Route 66 alignments. Streetscape designs would also enhance the Chicago Route 66 corridor through Jackson Boulevard, Adams Street, and Ogden Avenue.

Historic Community Murals

Murals are a cost effective method for attracting attention and communicating with travelers since their size is proportional to the architectural environment of cities and are easily viewed from

vehicles. Most small towns have available “rough” walls that can be visually improved with painted murals. The design of a mural should relate to the community’s sense of place, especially as it pertains to its history on Route 66.

The most effective subjects could depict historic events that might otherwise be forgotten. A mural that relates to events that happened at the site or in the city is more meaningful to travelers.

Mural possibilities include:

- ▶ **Wilmington:** A mural might portray the military caravans that lumbered through town carrying supplies to and from the huge national munitions plant north of the city.
- ▶ **Countryside:** A scene of the Wishing Well Motel in its glory days could be illustrated with superimposed portraits and names of famous customers surrounding it.
- ▶ **Plainfield:** A mural might highlight the most famous highways in the world, Route 66 and the Lincoln Highway, which share the same roadbed here for a few blocks. A visual of streaming automobiles and travelers from both eras could be an intriguing mural.
- ▶ **Broadwell:** A scene showing “noon hour at the Pighip” with Ernie Edwards spinning a story from behind the counter while customers listen intently with open mouths and forks poised.
- ▶ **Odell:** A view of children entering the subway underpass on their way to school. Bumper to bumper 1930s traffic passing above. In the background you can see a stream of cars waiting for gas at the bustling Odell Standard station where a driver stares at a geyser steaming from his radiator.
- ▶ **Granite City:** A mural showing a scene at the foot of the Chain of Rocks bridge at sunset. Dozens of neon signs are glowing over packed motel and restaurant parking lots. Caravans of

A few byway communities already have murals that highlight their connection to Route 66. Additional murals will help strengthen the Illinois Route 66 identity.

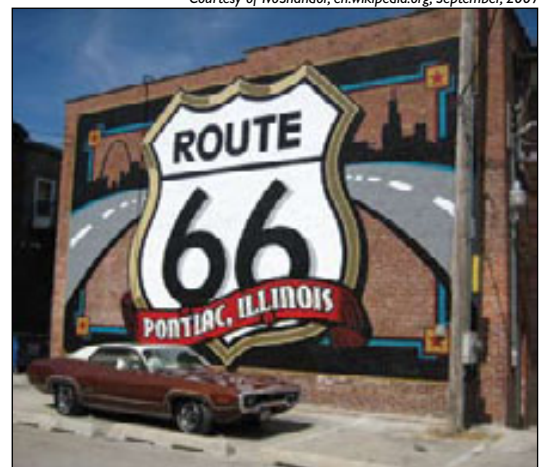


Atlanta’s “Midway on Illinois’ Mother Road” mural. December, 2006.



Virden History Mural. August, 2007

Courtesy of IvoShandor, en.wikipedia.org, September, 2007



Pontiac’s Route 66 mural on the Old City Hall and Fire Station.



Metal silhouette statues at the Funk's Grove Rest Area along I-55. December, 2006

1950s vacationers can be seen streaming over the bridge, barges drift under the bridge, and a steam locomotive races up tracks on the far river bank.

- ▶ **Elkhart:** An enormous mural that covers the west wall of the grain elevators facing 66 and I-55. It depicts corn harvesting in the heartland. A harvesting combine with plumes of dust cover the busy traffic on Route 66 and long strings of railroad cars are being filled with corn.

Interpretive Statues

Sculptural elements gain the attention of travelers and can be used to interpret resources that would otherwise be overlooked. Thematic statues tell the story of the road in a way that is unique and unexpected by visitors. They serve as a fun photo opportunity and add diversity to the traveler's experience package.

Human sculptures are especially powerful. Several human silhouette statues made of iron are currently placed along Route 66 in Joliet and at the Funk's Grove rest area along I-55. The statues are installed

in conjunction with wayside panels that interpret the site. These human figures connect with visitors on a personal level. They convey messages and put inanimate objects into meaningful contexts.

Additional statues along the road would be effective in accenting the Route 66 story. Some possibilities include:

Conceptual highway patrolman statue next to the old Pontiac State Police Headquarters Building.



- ▶ A **construction worker** with a shovel or a flagman at the Deerfield Historic Bridge south of Carlinville. A wayside panel could tell the engineering story of the road.
- ▶ A **hitchhiker** with suitcase or gas can on an old, abandoned roadway. This is a symbol of mass migration and dream seeking at various eras along the Mother Road.
- ▶ A **highway patrolman** on a motorcycle behind at the old Pontiac State Police Headquarters Building or behind a billboard. A wayside exhibit would interpret the lives of men and women who dedicated themselves to protecting travelers on the highway.
- ▶ A **picnicking family** at the Sherman Rest Area. This would provide a focal point to an otherwise overlooked historic wayside pull-off area. A panel would interpret the significance of families stopping at rest areas and how they have changed today.
- ▶ A **“rum-runner”** struggling to carry milk cans at a wayside interpreting the “Number 5” still near Benld.
- ▶ **Miners**, including children, at K Mine Park in Godley. A panel would interpret the difficult lives of mining families and the harsh conditions of their work.
- ▶ **Singers and musicians** with instruments at the Coliseum Ball Room in Benld. A panel would interpret the significance of the Coliseum as the largest ball room between Chicago and St. Louis and highlight the famous stars who performed here.



Conceptual singer and musician statues adjacent to the Coliseum Ball Room in Benld.



Interpretive opportunities should be dispersed along Illinois Route 66 at places where people already gather. Gazebo in Carlinville's historic square. March, 2007



Lincoln statue at the McLean County Courthouse, Bloomington. March, 2007

Visitor Centers and Experience Hubs

A series of visitor centers and experience hubs developed at strategic points along the byway will help to tell a comprehensive story of the highway. These facilities attract a traveler's attention, establish a dramatic presence, and engender public awareness of the significance of Route 66. Existing rest areas, museums, and other facilities are also identified in this plan that work together to provide a holistic storyline. Detailed information about experience hubs and visitor centers are discussed later in this chapter.

Disperse Interpretation Along the Corridor

Interpretation should be dispersed along the route rather than concentrated in a few locations. Media should be placed where people already gather or travel, at sites with significant stories and structures. This ensures that all communities along the byway will eventually have some interpretive recognition, resulting in significant exposure and involvement. Dispersed interpretation can capture new audiences, especially among Illinois residents who casually encounter these media. People will learn the stories and meanings of a site as they visit it.

Promote the Heritage Project's Website

To facilitate the search for more information, the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project website address should be prominently displayed on all interpretive media, including IDOT signs. A high quality website will bring worldwide recognition to Illinois Historic Route 66. Recommendations for the website are discussed later in this chapter.

Establish Uniform Design Standards

Uniform application of typefaces, colors, and graphics are important in establishing identity and recognition for the attractions and resources of the corridor. As an example, design recommendations are provided for wayside exhibits later in this chapter.

Improve Wayfinding

Wayfinding, a traveler’s ability to follow the byway and find destinations, is the foundation of a positive visitor experience. Without effective wayfinding, travelers will not be able to access the interpretive messages, and at worst, may become frustrated with the entire trip.

Improving wayfinding and increasing visitor identification are consistently cited in the Illinois Route 66 community meetings as the most important needs for “revitalizing Route 66.” The following statements typify residents’ concerns (from Appendix 1):

- ▶ Make the route user-friendly.
- ▶ Need signage to direct visitors to significant sites.
- ▶ Confusing signage... some signs have years of official route designation, others don’t.
- ▶ Listing of attractions needed.

Improved wayfinding means more than just installing extra signs. Travelers navigate by using many visual cues along the corridor. Analyzing the holistic corridor landscape is important for developing clear wayfinding.

Recommendations for enhancing wayfinding along Illinois Route 66 include:

- ▶ **Replace all weathered Route 66 markers and directional signage** with the standardized brown “Historic Illinois Route 66” IDOT signs. These signs are effective for marking the route—travelers understand that “brown” represents natural or cultural attractions, and the prominent Route 66 shield is instantly identifiable.



The unified brown IDOT Historic Route 66 signs direct travelers to different alignments. An additional sign on this post points to Odell’s Standard-Sinclair Gas Station. March, 2007



Conceptual direction sign to primary Route 66 attractions in Springfield. The design replicates the colors and Route 66 shield of the IDOT highway signs, which travelers are used to watching for.

The rounded corners and shapes, the shield breaking out of the top, and subtle “racing stripes” on either side of the shield give the sign a less formal and more friendly personality.

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive signage plan to **produce new IDOT route markers and directional signage** that supplement existing signage on the entire route. Increase the number of Historic Route 66 signs along busy urban stretches of road. Travelers need more reassurance when there are multiple distractions.
- ▶ Install **“Historic Route 66 Access” signs** before Interstate exits and at major highway intersections where the historic byway can be accessed. This would attract serendipitous travelers and enhance wayfinding for travelers using the major highways to access Route 66 attractions. The signs should be standardized with the brown IDOT designs.
- ▶ Create standardized **directional signs to primary Route 66 attractions**. The signs should replicate the brown IDOT designs with a prominent Route 66 shield for visual unity. A simple layout with high contrast words and arrows will assist travelers in making quick decisions while driving.
- ▶ **Paint the Illinois Route 66 shield on road pavement**, especially when entering communities or at complex intersections. This serves as another visual cue for travelers.
- ▶ Design and place signage at the Route 66 gateway to each community identifying it as a **Historic Illinois Route 66 Heritage Community**. These may, in some cases, be neon welcome signs on the city limits of a community or may take the form of a well placed Route 66 mural or wooden sign (see “Route 66 Heritage Community signs earlier in this chapter).
- ▶ Plan and produce **thematic murals** that reflect the history and the sense of place of byway communities. These murals should be site specific and should give insights into the unique qualities of each community and its relationship with Route 66 (see “Historic Community Murals” earlier in this chapter).

- ▶ Place easily recognizable **experience hubs** in prominent locations along the travel corridor. These hubs will serve as attractive focal points to draw the attention of travelers. Their standard appearance and crisp, inviting messages will condition visitors to stop wherever they see them. A full color community map should be standard for each of these hubs (see “Experience Hubs” later in this chapter).
- ▶ Place **website access information** on all media including wayside exhibits, experience hubs, and brochures.
- ▶ Complete the development of a **website**. The full development and maintenance of a quality website will aid tourists in planning and enjoying their Historic Illinois Route 66 experience. Websites are fundamental to wayfinding and identification and are a primary method that new visitors use when planning to visit a byway (see “Website” later in this chapter).
- ▶ A new **Travel Guide** should be designed with prominent maps to assist visitors in orienting themselves on the byway. Narrative directions should be used sparingly and visual maps should be reduced to essential information that allows travelers to see their location, spatial relationships, and view precise travel routes. A corridor map should give users a holistic perspective of their location and small community maps should be inserted on pages to show streets and the location of attractions within each city. Each page should feature a prominent photograph of a local Route 66 attraction (see “Travel Guide” later in this chapter).



Conceptual Historic Route 66 Access Sign that would be installed at Interstate exits and major highway intersections that connect to the byway.

Accessing the historic Route 66 byway from I-55 and other major highways can be confusing. Access signs would enhance wayfinding for tourists who planned in advance, while attracting the attention of serendipitous travelers.

Unified Design Standards

To enhance recognition and provide a holistic interpretive experience for travelers on the byway, all media should be graphically and visually unified. Incorporating standard colors, typography, logos, graphic elements, and layouts will tie together the diversity of recommended media.

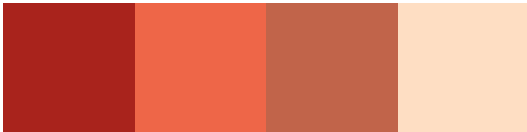
A marketing and design firm will help to define and establish a set of standardized design principles that reflects the personality of Illinois Route 66 on all advertising and media. The following are suggestions to consider during this design process.

CMYK= 63,10,0,38 CMYK= 63,10,0,9 CMYK= 46,0,2,18 CMYK= 15,0,0,0



A gradation of blue colors provides a rich palette of choices for backgrounds, tint boxes, borders, and text.

CMYK= 12,96,100,25 CMYK= 0,74,75,1 CMYK= 8,66,69,17 CMYK= 0,14,22,0



A gradation of red colors provides contrast and highlights for important elements.

CMYK= 0,0,0,100 CMYK= 0,0,0,0



Black should be used for lettering on large blocks of text. Dark lettering on a light background increases readability. White can be used for titles, headings, or other emphasized text when placed over a dark colored background.

Color Families

A standard set of colors helps to unify media, highlight important messages, and evoke feelings about a site and organization.

Some colors chosen to represent Illinois Route 66 should be bright and bold to celebrate the idiosyncratic nature of the road—the excitement of vacationing, neon signs, and hopping drive-ins. Other colors should be subtle and toned down to interpret topics that may not fit the brighter color scheme—struggles of the labor movement, accidents along the route, families moving during the Great Depression.

Different combinations of red, white, and blue colors have been traditionally used to represent Route 66 (Historic Route 66 in Illinois logo, Hampton landmark signs, Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project website). Route 66 is America’s “Mother Road,” and variations of this color scheme evoke that connection.

Typography

Each typeface has its own unique personality, and fonts should be chosen carefully to express the tone of the interpretation and the organization.

Typefaces during the heyday of Route 66 were unique and identifiable, especially during the 1950s

when the beat and jazz culture influenced design. Most fonts during this time were bold, flowing, irregular, and showy. Many people instantly connect these stylistic fonts with the era, which provides recognition with the byway. Fonts like “Expo,” “Brody,” or “Font Diner Loungy” add a fun retro character to media and would be appropriate for titles and headings.

Stylized fonts work well for short headings, but they do take more time and energy to read. Therefore, simpler standard fonts are recommended for larger blocks of text that require more reading. A popular sans-serif font (without decoration on the end of letters) during the 1950s was “Gill Sans.” Although it has less character, the font provides maximum readability and is widely available.

The size of type is also important, especially on interpretive exhibits and panels. A hierarchy of sizes emphasize the importance of different sections of text. Headlines are the largest, followed by main text headings, main text, sub-text headings, sub-text, captions, and photo credits.

Media should be developed following the “3-30-3 rule.”

- ▶ Most visitors will only spend about **3 seconds** looking at a piece of media. They should be able to grasp the main interpretive message just by looking at the headings and graphics. Well designed “3 second messages” will provoke interest to continue reading.
- ▶ Some visitors who are motivated by the headlines will spend up to an additional **30 seconds** looking at the media. A short paragraph of larger letters is appropriate for this group to connect with the stories on a deeper level. The paragraph should summarize the main messages of the panel.
- ▶ A few visitors who are very interested in the topic will spend up to **3 minutes** looking at the media. Sub-text and captions with smaller

Expo Font
 Brody Font
 Smilage Font
 Font Diner Loungy
 FLORALESS
 Fabulous 50s
 Gill Sans **Extra Bold**
 Futura **Extra Black**

Many idiosyncratic font styles are available that reflect the 1950s era, and may be ideal for connecting travelers with the stories of Route 66. For most conceptual designs in the plan, Expo was chosen for headlines and headings, and Gill Sans for the main text and captions.

Headline
 Main heading
 Main text
 Sub-text heading
 Sub-text
 Captions
 Photo credits

Successful interpretive media follows the “3-30-3 rule,” a hierarchy of text sizes that emphasizes the importance of different sections.



Logos are unifying symbols that increase recognition for organizations.



Unifying symbols help to integrate media and speak a universal language to Route 66 audiences.

lettering help enrich their experience. These may include quotes, stories, poems, fun facts, and examples that provide for the deepest level of understanding.

Unifying Elements

Certain graphic elements can be replicated on all media. The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project and the National Scenic Byways logos, for example, should be clearly visible on all byway media along with contact information. Colored title or footer bars, tint boxes (of different shapes), and borders help to visually tie layouts together. Other graphic elements, such as a “detour sign” that leads to exploratory activities off the road or “headphones” that indicate an audio tour stop, not only unify the media, but also serve as universal symbols for increasing accessibility.

Grid systems can be designed for each type of media to unify text, graphic, and object placement. By using templates, new media can be quickly and easily developed and old media updated.

Although unified design is of the utmost importance for establishing an identity, the idiosyncratic nature of Route 66 is one of its greatest draws. Effective media designers will “break out of the grid” to reflect the diversity of attractions along the road.

The following section provides recommendations on developing design standards for wayside exhibits.

The National Park Service uses a “unigrid” system throughout the country to unify its media design, which includes a black header with white text. To add individual personality, designers “break the grid”—the top of the cactus on this sign, for example, overlaps the black header.



Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits are outdoor interpretive panels found along trails and roads. The most successful wayside exhibits are associated with a tangible resource or landscape. They display intriguing photographs and illustrations, along with a few concise messages, that tell a story.

Rationale

Wayside exhibits are one of the most effective forms of media for a byway. They are highly visible and available to visitors 24 hours a day. Because they are located at or near the resources that they interpret, wayside exhibits can quickly answer questions that visitors have about a site. They can be dispersed along the byway for maximum visibility. They are direct, low-tech, user-friendly communication tools that are easily accessed by a visitor. People who are reluctant to enter a visitor center, participate in an interpreter-led program, or attend an audiovisual presentation will often stop to enjoy a wayside exhibit.

Current technology has expanded the range of formats for interpretive panels. Today, wayside exhibits with large, full-color illustrations, photographs, and detailed maps can be created inexpensively. Audio and tactile elements can be incorporated to more fully immerse the visitor in the story of the site.

Since waysides interpret particular places or resources, they can be used in very specific ways. They can, for example, show a place at another time—such as the road prior to flooding by Lake Springfield. They can show you a closer view than you can get on-site or give you a “bird’s eye” view of your location. They can freeze time or show long-term processes in an abbreviated format.

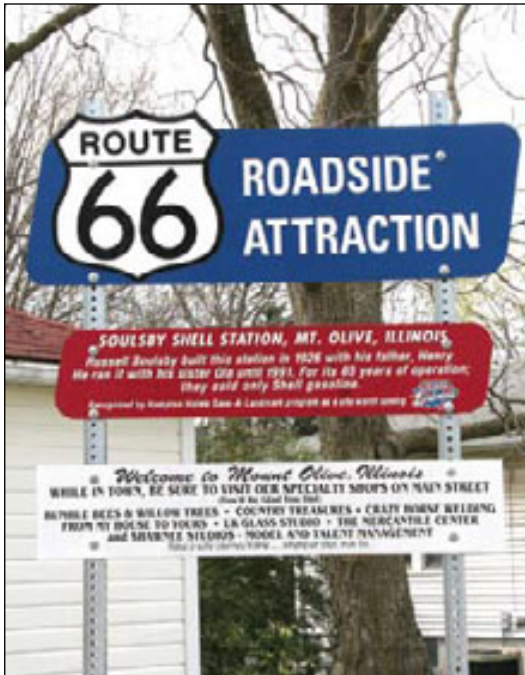
Wayside exhibits can share local examples and stories that are part of a greater pattern. Route 66 is a national story, but has many local, human



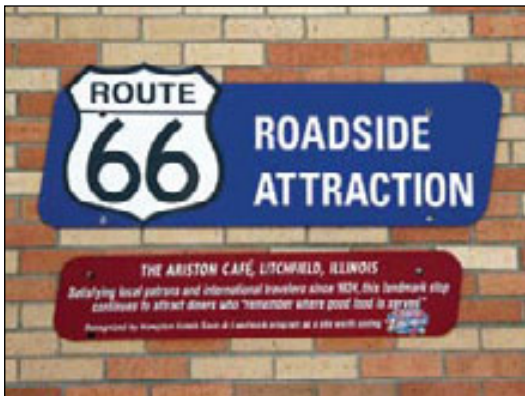
Conceptual sketch of an Illinois Route 66 wayside exhibit. Interpretive panels are on duty 24 hours a day and directly interpret tangible resources that can be seen or experienced.



Located along the Salt Mission Trail scenic byway in New Mexico, this wayside exhibit illustrates the layout of the Tijeras Pueblo that once stood on the site. Interpretive panels are ideal media to convey historic stories.



Existing “Route 66 Roadside Attraction” sign at the Soulsby Shell Station in Mt. Olive. April, 2007



Existing “Route 66 Roadside Attraction” sign at the Ariston Cafe in Litchfield. April, 2007

connections that are often told best with a wayside exhibit. Wayside exhibits allow local communities to place their stories into the broader history of the nation along Route 66, giving residents and travelers a richer sense of history and a more personal connection to great events.

Interpretive panels are versatile. A single panel may be all that is needed at a given site. For broader stories, multiple panels can be clustered into kiosks, or experience hubs. For linear sites, several panels can be arranged in a complex storyline along a path.

Analysis of Existing Wayside Exhibits

Several wayside exhibits have been placed along Illinois Route 66 by communities and organizations wanting to share their stories with travelers. The most common are the “Route 66 Roadside Attraction” signs sponsored by the Hampton Hotels Save-A-Landmark program. These have been installed next to or on popular primary resources throughout the byway. The current signs have both advantages and limitations for interpretation.

Advantages:

- ▶ Tilted shape, bright colors, and prominent Route 66 shield logo fit the personality of the byway.
- ▶ Contains short, concise messages that interpret the significance of the resource.
- ▶ Large letters and vertical orientation attract attention and allow reading from a car.

Limitations:

- ▶ Photographs and illustrations cannot be incorporated onto the sign panel
- ▶ Space is a limiting factor for including multiple message layers.
- ▶ Signs have a temporary look, emphasized by bolts through the sign face and the metal fence post supports.
- ▶ Vertical orientation can be visually distracting at certain sites.

Due to these limitations, the planning team recommends a different design for wayside exhibits that would be more effective at connecting visitors with the meanings of the resource.

Design Standards for Wayside Exhibits

Most typical wayside exhibits that visitors experience are rectangle panels held at a 30-degree angle by a black aluminum supports. This style, originated by the National Park Service, has been successfully used at interpretive sites for the past 30 years.

Route 66, however, has a distinctive personality that doesn't fit into a standard wayside exhibit design. The Route 66 era was a time of “breaking out of the box,” both literally and figuratively. Designs of the 1940s and 50s included streamlined shapes, angles and curves, chrome and neon. These elements were used to develop a concept design for the Illinois Route 66 wayside exhibits

Shape:

The shape of the panel reflects the streamline design of the 1950s with a rounded top and an angled bottom that terminates in a point. Although it may create some challenges for design, the flowing shape contributes to a “sense of place” and fits the personality of the byway.

Frame and Supports:

The frame and supports for wayside exhibits also contribute to the interpretive storyline. The frame, shaped to fit the panel, will feature a shiny chrome-like finish, etched “racing stripes,” a prominent Route 66 shield logo, and a tactile chevron. The design is inspired by streamlined cars of the Route 66 era. The frame top can be removed with special tools that allow for easy installation and removal of the panel.

The supports, also finished to look chrome-like, gracefully curve from the ground to match the streamlined frame and panel. Route 66 logos would be etched into the outside of each leg. An optimal amount invested in framing and supports

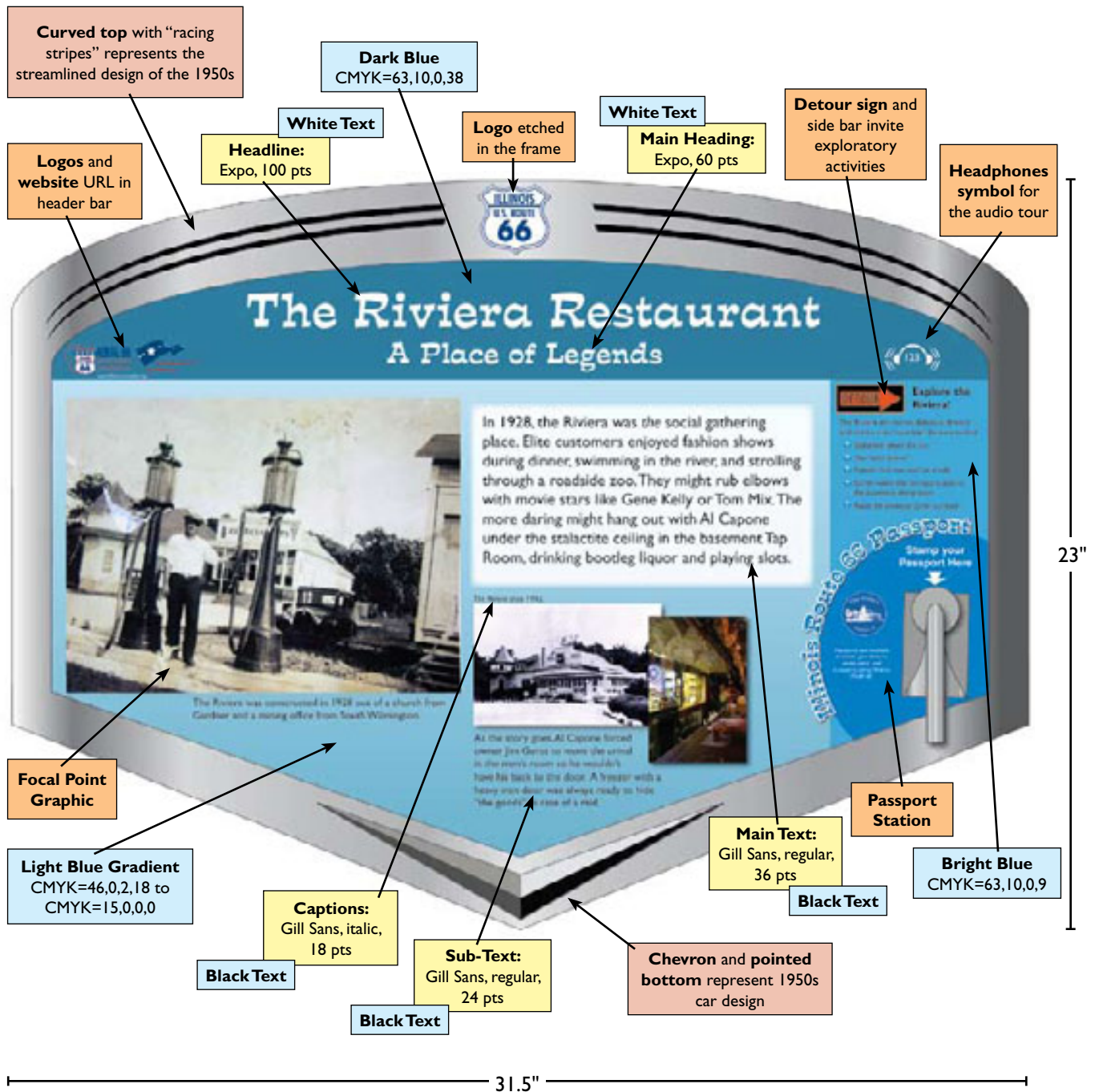


Conceptual sketches of an Illinois Route 66 wayside exhibit that would be placed near the Riviera Restaurant in Gardner.



Recommended Design Standards for Illinois Route 66 Wayside Exhibits

Shape	Typography
Color	Unifying Elements





The Riviera Restaurant

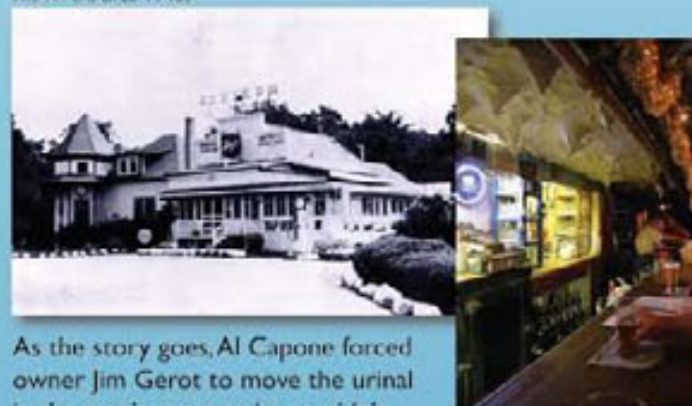
A Place of Legends



The Riviera was constructed in 1928 out of a church from Gardner and a mining office from South Wilmington.

In 1928, the Riviera was *the* social gathering place. Elite customers enjoyed fashion shows during dinner, swimming in the river, and strolling through a roadside zoo. They might rub elbows with movie stars like Gene Kelly or Tom Mix. The more daring might hang out with Al Capone under the stalactite ceiling in the basement Tap Room, drinking bootleg liquor and playing slots.

The Riviera circa 1945.



As the story goes, Al Capone forced owner Jim Gerot to move the urinal in the men's room so he wouldn't have his back to the door. A freezer with a heavy iron door was always ready to hide "the goods" in case of a raid.

DETOUR Explore the Riviera!

The Riviera still serves delicious dinners and drinks in its "cave bar." Be sure to find:

- Stalactites above the bar
- The "tudest riviera"
- Freezer that was used as a safe
- Dumb waiter that transports food to the basement dining room
- Route 66 Streetcar Drive out back

Illinois Route 66 Passport

Stamp your Passport Here

Passports are available at hotels, gas stations, waterfalls, and museums along Historic Route 66.

Conceptual Design for an Illinois Historic Route 66 Wayside Exhibit

will provide long-term protection for the interpretive panels which can then be produced in thinner, less costly materials. Panels should be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors, including those in wheelchairs.

Colors:

For the wayside exhibit standards, a series of blue tinted colors worked well to tie the different elements of the panel together. Darker blue colors, like the one in the title bar, provide good contrast with white lettering. This attracts attention to the title.

Lighter blue colors, like the one used for the background, provide sufficient contrast with black lettering—dark lettering over a light background is easier to read for large blocks of text.

A brighter blue color was used on the sidebar in conjunction with the bright orange detour sign to differentiate the “explore” activities.

White is used for emphasis; it serves as contrast on the dark background for headlines, and makes the main message more noticeable.

Typography:

The “Expo” font was used for the title and sub-heading of the panel. The style is open, friendly, and evokes a classic era while maintaining its readability. The rest of the panel is designed with the much simpler “Gill Sans” font family.

The text is organized in a visual hierarchy that follows the “3-30-3 rule;” the most important messages are the largest.

Unifying Elements:

Certain graphic and layout elements will be standardized on all wayside exhibits. The dark blue title bar, for example, serves as a logical place to hold the title, “Historic Route 66” and “America’s Byways” logos, contact information, and integration with other media like the audio tours.

A unified sidebar with a “detour sign” can encourage exploration activities especially targeted at kids and families.

Each panel should also follow effective design principles, which would include a focal point graphic, balance, and planned visual flow.

Seven Ways to an Effective Interpretive Panel:

1. Communicate visually. Use photos and drawings to help tell the story.
2. Graphics should do more than duplicate what can be seen at the site. They should reveal hidden meanings and ideas.
3. Use a message pyramid: develop a descending order of message importance. This can be expressed as the 3-30-3 rule. Visitors can receive a message in 3 seconds, 30 seconds, or 3 minutes.
4. Keep the message short. Use short sentences and paragraphs.
5. Create imagery with concrete nouns and active verbs. Avoid adjectives and adverbs.
6. Relate to the visitor's experience. Use personal pronouns, personal language, and familiar terms. Illustrate with metaphors, analogies, quotes, questions, and real examples.
7. Provide for multi-sensory involvement. Use digital audio repeaters and participatory devices. This may include tactiles, models, and relief maps.

Steps to Creating Wayside Exhibits

Step 1: Planning

Purpose of the Panel:

- ▶ What themes and messages does it address?
- ▶ What are the objectives? Educational, emotional, and behavioral objectives should be stated in complete sentences.
- ▶ What universal concepts are represented in this panel?
- ▶ Determine who is responsible for each step.

Budget:

The fabrication costs for a 2'x3' panel with standard metal supports ranges from \$800-\$3,500. A specialized base and panel, like those suggested for Route 66, would cost between \$5,000-\$10,000. At least \$3,000 additionally should be budgeted per sign for planning, writing, research, and graphic design. It is most cost effective to produce a number of panels at once since this concentrates research and design efforts and usually reduces fabrication costs per panel.

Step 2: Research, Design, and Development

Research:

- ▶ Identify themes, messages, and objectives for each panel and determine their appropriateness to the site/community where they will be placed.
- ▶ Develop conceptual approach for conveying the "message."
- ▶ Verify facts, research information for accuracy, look for quotes, new perspectives, and other unique resource based ideas.
- ▶ Identify images and pay for or get a release for their use or work with an artist to create them. Images are paramount to a successful panel. The images should "tell" much of the story. Select only clear, high-quality images. Use originals whenever possible.

Write the Text:

- ▶ Revise, edit, and coordinate inscription with the graphics. To be effective, they must compliment and support each other.
- ▶ Messages must be concise. They compete for readers attention with warm sunshine, cold rains, crowds, and traffic.
- ▶ To be effective, an interpretive sign must communicate quickly and dramatically. The message must connect to the interests of the reader and must relate to what they can see or experience.
- ▶ The visitor must feel that reading this sign is worth the effort. Too much work reading for no apparent reward means the message will be ignored.
- ▶ Text should be presented in a layered format to present a hierarchy of material in a descending order of importance.

Design:

A standard format for the panel face will result in a consistent and unified appearance. The titles, text, map, banner, and logo are standard elements found on each wayside exhibit. They will create a recognizable identity along the corridor. Although each exhibit will adhere to these standards, each should be designed to best meet the needs of the site, the specific message, and the graphics composition.

Step 3: Fabrication, Installation, and Maintenance

Panel Fabrication:

The most efficient and cost effective process for panel fabrication (as of 2008) is high-pressure laminate. Digital layouts are printed on special paper impregnated with melamine resins, a harmless type of plastic that cannot be melted or reshaped after being molded once. The paper is then pressed at high pressures and temperature with phenolic resin layers

Fabrication Companies that offer high-pressure laminate

Folia Industries Inc.
58 York Street
Huntingdon, Quebec
J0S 1H0 CANADA
888-264-6122

Fossil Graphics Corp.
44 W. Jerfyn Blvd.
Deer Park, NY 11729
631-254-9200

iZone
2400 Wilson Place
Temple, TX 76504
254-207-7000



High-pressure laminate is a relatively inexpensive panel material that holds up well to vandalism and the elements. It can be produced in a variety of thicknesses and cut into any shape.

Frame and Support Companies

Best-Ex, Inc.
 Ruth Risler
 820 Industrial Ct.
 P.O. Box 454
 Baraboo, WI 53913
 800-356-4882
 bestex@tds.net

Hopewell Manufacturing, Inc.
 11311 Hopewell Road
 Hagerstown, MD 21740
 301-582-2343

KVO Industries
 1825 Empire Industrial Ct.,
 Suite A
 Santa Rosa, CA 95403
 800-657-6412

(another type of plastic) and a UV-resistant over-laminate. This process fuses the layers into a strong and durable solid core, similar to a countertop.

The finished panel is resistant to vandalism, UV-fading, and other weather conditions. Several nationally reputable companies offer this fabrication process and guarantee their products for at least 10 years.

Unlike many other fabrication techniques, high-pressure laminates can be produced in a variety of thicknesses and cut to different shapes, ideal for the Illinois Route 66 recommendations.

Frame and Supports Fabrication:

The individualized frame and support system recommended in this plan will require research and development to produce.

The planning team has been working with Ruth Risler of Best-Ex, Inc. (800-356-4882) to determine ways of producing the bases while keeping the costs affordable. For example, electropolished stainless steel will give the appearance of a chrome finish without the expensive hard chroming process.

A ballpark estimate for developing a prototype of the base was provided by Best-Ex on March 19, 2008:

Electropolishing one unit.....	\$450
Electropolishing transport.....	\$120
Shield screening.....	\$85
Cheveron.....	\$35
Waterjetting of frame, post parts, shields, programming.....	\$500
1/8" stainless steel.....	\$753
<u>Prototype labor – est 40 hr at \$45/hr.....</u>	<u>\$1,800</u>

Total for one unit*..... \$3,465

** Quantity pricing of the bases would be less*

For cantilevered bases such as these, the panels should be at a 30° angle and at a height of 30-34" from the bottom of the panel to the finished grade.



Wayside exhibit supports should be installed for universal accessibility. This ensures that people of all abilities can access the interpretive messages.

Maintenance:

Under normal conditions, high-pressure laminate panels should last 10 years without fading, blistering, or delaminating. General cleaning can be done with mild soap and water. To prolong the life of exterior panels, a coat of polymer-based car wax should be applied annually.

The panels are also very resistant to most types of vandalism. The hard surface resists scratching. Nicks, blemishes, or small scratches can be concealed with a polymer-based car wax or surface treatment. Graffiti, including spray paint, lipstick, permanent markers, and crayons, can be removed with an organic solvent (nonabrasive citrus-based cleaner). Worse graffiti may require mineral spirits and a rinse with water. If a determined vandal does scratch or break the panel in some way, it will not deteriorate any further. High pressure laminate panels are inexpensive, and the quick turnaround time (4-6 weeks) makes them easy to replace.



High-pressure laminate panels are resistant to most forms of graffiti, including permanent markers (above), spray paint, lipstick, and crayons. Marks can be removed with organic solvents or mineral spirits.

Audio Interpretation at Waysides

The use of senses, like hearing, can add a uniqueness and a richness to the “storytelling” experience. Sound and music immerse visitors in a different time and place. Interviews with people who lived and worked along the highway add to site’s sense of authenticity.

Examples of places where sound might enliven the story include:

- ▶ **Site of the Pig Hip Restaurant, Broadwell:** Visitors view historic photos of the restaurant and listen to Ernie Edwards as he tells the tale of Coonhound Johnny and his illegal pinball machines.
- ▶ **Coliseum Ballroom, Bend:** The voices of middle-aged residents whisper rumors about the racy night life at the Coliseum from their own fanciful, young memories. Music from the Big Band era completes the atmosphere.



Wayside exhibits with push-button audio messages add another sensory experience to the interpretive message. Music, sound effects, and interviews add authenticity to the story.

Courtesy of Korean War Educator, www.koreanwar-educator.org/memoirs/gire_edwin



At the Palm's Grill Cafe in Atlanta, listeners hear the young voice of an army recruit sharing his story as he waits for the Greyhound Bus to take him down Route 66 to Fort Leonard Wood.

- ▶ **Places where engineering, policing, and road safety are interpreted:** The sound of screeching brakes, shattering glass, and sirens bring back the dark reality of “Bloody 66” to today’s traveler. A 1950s style narrative could tell of the dangers that travelers faced on the overcrowded highway.
- ▶ **Former restaurants like The Mill (Lincoln), Sprague’s Super Service and Cafe (Normal), or the Belevidere Motel and Cafe (Litchfield):** The happy drone of a crowded restaurant is broken by the bark of a busy waitress as she sings out period diner slang to the cook. The meaning of the slang is interpreted.
- ▶ **Palm’s Grill Cafe, Atlanta:** A young Army recruit shares his story as he waits to hear the braking sound of the Greyhound Bus that will carry him to training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, some 200 miles and a lifetime away from Atlanta.

Recommendations for Wayside Exhibits on Illinois Historic Route 66



In 1905, landscape architect Jens Jensen designed the Flower Hall and Reflecting Pool for Douglas Park in Chicago. An interpretive panel or experience hub should be placed near the park for Route 66 travelers. November, 2007

- ▶ **Chicago:** Provide interpretive panels at selected locations along Jackson Blvd., Adams St., and Ogden Ave. These would feature historic photos and text describing the significance of nearby historic sites. Potential sites include The Chicago Board of Trade, the bridges on Jackson and Adams, Union Station, Old St. Patrick’s Church, and Douglas Park.
- ▶ **Countryside/McCook:** Develop a viewing platform with interpretive panels overlooking the Vulcan Quarry in Countryside/McCook at the south end of the abandoned Route 66 roadway. The view would be of the old roadway with the Sears Tower visible in the distance. The panels will tell the stories of the roadway’s closing and the use of crushed limestone in building the city and the Route 66 roadbed, and link Countryside to Route 66 history.

- ▶ **Countryside:** Develop a wayside exhibit interpreting The Wishing Well Motel and the Marx Brother’s Farm. The actual wishing well from the motel, currently in Pontiac, would serve as a tangible resource for this exhibit.
- ▶ **Lyons:** Develop an interpretive panel at the Hoffman Tower and dam that places the tower into a historical context. This panel should recreate through pictures the early years of the 20th century when beer gardens along the Des Plaines River brought customers from the city.
- ▶ **Joliet:** An attempt should be made to purchase the first Dairy Queen in Joliet, restore it, and interpret it with street-side panels and window exhibits.
- ▶ **Braceville:** At Mazonia Fish and Wildlife Area, a panel should explain that ponds and valleys were actually old strip mines and show the relationship of coal mining to Route 66. The Mazonia/Braidwood Fish & Wildlife Area consists of 1,017 acres dedicated to fish and wildlife management. The visitor center is accessed just south of Braceville by turning left on Huston Road. This would be a good location for this panel.
- ▶ **Godley:** K Mine Park is an excellent site to interpret the mining history in the Wilmington region and its connections to Route 66. This outdoor museum could include a collection of old mining equipment and an interpretive experience hub with vintage photographs of the mines. It could serve as a memorial to the men and boys who labored in these mines and to the labor movement that brought many reforms for workers.
- ▶ **Gardner:** At the Riviera, tell the colorful stories of this historic roadhouse and the old streetcar. Many famous customers stopped here, including Gene Kelly, Tom Mix, Al Capone and his brother Ralph. A freezer in the basement with a heavy iron door was supposedly built to hide gambling machines and booze during Prohibition in case



The Wishing Well from Countryside could serve as a tangible icon at a wayside exhibit interpreting the Wishing Well Motel and the Marx Brother’s farm. March, 2007



The intersection of Historic Route 66 and Huston Road would be a good location to interpret the strip mine landscape of the Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish & Wildlife Area. March, 2007

Courtesy of Godley Park District, www.godleyparkdist.com



K Mine Park in Godley would be an ideal site to interpret regional mining history. A sculpture garden, trails, and other attractions make this a worthwhile stop for Route 66 tourists.



The Dwight Depot offers a commanding view of downtown historic buildings. An interpretive panel here could feature their stories. March, 2007



An updated interpretive panel at the St. Paul's Church Subway in Odell can incorporate historic photos. The resource is a tangible link to the once traffic congested highway. March, 2007



A panel at the 1926 Route 4 bridge in Pontiac could interpret the evolution of road construction and the first hard road across Illinois. March, 2007

of a raid. A historic Kankakee streetcar from the early 20th century was moved to Gardner in 1932 to serve as a diner along Route 66. It was moved to a location behind the Riveria in 1955, and is still there today.

- ▶ **Dwight:** At the Dwight Depot, interpret the historic buildings that are within line-of-sight: The former Keeley Institute, for the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction, was located in downtown Dwight and is known for its stained glass windows depicting the five senses and for the rich and famous patients it treated; The First National Bank of Dwight was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and constructed in 1905; The Chicago & Alton Railroad Depot, a limestone structure, was built in 1891.
- ▶ **Odell:** At Standard-Sinclair Station, provide a history of gas station architecture and the story of this particular station. On the National Register of Historic Places, it was built in 1932 and served travelers until 1975.
- ▶ **Odell:** At St. Paul's Church Subway, a panel could tell the story of this structure to protect children from Route 66 traffic. This 1937 pedestrian tunnel under Route 66 was filled up in the 1950s. The first 3 steps and the railing were replaced in the spring of 2006 by the Illinois Route 66 Association. That this tunnel was a necessity to safely cross Route 66 is a revelation to anyone standing on this quiet corner today.
- ▶ **Cayuga:** At the Cayuga Barn, provide a history of roadside advertising. It is one of two remaining advertisement barns along Illinois Route 66. It is a rare commercial and cultural landmark on the corridor.
- ▶ **Pontiac:** At the Route 4 Bridge in Pontiac, interpret the evolution of road structures. The bridge abutments, the only ones with the original Illinois Route 4 logo on them, can be seen one mile from the log cabin. A 1926 bronze plaque and a 1998 Route 66 Association of Illinois plaque mark this historic bridge.

- ▶ **Pontiac:** At State Police District 6 Headquarters tell the story of patrolling the “hard road”. The state patrol was originally created to enforce weight limits on trucks to keep the road from breaking up. Their role quickly expanded to enforcing speed limits. Plans call for turning this site into Route 66 County Park and perhaps build a tower with a view of the pistol shaped police building.
- ▶ **Chenoa:** A panel at the downtown bandstand could show historic photos and tell the story of Steve’s Cafe and other Route 66 town features. Chenoa Pharmacy, when founded in 1889 was called the Schuirman’s Drug Store. Steve’s Cafe and Texaco Station was a Route 66 original that was named for its chef, Steve Wilcox. Advertising “The finest steaks between Chicago and St. Louis,” it became a popular stop for politicians traveling to Springfield.
- ▶ **Lexington:** Provide a panel at the Memory Lane parking lot that has historic photos and stories of a bygone era. Memory Lane is one mile of original Route 66 north of Lexington that was dedicated in 1926. It has been restored back to the 1940s era with vintage billboard and Burma Shave signs. The parking lot panel will provide a perspective for people hiking this lane.
- ▶ **Lexington:** An interpretive panel should be located at the Route 66 Park that places this site into a greater context of what Route 66 meant to small communities like Lexington.
- ▶ **Towanda:** Develop a Panel at the Geographical Journey parking lot that introduces this experience and ties everything together. This 1.6 mile stretch of Route 66 has educational kiosks representing each state along the road. The walking tour has fliers printed in several languages for international tourists, and a collection of Burma Shave signs.
- ▶ **Normal:** Provide exterior interpretive panels at Sprague’s Super Service. Include an audio message on the panel for after-hours

Courtesy of the Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation



A wayside exhibit at the old District 6 State Police Headquarters in Pontiac would tell the story of patrolling the “Hard Road,” often called “Bloody 66.”



The Route 66 Park in Lexington would be an ideal location for a panel with historic photos of Route 66 establishments in the community. March, 2007



The recommended interpretive wayside exhibit would provide a community context to this historical marker. They should be displayed together in the park. March, 2007



Photo of a Steak 'n Shake in Springfield. The first Steak 'n Shake restaurant was built along Route 66 in Bloomington. Although no longer a Steak 'n Shake, a panel at this site could interpret the history of franchise eateries along the highway.



An interpretive panel in Atlanta's Route 66 Park could describe the attractions and connections of this town to Route 66. December, 2006



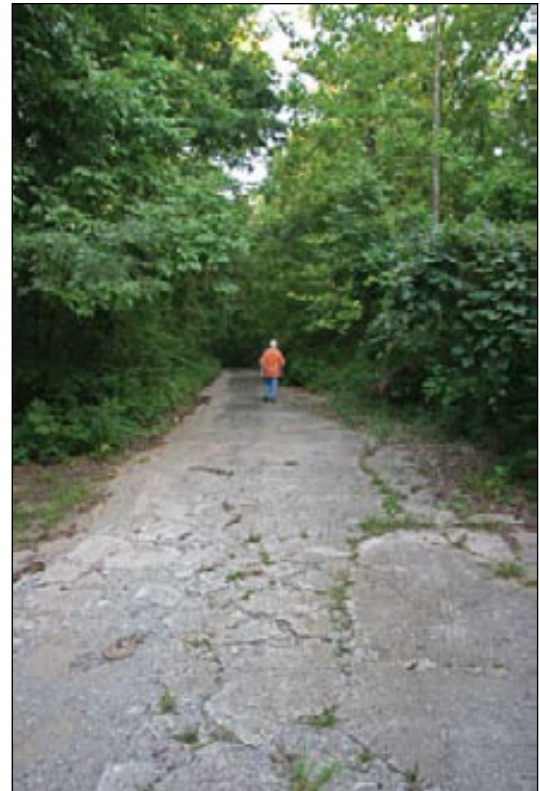
Interpretive panels at the Illinois State Police Museum in Springfield could tell stories of patrolling the old "Hard Road." August, 2007

information. This is a classic station/restaurant that deserves priority consideration for restoration to its vintage 1931 era.

- ▶ **Bloomington:** Provide an interpretive panel at the first Steak and Shake. It should tell the story of this chain and the development of franchise eateries on Route 66.
- ▶ **Funk's Grove I-55 Rest Area:** Wayside exhibit panels should interpret the importance of Funk's Grove and its historic relationship to Route 66. A map on the panel should orient visitors to the Funk's Grove attractions and show how to access Historic Route 66 from this location.
- ▶ **Lincoln:** At the Redwood Motel, provide a panel telling stories of people who stayed here. The Redwood Motel was built in 1955 at the junctions of Route 66, 10, and 21. This had previously been the site of a Standard Oil station built in 1934.
- ▶ **Broadwell:** At the site of the Pig Hip Restaurant, provide a panel telling stories of this Route 66 icon and the Pioneer's Rest Motel. The site is now simply identified with a stone marker.
- ▶ **Atlanta:** At Route 66 Park provide an orientation panel describing the many attractions in Atlanta and the historic connections of this town to Route 66. This panel should also include a sub-message about the Hawes Grain Elevator and the connection of grain elevators to the Illinois Route 66 landscape.
- ▶ **Sherman:** Develop an interpretive trail with panels along the original roadbed at Carpenter Park near Sherman. Interpret the evolution of engineering Route 66 and the beginning of the highway numbering system. Also include a panel at the Route 66 Memorial Rest Area across the highway from Carpenter Park.
- ▶ **Springfield:** The Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation Museum is located on North Peoria

Road, a historic alignment of Route 66. The stories of patrolling Route 66 could be told in a cluster of panels installed at the entrance, adjacent to the displayed patrol car.

- ▶ **Springfield:** Develop an interpretive trail on North Cottonville Road where the original roadbed disappears into Lake Springfield. Interpret the “fluid” nature of routing the roadway as it evolved. Include a reference and photos of the old brick curve about two miles north on North Cottonville Road.
- ▶ **Benld:** Provide an interpretive panel at the Coliseum Ball Room. This classic old dance hall hosted some of the most popular entertainers for over 50 years. Make the connection to prohibition and the stories of famous gangsters at the Coliseum. One owner was murdered in a mysterious way. In an inset on the panel, tell the story of “Number 5”, the large still that operated during prohibition on nearby Cahokia Creek. It was raided and closed down by “revenueurs” in 1928.
- ▶ **Carlinville-Gillespie:** Provide an interpretive panel at the Deerfield Drive historic bridge. A small original section of Route 66 survives as Deerfield Drive between Carlinville and Gillespie. A concrete bridge built in 1920 was saved from destruction.
- ▶ **Virден:** Provide an interpretive panel for the Virден Central Park that has historical photos of the mining and labor movement and Virден Miner’s Riot that gives insights and greater meaning to the Virден Miners Monument.
- ▶ **Farmersville:** Provide an interpretive panel at Arts Motel and Restaurant that includes historic photos of this vintage 1937 establishment.
- ▶ **Staunton:** At the Decamp Junction roadhouse, provide an interpretive panel with historic photos of the tourist cabins, dance hall, and roadhouse, and tell the stories associated with this infamous place which included gambling and a brothel.



An original piece of the “Old Hard Road” can be accessed at Carpenter Park in Sherman. This would be an ideal trail to the Sangamon River interpreting the evolution of Route 66. August, 2007



Deerfield Drive illustrates how the original hard road conformed to the landscape. A bronze plaque on the right of the bridge commemorates its 1920 construction. An interpretive panel here could tell the story of the “Old Hard Road” and its conversion to Route 66. March, 2007



Old photos on an interpretive panel at the Soulsby's Service Station would transport visitors back to an earlier era. This is also a good opportunity to describe other historic attractions in Mt. Olive. April, 2007



An interpretive panel at Scotty's in Hamel would unify the stories of this classic Route 66 roadhouse. April, 2007



McKinley Bridge Park in Venice opened recently with art and panels interpreting the region's cities and industries. It would be an excellent site for a thematic overview of Route 66. February, 2008

- ▶ **Waggoner:** Provide an interpretive panel at Our Lady of the Highways Memorial. The shrine harks to an era when “Bloody 66” was a dangerous drive. It should include compelling stories of this connection to the shrine.
- ▶ **Mount Olive:** Provide an interpretive panel at Soulsby's Service Station that interprets this historic old filling station. In an inset on the panel, describe the Union Miner's Cemetery, the Mother Jones Monument, and the 1876 flour mill.
- ▶ **Hamel:** At the Homestead Rest Area, off of I-55 near Hamel, provide wall panels that describe the Route 66 attractions in the area, all the way to the Mississippi River bridges. One panel should focus on the five historic river crossings with an invitation to walk the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The 1957-1977 alignment actually follows I-55 at this point. The rest area does not currently provide any interpretation, but does feature Route 66 ceiling banners, floor tile map, and three-dimensional etchings in the brick wall.
- ▶ **Hamel:** Provide an interpretive panel at Scotty's Route 66 Bar & Grill in Hamel. The roadhouse has been serving travelers since the late 1930s. An exterior panel with historic photos of the roadhouse would unify this story and connect it to Route 66 themes.
- ▶ **Venice:** On the east side of McKinley Bridge, a small roadside park commemorates the history of McKinley Bridge and Madison County. A kiosk with interpretive panels describes the region's cities, transportation, geography, and industry. A modest interpretation of Route 66 is included in the panel text. A separate interpretive panel should provide a thematic overview of the Mother Road and identify important related local attractions in Illinois and St. Louis.

Experience Hubs

Collections of interpretive panels on thematic Route 66 supports add character and identity to interpretive efforts along a byway. They will be designed with enough size and mass to attract attention even in cluttered urban settings. These hubs are a highly visible way to connect the local community stories to the Route 66 story. They will hold a number of signs and exhibits that can serve as the hub of Route 66 information and be the catalyst for experiences in a community.

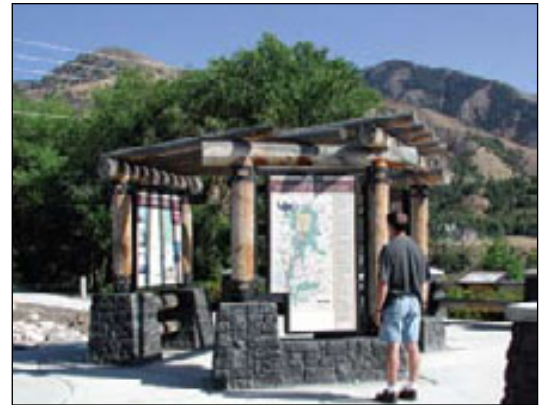
Purposes

- ▶ To create an identifiable, quality Route 66 structure for displaying interpretation about the byway.
- ▶ To serve as a gateway and hub to individual communities and to the entire Route 66 experience, when other visitor center facilities are not directly available on the byway.

Design

The conceptual design for Route 66 Experience Hubs closely follows the wayside exhibit design standards introduced in the last section. The shape reflects the angled, streamlined look of the 1940s and 50s. Many motel support signs from this era start small on the bottom and flare into a larger size on top, resulting in an iconic shape. The finish has the same chrome-look as wayside exhibits. The Illinois Route 66 shield logo is displayed prominently in a colored circle for instant recognition.

Panels are installed in chrome frames with rounded corners, again reflecting the fluid designs of the Route 66 heyday. Different sized frames are arranged asymmetrically to attract attention and encourage exploration.



The Logan Canyon National Scenic Byway in Utah has invested in highly visible experience hubs along the route. They showcase the natural and cultural stories of the canyon, are harmonious with the landscape, and are unified throughout the byway.



Conceptual sketch for an Illinois Route 66 Experience Hub that would be located in Lincoln.



One side of each Experience Hub should display a large map of the community and show the significant tourist attractions along the Route 66 alignments.



Route 66 bisects the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. An experience hub at the Midewin Prairie Visitor Center near Wilmington could interpret core stories of the Grand Prairie and Army Ammunitions Plant. March, 2007

One large panel should be designed with a simple yet professional map of the community that highlights the major Route 66 attractions and clearly illustrates how to access them. The other panels will interpret the community’s history and its connection to the Mother Road.

Recommendations for Experience Hubs on Illinois Historic Route 66

- ▶ **Chicago:** Grant Park, across Jackson Street from Buckingham Fountain, is the logical location for an experience hub that “paints” a holistic picture of Chicago and directs visitors to the Chicago Architecture Foundation, Buckingham Fountain, and other key Route 66 attractions in the city.
- ▶ **Joliet:** An experience hub is needed on the sidewalk outside the Joliet Area Historical Museum to serve travelers when the building is closed. A “Crossroads of America” exhibit would offer maps and historical photos describing Joliet as the hub for canals, rivers, railroads, historic highways, and Interstate highways. The hub would guide visitors to the many other Route 66 experiences in the community.
- ▶ **Wilmington:** An interpretive experience hub should be developed for the Midewin Prairie Visitor Center to show the relationship of the Army Ammunition Plant to Route 66 and the significance of The Grand Prairie which surrounds 66 through most of Illinois. The panel should encourage Route 66 tourists to watch for tall grass prairie remnants in the railroad rights of way and at prairie nature preserves along the route and should alert travelers to stop at attractions in Wilmington and Joliet.
- ▶ **Dwight:** An experience hub should be located at the Ambler-Becker Texico Station to serve visitors when the station is closed. It should direct people to the other attractions on Historic 66 and downtown. It should also tell the story of the oldest continuously operated service station

on Route 66. It dispensed fuel for 66 continuous years until 1999.

- ▶ **Funks Grove:** Provide an experience hub at the Funks Grove Sirup Camp that tells the story of the family and all the attractions that can be seen and experienced within the grove. Funk's Grove is the largest prairie grove surviving today. It is a self-contained example of Illinois farm history, featuring a pioneer church and cemetery, a nature reserve with a tall grass prairie, a historic sugar bush operation, and the Funk Farm and Museum (in nearby Shirley).
- ▶ **Lincoln:** Provide an experience hub at the Railsplitter Covered Wagon that interprets old Route 66 establishments at or near this intersection called "The Four Corners". The stories associated with The Tropics Restaurant, Werth Gas Station, Coonhound Johnnies Roadhouse, Redwood Motel, Dead Man's Curve and the Railsplitter should be told here. The prohibition era stories are particularly compelling at this site.
- ▶ **Bloomington/Normal:** Locate a hub in the parking lot of the Sprague Super Station in Normal that interprets this large service station, cafe, and living quarters. When the facility is closed, the hub guides traveler to other attractions in the area such as the first Steak'n Shake, the restored Normal Theater, Miller Park and Zoo, the Beer Nuts Factory, and others.
- ▶ **Springfield:** An experience hub should be available in the parking lot of the Route 66 Discovery Center at the old Bel-Aire Motel or at another well attended Route 66 site in Springfield if the motel is not developed. The hub will direct travelers to other area attractions.
- ▶ **Pontiac:** A hub should be located in association with the Route 66 Hall of Fame to direct visitors to other area Route 66 attractions when the building is closed.
- ▶ **Carlinville:** An experience hub should be placed on the Public Square or courthouse lawn in Carlinville to feature the Route 66 attractions in



The Railsplitter Covered Wagon is an easily accessed attraction that is located at the "Four Corners" of Lincoln. Several compelling stories can be told here. August, 2007



An experience hub at the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum in Pontiac could serve tourists when the building is closed. August, 2007



An experience hub at the Ariston Cafe in Litchfield could interpret the numerous historic community attractions. The cafe is located between two alignments of the highway. April, 2007

and around Carlinville. It should also feature the unique local history and attractions including the monumental architecture and Sears Roebuck houses.

- ▶ **Litchfield:** Develop an experience hub of Litchfield Route 66 attractions and tell their stories. This should be placed somewhere in the vicinity of the Ariston Cafe which is located between two historic routes and at a major crossroads. The Skyview Drive-In, the Belevidere Cafe and Motel, The Ariston Cafe, and the Vic Suhling Gas for Less sign should be interpreted.
- ▶ **Edwardsville:** Locate an experience hub in town (site to be determined) to make visitors aware of the historic districts, the Wildey Theater, and other “drive by” sites like the Town and Country Motel that would otherwise be missed by travelers.
- ▶ **Chain of Rocks Bridge:** Place an experience hub at the end of the bridge that interprets all the 66 bridges and river crossings in the St. Louis area. It should also contain historic photos of the many restaurants, motels, and gas stations that once flourished at the ends of the bridge. Currently, an eclectic collection of panels interpret a variety of subjects; however, a cohesive, thematic story of Route 66 is needed.



Interpretation about Route 66 is limited to this wayside exhibit on the Chain of Rocks Bridge in Madison. Either a visitor center in a restored toll house or an experience hub should be developed here to provide a comprehensive thematic story of the Mother Road. April, 2007

Interpretive Visitor Facilities

The visitor experience will be enhanced through a series of comprehensive interpretive facilities that include a variety of media and visitor services. These should be strategically located along the 421 miles of Illinois Historic Route 66 in order to serve Route 66 tourists regardless of where they enter the corridor. This chain of visitor facilities will attract traveler’s attention, establish gateways to enter the historic corridor, and engender public awareness of the significance of Route 66. Several facilities already exist or are in development. Additional facilities are recommended in this plan. They can be classified in three categories*:

- ▶ **Welcome Centers and Visitor Centers:** Facilities offering comprehensive visitor services including an information desk, sales area, exhibits, and other interpretive media.
- ▶ **Museums:** Facilities housing collections and exhibits of Route 66 memorabilia.
- ▶ **Rest Areas and Parks:** Facilities offering basic Illinois Historic Route 66 information including brochures, maps, and interpretive panels.

*Many other visitor centers and museums that have a tangential connection to the road are located along or near Illinois Historic Route 66. This listing is limited to those Interpretive Visitor Facilities providing services to Route 66 tourists.

Welcome Centers and Visitor Centers

- ▶ **Chicago Architecture Foundation—the Beginning of the Mother Road**

Located on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Jackson Boulevard, the Architecture Foundation maintains public exhibits, a bookstore and docent-led tours of downtown Chicago architecture. Their docent program



Visitors enjoy the “Route 66 Experience” in the Joliet Area Historical Museum. Interpretive visitor facilities provide more in-depth information about the road through artifacts and exhibits, and allow visitors to talk to staff knowledgeable about the byway. July, 2007



City tours led by Chicago Architecture Foundation guides could easily include fun facts about Route 66. January, 2004



Route 66 sculptures would create a dramatic photo opportunity for travelers at the intersection of Jackson and Michigan in Chicago. October, 2007



The “Route 66 Experience” is a fun new discovery welcome center within the Joliet Area Historical Museum. July, 2007

is well established and includes a rigorous training program for volunteer tour guides.

Recommendations for Interpretive Media Development:

- Provide focal point sculptures at the Jackson Blvd/Michigan Ave intersection that identify the historic beginning point of the Mother Road and provide quality photo opportunities for Route 66 tourists. They should be able to say photographically, “this is where our trip began.”
- Develop a Route 66 exhibit for the Architecture Foundation that interprets the Mother Road in Chicago and gives an overview of the route to Los Angeles. Special attention should be given to Route 66 attractions in Chicago and on the Illinois section of the road.
- Include special tours of Route 66 in Chicago led by docents from the Architecture Foundation. David Clark, a Chicago Route 66 author and tour guide, indicated his willingness to train docents for these special tours. Current tours focus on downtown architecture and many of the significant buildings are located on Jackson Blvd and Adams St, the inbound and outbound corridors of the highway.
- Provide a Route 66 section in the Foundation’s sales area that offers books and memorabilia pertaining to the road.

► Joliet History Museum—the Route 66 Experience

This regional museum celebrates the themes and experiences of the people who settled the Joliet area. A prominent Route 66 sculpture stands on the sidewalk entrance to the building. A Route 66 Welcome Center was created in the lobby of this building in 2007. This discovery center greets visitors as they

enter the museum. It serves as the heart of Route 66 attractions in the Joliet area providing orientation and information for visitors interested in seeing other attractions. The museum and welcome center are located at the “Crossroads of America” where Rt. 66 and Lincoln Highway intersect.

Recommendations for Development:

- Establish the Joliet “International Route 66 Welcome and Interpretive Center” “We want to be the gateway to Route 66 on the east end of Route 66,” said Don Fisher, Joliet’s planning director (Joliet Herald-News, May, 2006). If Joliet maintains this level of commitment, it could be an ideal location for this facility. It provides easy access to O’Hare Airport and the Interstate highway system and can provide quality accommodations. It has a number of Route 66 themed attractions. The Joliet Historical Museum already provides Route 66 exhibits and a museum shop with a comprehensive collection of Route 66 publications. The Route 66 welcome center contains state-of-the-art media telling the story of “The Mother Road”. Ideally, a tourism office could expand these services to provide tourist information, trip planning, and booking services, including Internet pre-booking services. It would be a hub for downtown Chicago tours and a staging area for the journey west. With these expanded services, it could describe itself as “The International Route 66 Welcome and Interpretive Center.” Many of these services could be offered on a fee basis to support the additional staff that might be required.

► Dwight—Ambler-Becker Gas Station Visitor Center

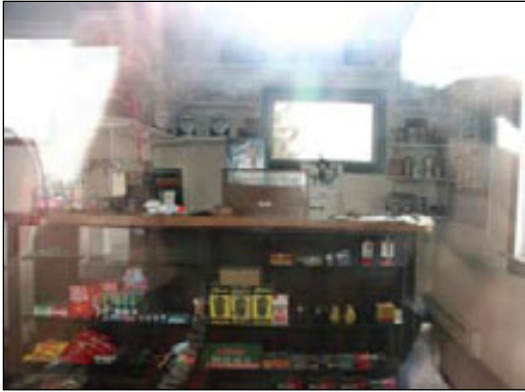
Ambler’s Texaco Gas Station, also known as Becker’s Marathon Gas Station, is a historic



With developing tourist attractions and amenities, Joliet is well positioned to develop as a gateway for international Route 66 travelers. August, 2003



Historic gas stations, like the Ambler-Becker Texaco Station in Dwight, can find new life as community Route 66 welcome centers. March, 2007



After hours visitors can peek through the gas station's front window to see the interior furnished with Route 66 era artifacts. Dwight. March, 2007



The Ambler-Becker Gas Station is themed with authentic artifacts and replicas both inside and out. Dwight. March, 2007

filling station located at the intersection of Old U.S. Route 66 and Illinois Route 17. The station has been identified as the longest operating gas station along Route 66, dispensing fuel for 66 continuous years until 1999. The station is a good example of a “family run” gas station. North of the station is an outbuilding that once operated as a commercial icehouse.

Ambler's was the subject of major restoration work from 2005–2007, and reopened as a Route 66 visitor's center in May 2007. It was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Recommendations:

- This iconic structure has the potential to serve the Dwight area as a dynamic visitor center. It occupies an inviting and conspicuous corner location near other Route 66 attractions. Access off the street is easy and parking space is very available. Ideally, it should be staffed, but even when closed it should be a center for orientation and information that guides visitors to area attractions. The large windows even allow visitors to “window peep” when the building is closed. This is a natural location for an interpretive hub.

► Normal—Sprague Super Service:

Sprague Super Service is a two-story Tudor-Revival style building built in 1931 to serve increasing traveler needs on Route 66. The building housed a cafe, gas station and garage on the first floor, while the upstairs served as housing for the owner and station attendant. Several different cafe and auto-related businesses utilized the building until 1976, when it ceased auto-related service. The building has been approved by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and nominated by the agency to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rehabilitation

plans include an information center, diner/ soda fountain, bed and breakfast, and event space. It is the largest gas station/restaurant on Historic Route 66. This rambling station still displays great architectural integrity despite minor conversions to other uses. It occupies a commanding location on Historic Route 66 within a very intact cultural landscape. A traveler senses that this streetscape has changed very little since the busy days of Route 66. Since the new owner, Dr. Terrie Ryburn, has Route 66 expertise and a commitment to making this building a themed interpretive/visitor center to Route 66, it should serve as a portal to this region of Route 66. Dr. Ryburn is a historian by profession and intends to restore this building to a 1931 appearance. She has recently received grants from the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Project, and from the Town of Normal. With its prominent location, large inviting parking lot, and classic ambience, this facility should be a well visited Route 66 welcome center.

Recommendations for Interpretive Media Development:

- Provide exterior interpretive panels at Sprague's Super Service. Include an audio message on the interpretive panel for after-hours information.
- Interior exhibits should interpret Route 66 in the Bloomington-Normal region and feature the available tourist attractions. This is a classic station/restaurant that deserves priority consideration for restoration to its vintage 1931 era. Dr. Ryburn is planning to provide educational programming, tea and light food service, and other amenities that should create a relaxed atmosphere in which people will be receptive to investing time exploring interpretive media. The playing of 1930s juke box music, historic photographs on



Sprague Super Service can serve as an eye-catching gateway to the Normal/Bloomington region. The new owner plans to restore the station to its 1931 condition and make it a public "Route 66 Info Center." March, 2007



Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007, Sprague's is probably the largest station/restaurant with living quarters on Route 66. Normal. August, 2007



The Palm's Grill neon sign with its special "bus stop light" is a symbolic connection to the road. Atlanta. March, 2008



This restored diner blends gracefully with the historic architectural streetscape of downtown Atlanta. April, 2007

the wall, area maps, and information about regional Route 66 attractions would be very appropriate in this setting.

► **Atlanta—Palm's Grill and Cafe**

This building which operated from 1934 through the late 1960s has been refurbished and reopened as a museum and working cafe. Half of the Downey Building will be designated as an Atlanta museum with many Route 66 themes connecting the community's stories to the road. The other half of the building, with the historic cafe, will include a restaurant concession. Interpretation will be incorporated into the restaurant motif.

Recommendations for Interpretive Media Development:

- Palm's Grill is noted for its neon sign. Traditionally, a customer would turn on a light at the bottom of the sign to notify the Greyhound bus driver to stop for a rider. This quaint procedure conjures images of humble travelers waiting patiently to journey to distant cities. It is a striking contrast to today's instantaneous travel. It underscores the importance that Route 66 played in connecting scattered communities to each other. An exhibit could be developed with sound that conveys the emotional connotations of bus travel on Route 66. It could include an oversize photo of a WWII era bus picking up a young recruit headed to the Fort Leonard Wood Army base.
- Audio component: A young Army recruit shares his story as he waits to hear the braking sound of the greyhound bus that will carry him to training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, some 200 miles and a lifetime away from Atlanta.

► **Springfield—the Bel-Aire Motel: Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center**

This “flagship” interpretive center experience will immerse visitors in the Historic Illinois Route 66 story and serve as the headquarters for the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project. See the next section for more information.

► **Mitchell—Chain of Rocks Toll Booth Visitor Center: Western Gateway to Illinois Route 66**

At present, no interpretive visitor facilities exist near the western terminus of Illinois Historic Route 66. It is important to create such a facility somewhere in the vicinity of St. Louis as a place to intercept and greet eastbound travelers as they enter the Illinois corridor. An ideal location would be the Chain of Rocks Bridge which is a must-see icon of the Mother Road for most 66 travelers.

Recommendations for Development:

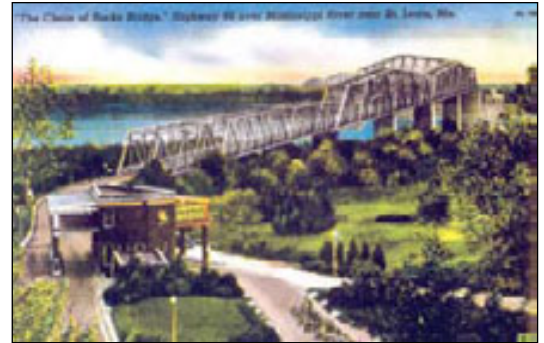
- Investigate the feasibility of rebuilding the classic toll booth that existed at the bridge as a visitor center. This should be a staffed facility with information and sales services for the region. It should include an exhibit that focuses on Route 66 in the region, and include models and a photographic exhibit of the five Route 66 bridges that crossed the Mississippi River.

► **Alternative Visitor Center at Edwardsville**

If development of a Chain of Rocks Toll House Visitor Center is not feasible, then an easily accessible gateway community such as Edwardsville should be considered as a welcoming portal to the Illinois corridor. Edwardsville has potential for several reasons:

- It has an active Historic Preservation Commission and two Historic Districts
- Easy access for travelers and good orientation opportunities exist because of its proximity to Chain of Rocks Bridge

Courtesy of Jerry Keyser (as shown in Route 66 Remembered by Michael Karl Witzel, 2003)



A rebuilt tollbooth adjacent to the Chain of Rocks Bridge would be a fascinating and immersive visitor experience. It would serve as a much needed western gateway to Route 66 in Illinois, and bring more tourism and development to an economically depressed area of the state.

Courtesy of City-Data.com, www.city-data.com/album/album-Edwardsville-Illinois.html



The historic residential and downtown districts of Edwardsville create a favorable environment for a welcome center on the western terminus of Illinois Route 66.



The Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum in Pontiac is a popular stop for international travelers, as well as increasing numbers of American tourists. March, 2007



The Hall of Fame contains a treasure trove of Illinois Route 66 artifacts. March, 2007

- The Historic Preservation Commission owns the Rt. 66 “Cascaerts Diner” storefront façade that could be incorporated into a visitor center
- The potential exists to purchase the classic Town and Country Motel on the Chain of Rocks Road, just outside of town, for preservation and use as a visitor center

Museums

► Pontiac—Route 66 Museum and Hall of Fame

The Route 66 Museum and Hall of Fame, 110 W. Howard Street, housed in a historic firehouse, tells the story of the people and places that have been inducted into the hall of fame. The museum displays significant Illinois Route 66 artifacts and exhibits. In 2007 a large mural was painted on the exterior courtyard wall which will also house the Wishing Well Motel sign and the actual restored wishing well from Countryside. In 2008 an elevator and second floor photo gallery was also added. A sales area offers a wide variety of souvenirs. This is a must-stop for Route 66 travelers.

► Lincoln—the Mill Restaurant

This restaurant opened in 1929 under the name of the Blue Mill. It served grilled sandwiches at any hour of the day or night. The Dutch themed building with blue trim featured a revolving windmill and waitresses dressed in blue with white aprons. In 1945, Albert and Blossom Huffman purchased the building, added a barroom and dance hall, and then painted the building barn red. Over the years, the restaurant earned fame for its fried schnitzel. The Mill closed in 1996. In 2007 work began to restore the building as a museum.

Recommendations for Interpretive Media Development:

- Develop a “Route 66 restaurants” themed exhibition for the Mill that tells the story of diners of the past and present. It should promote the “classic” eateries currently on Illinois Historic Route 66 and show some that are only memories. Visitors can learn about table jukeboxes, the evolution of waitress uniforms, or listen to kitchen lingo from the 1920’s and 30’s. There are some excellent memories recorded about The Mill in the Lincoln Website.
- This might also be a good place to preserve old restaurant signs such as the one from the Tropics. Interpretive panels can tell the story of this popular roadhouse owned by Vince Schwenoha, son of Coonhound Johnny. These panels could tell stories of the infamous Coonhound Johnny and his roadhouse on route 66. Johnny reportedly transported moonshine in canisters under the floorboards of his truck and covered the truck bed with snarling coonhounds in cages. Revenue agents patrolled Route 66 during prohibition and raided establishments that might have liquor and slot machines. Many other compelling stories of Route 66 restaurants and roadhouses could be told here and visitors could be directed to other local Route 66 attractions such as the Four Corners and the Ghost Bridge.



The Mill site in Lincoln should be considered as a possible refuge for displaying signs and artifacts from old Route 66 restaurants and diners. February, 2008



With a diner theme, the Mill could advertise eateries along Illinois Route 66 like its offspring, Hallie’s in downtown Lincoln. June, 2007

Rest Areas and Parks

► Joliet—Route 66 Park

Route 66 Park looks out over the historic Collins Street Prison where the Blues Brothers and other movies were filmed. Informational Kiosks here and in other locations highlight Route 66 attractions



Artifacts and interpretation that link to local stories would be a site specific addition to the Funk's Grove Rest Area exhibits. November, 2006



Some excellent Route 66 interpretation already exists at this rest area. Travelers would welcome directions to the historic highway and nearby attractions. November, 2006

in Joliet, with directions, photos and inscriptions. Integrating design elements from the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project will create additional unity in the future.

► **Lexington**

Lexington Route 66 Park is a small wayside park on Historic Route 66 that provides information about Lexington and serves as a trailhead for the “Lexington Parkway” Route 66 Bike Trail.

Recommendation:

- An interpretive panel should be located here that places this site into a universal context of what Route 66 meant socially and economically to small communities like Lexington.

► **Funk's Grove I-55 Rest Area**

Funk's Grove Rest Area, I-55 features interior historical exhibits about Abraham Lincoln and Route 66. Metal silhouette statues outside tell the story of traveling in automobiles, picnicking, and the beginnings of Route 66. Historic Route 66 runs directly behind the rest area. There are no connecting access roads but off-ramps are nearby.

Recommendations:

- A wayside exhibit panel or panels should interpret the importance of Funk's Grove and its historic relationship to Route 66. A map on the panel should orient visitors to the Funk's Grove attractions and show how to access Historic Route 66 from this location. The existing interior exhibit on Route 66 should also include information and photographs specific to Funk's Grove with access information for travelers who would like to visit.

► McLean—Dixie Truck Stop

In 1928, J.P. Walters and John Geske rented part of a mechanic's garage here to sell sandwiches to Route 66 travelers and truckers. By the 1930s, the operation had grown to a full-fledged restaurant, cabins, and a cattle pen. The Dixie was owned and operated by the Geske family from 1928-2003 and was only closed one day after a fire in 1965. The truck stop has changed hands, but still serves travelers along Route 66 and I-55, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The original Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame was housed here in from 1990-2004, when it moved to Pontiac.

Recommendation for Media Development

- Create a Historic Illinois Route 66 exhibit at the Dixie Truck Stop that includes indoor interpretive panels about the truck driving culture on Route 66 as personified at Dixie Truckers Haven. This contact station should offer I-55 travelers brochures and information about the route and its attractions. This site presents an opportunity to communicate 24 hours a day with a large population of travelers who are potential Route 66 tourists. This is an excellent location to address the truck driving legends of the road and to partner with an Illinois trucking company sponsor.

► Atlanta—Route 66 Park

This park was built for Route 66 travelers to relax and get a glimpse of local history. It includes the cornerstone of Atlanta High School (1909) and a memorial to the veterans of WWI (1921). A booth is staffed seasonally to provide information about sites in Atlanta (once a ticket office for the Atlanta Fair). A colorful Route 66 mural graces the wall of the building overlooking the park.



The Dixie Truck Stop in McLean is a natural location to tell the story of Route 66 truck driving culture and history. April, 2007



Atlanta's Route 66 Park is an ideal location for installing wayside exhibits that guide travelers to other attractions in the community. December, 2006



Interpretive panels in Atlanta's Route 66 Park can guide visitors to attractions like this historic stretch of road and its connection to the nearby "Bucket of Blood" Roadhouse. March, 2008



The Homestead Rest Area near Hamel is themed for Route 66. It offers potential for inviting Interstate travelers to alternative experiences on the historic highway. March, 2007



Interior of the Homestead Rest Area near Hamel. March, 2007

Recommendations:

- An interpretive panel here could direct visitors to other Route 66 attractions such as the abandoned road surface north of town, the "Bucket of Blood" Roadhouse, and The Palm's Grill. This panel should also include a sub-message about the Hawes Grain Elevator and the connection of elevators to the Illinois Route 66 landscape and the travelers experience.

► Hamel—Homestead Rest Area

Homestead Rest Area on I-55 is themed for Route 66. The 1957-1977 alignment actually follows I-55 at this point. The rest area does not currently have any interpretation, but does feature Route 66 ceiling banners, floor tile map, and three-dimensional etchings in the brick wall.

Recommendations for Media Development:

- This Route 66 themed site is an ideal location for informing I-55 travelers about the Mother Road. Capitalize on the existing wayside theme of Route 66 to invite travelers to visit the historic road as they continue south. Provide wall panels that describe the Route 66 attractions in the area, all the way to the Mississippi River bridges. One panel should focus on the five historic river crossings with an invitation to walk the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The 1957-1977 alignment actually follows I-55 at this point.

Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center

A “flagship” interpretive experience is needed to tie together the diverse stories of Illinois Route 66 and serve as a destination for travelers. The Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center in Springfield would be a state of the art facility that interactively interprets stories and attractions along the road in an exciting and highly credible way.

The classic 1950s Bel-Aire Motel is an excellent location for this state of the art interpretive facility. The look of the motel will be enhanced behind a building of glass. People passing by will be treated to inviting views of the brightly lit and spacious discovery center. At night, the dynamic discovery room will glow with colorful exhibits and neon lights.

The center would also function as the headquarters for the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project—a centralized facility for all communities along the byway. The building would feature meeting rooms and office space, while serving as a clearinghouse and research center that coordinates with the State Library Route 66 Collection downtown.

Portal to Other Attractions

While immersive exhibits and audiovisual presentations provide background information about the Mother Road, the primary purpose of the discovery center is to serve as a portal, encouraging tourists to visit the diverse attractions up and down Route 66. Knowledgeable staff can suggest attractions that fit a traveler’s distinct interests and direct them to other locations along the byway.

Rationale for Building the Discovery Center in Springfield

Springfield, the current headquarters of the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project, is an ideal community for the development of this “flagship” center.



The Bel-Aire Motel's classic sign and sputnik would serve as an intriguing introduction to the Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center. March, 2008



The Bel-Aire's seal fountain, fondly remembered by Springfield residents, still stands adjacent to the building, but no longer sprays water. March, 2008



Springfield supports a large number of visitor amenities, such as the Route 66 Hotel and Convention Center just down the road from the Bel-Aire Motel.

- ▶ Springfield is centrally located on Route 66, which allows people traveling from either direction to visit additional state attractions.
- ▶ It is a thriving and growing community with a population estimated at about 115,000. The critical mass of visitor amenities and infrastructure in Springfield supports extended visits by travelers.
- ▶ Springfield has been a major tourist destination since the late 1800s due to its association with Abraham Lincoln. Tourists already visiting the city for these attractions would serve as a base audience for the center.
- ▶ The city recently completed the popular Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, which has attracted hundreds of thousands of tourists. The area is becoming known for its high class museums, and several more are planned. A facility with a Route 66 theme would be a natural addition.



The Bel-Aire Motel is a classic 1950s motel along Route 66 that could be renovated into a flagship interpretive facility.

Rationale for Renovating the Bel-Aire Motel

One possible location for the Route 66 Discovery Center is the Bel-Aire Motel located along a former alignment of Route 66 on the south side of town. The Bel-Aire is uniquely suited for the following reasons:

- ▶ It is a classic example of a 1950s, state of the art motel. Very few examples of its size and vintage still exist. Its neon sign dates to the post war construction technology and the “Sputnik” neon star is indicative of the Space Race. Only one of the once popular Sputniks is still operational on all of 66. A company in Albuquerque, New Mexico has the ability to repair it.
- ▶ The building is highly visible and easily accessible to travelers. It is close to many Route 66 attractions like the Cozy Dog, the Curve Inn, the Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center, and several abandoned, historic roadways. It is

also just a short drive from all of the downtown attractions.

- ▶ A large parking lot is available for RVs and buses, for peak visitation during special events, and is large enough for the construction of a core interpretive structure that compliments the motel architecture and houses extensive exhibits.
- ▶ There is adequate office, meeting, library, and storage space to house the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project.
- ▶ The City of Springfield is currently seeking ways to restore the Bel-Aire site to a productive economic and social asset in the neighborhood and community.

Development Recommendations

The Discovery Center Experience:

The design of the discovery center begs people to explore it (see tabloid fold-out of “Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center: Conceptual Design”).

Massive glass windows bring the outdoors in and tempt passers by to sneak a peek at the fun to be enjoyed inside. Classic cars parked provocatively along the street set the theme for this interactive experience. The visitor’s parking lot is conveniently located just beyond the glass showroom.



An early postcard of the Bel-Aire shows what it looked like before expansion. Tourist cabins are located on the left, and the seal fountain is a focal point.



A later postcard shows the Bel-Aire after expansion. The motel boasted “hotel furniture” and both “electric and steam heat.” The seal fountain is still prominent in front of the office.



A postcard of the Bel-Aire from the late 1960s or early 1970s shows it much as it appears today. The seal fountain is hidden behind a pool. It is described as “One of Springfield’s finest motels.”

Even the parking lot is an exciting experience. It is surrounded by historic neon signs, rescued and restored to their former glory. The venerable Bel-Aire fountain, with its water spitting seal, presents photo opportunities for group pictures.

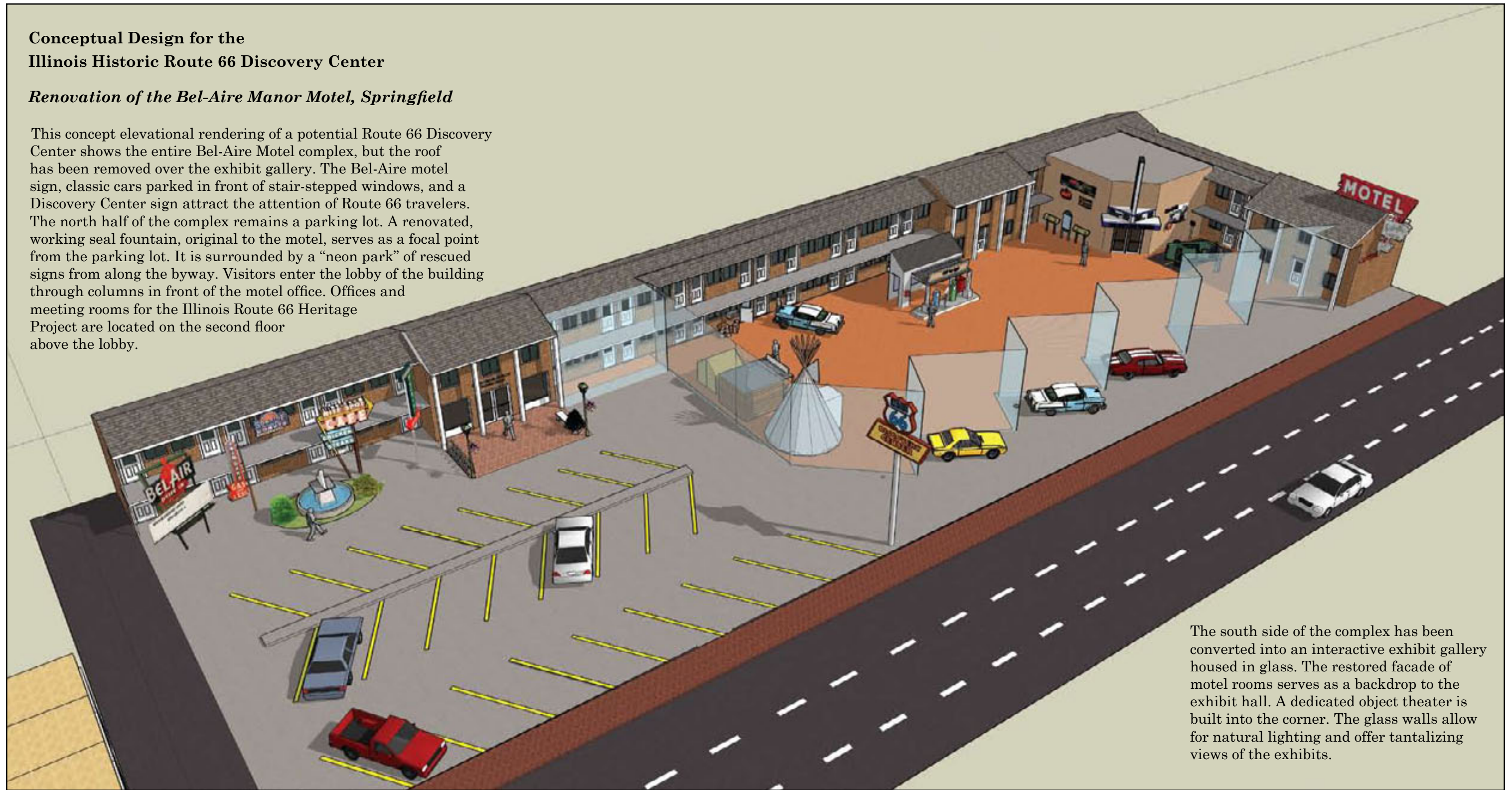


A spacious lobby with glass doors greets visitors as they enter the renovated motel office which is staffed by the Route 66 Heritage Project. Office and meeting room space is located just above the lobby. The sounds and lights of the discovery room quickly draw visitors through the lobby and into the action of the exhibits.

**Conceptual Design for the
Illinois Historic Route 66 Discovery Center**

Renovation of the Bel-Aire Manor Motel, Springfield

This concept elevational rendering of a potential Route 66 Discovery Center shows the entire Bel-Aire Motel complex, but the roof has been removed over the exhibit gallery. The Bel-Aire motel sign, classic cars parked in front of stair-stepped windows, and a Discovery Center sign attract the attention of Route 66 travelers. The north half of the complex remains a parking lot. A renovated, working seal fountain, original to the motel, serves as a focal point from the parking lot. It is surrounded by a “neon park” of rescued signs from along the byway. Visitors enter the lobby of the building through columns in front of the motel office. Offices and meeting rooms for the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project are located on the second floor above the lobby.

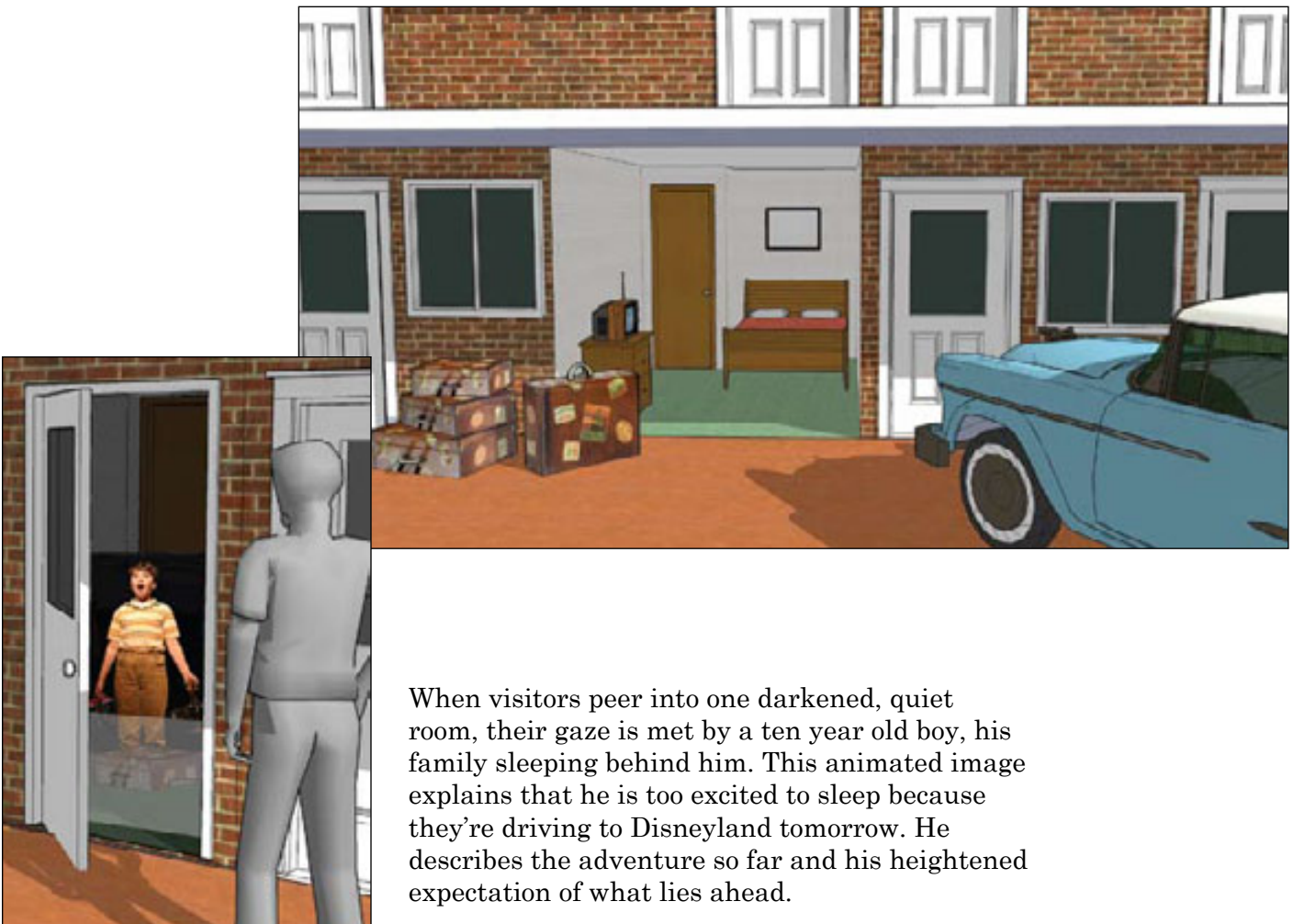


The south side of the complex has been converted into an interactive exhibit gallery housed in glass. The restored facade of motel rooms serves as a backdrop to the exhibit hall. A dedicated object theater is built into the corner. The glass walls allow for natural lighting and offer tantalizing views of the exhibits.

An Immersive Exhibit Experience:

Visitors will be immersed in an interactive experience quite different from more traditional museum visits. The atmosphere will be electric with the heightened sense of adventure that you feel on a Route 66 road trip. Exhibits will be buzzing with the upbeat sounds of 50s highway songs. The glow and flash of neon signs will draw viewers into exhibit rooms. Images from TV, film, and home movies will enliven visitors and motivate them to watch short programs that connect them to the human stories of the Road.

Much of the existing motel facade with two stories of doors, windows, and a walkway will become an interior wall of a large exhibit hall. As one strolls past the rooms that open onto the now enclosed parking lot/exhibit hall, you eavesdrop on guests' conversations; you hear and glimpse into rooms where black and white TVs show flashes of *I Love Lucy* and *News with Edward R. Murrow*. You can see a light from a bathroom and hear the patter of shower water or a flushing toilet. You walk past parked 1950s cars with Merrimac Caverns bumper stickers and portable air conditioners protruding from the windows; doors and trunks are open as guests unload for the night. Suitcases are piled at the doors.



When visitors peer into one darkened, quiet room, their gaze is met by a ten year old boy, his family sleeping behind him. This animated image explains that he is too excited to sleep because they're driving to Disneyland tomorrow. He describes the adventure so far and his heightened expectation of what lies ahead.

A service bell rings when you enter the exhibit “Fill ‘er up!” which shows visitors how service stations evolved. Vintage pumps from various eras are interspersed with life-size cut outs of uniformed gas station attendants, “ready to service your car.” Touch screens invite you to sample scenarios about garages, tow trucks, and stations. Station attendants tell what it was like in the fast paced days of “real service” stations.



“Sleeping on the Mother Road” interprets the evolution of motels by displaying a full-size old canvas wall tent, a tourist cabin, and a concrete teepee. Visitors are invited to lie on a cot in a “hot” wall tent lit by a simulated kerosene lantern with a mechanical moth circling the light. They can step into a tourist teepee and experience a vibrating bed. They can view enlarged promotional photos and postcards of the idiosyncratic motels that competed for traveler’s business.



“Bloody 66” greets visitors when an old siren and police “gumball” light flash and wail for an instant when a person nears the exhibit. A twisted 50s car is the focal point for historic photos of safety hazards, speed traps, and video interviews with Highway Patrolmen, tow truck drivers, and highway engineers. A slab of 66 pavement and a road marker add authentic and sensory elements to the exhibit.



Thematic exhibits, like “Diners on Route 66,” will challenge listeners to translate 1920s and 30s diner slang. A waitress’s recorded voice will call orders to the kitchen in “coded” phrases while listeners try to decipher their meanings. Photos and menus of 66 restaurants should entice people to sample cuisine and culture in local establishments like the Cozy Dog, Jungle Jim’s for a horseshoe, hot chilli at Joe Roger’s, or to drive through the window at the vintage Maid Rite Sandwich Shop. A list of other classic 66 restaurants and cafes will help them plan their trip.

Other exhibits will feature subjects like roadside attractions, tourist traps, and advertising; automobile design and styles; artistic creations of Route 66 like *Grapes of Wrath* and the movie *Cars*. Some of the many versions of the song “Get your Kicks on Route 66” will be played on an old jukebox. The photographic masterpieces of Dorothea Lange and the Dustbowl Migration will be interpreted.

“The Fast Lane:” Interactive Object Theater

A rapid paced, 10-12 minute production introduces visitors to the heydays of Route 66 and prepares them to explore the center and the surrounding countryside. This dynamic sensory theater experience engages visitors in the spirit of a Route 66 trip. It appeals to all ages emotionally and wholly captivates them. An audio-visual experience is the most effective way to bring this multifaceted story to life. Vast time spans are condensed into lively and comprehensible segments.

Object theaters are dynamic presentations that blend moving pictures and audio with real artifacts and objects that are artistically

revealed during the presentation. Special effects such as surround sound, colored lights, opening curtains, vibrating seats, and misting machines bring the production to life.

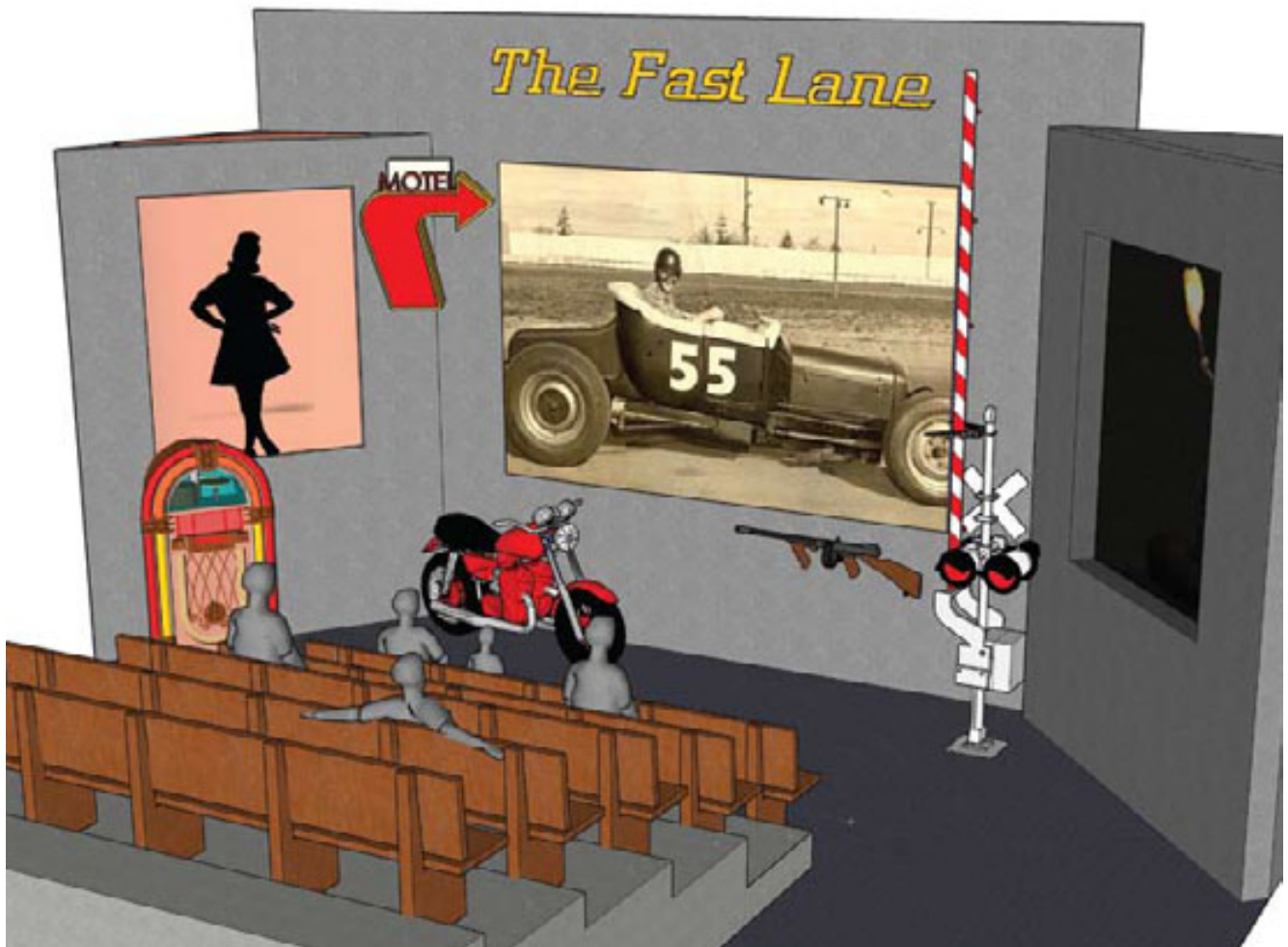
The presentation is housed in a two story room decorated on the outside with a classic theater marquee. Flashing lights and neon signs attract attention. The room is windowless and the doors will close automatically when the presentation begins. To be successful, external light from the exhibit hall needs to be controlled.



People's senses are engaged by sounds, smells, and real three dimensional objects. For instance, when a train on the screen rumbles by at an on-grade crossing, an actual crossing arm lowers past the screen, real crossing lights flash, and the audience's seats vibrate and bump with the sound of the bouncing rails. Steam shoots out into the room. Visitors have experienced why on grade crossings were so dangerous. In another scene, visitors see the highway from the interior of a corvette convertible. As it accelerates down the road, a rush of air is blown over the viewers face and when the car ahead shoots through a puddle, a light

mist kisses the viewers faces. Traveling 66 connected people intimately with the land.

The presentation engages the audience's emotions as well as their senses. A human authenticity is provided by the voices of real people sharing stories of exciting events that happened to them on Route 66. For example, a spot light in the dark room illuminates a Tommy gun as an old man's voice reminisces about witnessing a gang shooting in a Benld alley when he was a kid. Historic mug shots of gangsters stare back from the screen as he tells his tale.





In another scenario, a table jukebox lights up a diner counter set for a meal. The sounds of lunch time fill the room as a woman describes how she and her mom and pop started a family run drive-in restaurant on 66. She shares the joys, tribulations, and, finally, its failure when I-55 passed it by.

While sharing the excitement of the whole road, it is the rich, rural landscape of Illinois with its friendly small towns that is featured. This production organizes the on-site experiences and stimulates visitors to participate in new adventures that are just down the road.



A tile floor map, like this one at the Delta Rivers Nature Center in Arkansas, is an artistic and provocative way of orienting travelers to Illinois Route 66.

The pace of the presentation quickens and the happy voice of a present day Route 66 enthusiast invites travelers to enjoy the road as colorful pictures of highway attractions flash across the screen. As the program ends, the screen rises and the audience is looking at a Corvette with the door invitingly ajar and the engine purring. A voice challenges them, “What are you waiting for? It’s still out there! Go explore Route 66!” Nat King Cole croons, “Get your kicks on Route 66,” as the audience files out to the bright light of the exhibit hall. Outside the theater a huge tile floor map clearly identifies the Illinois Route 66 corridor with colorful symbols of attractions waiting to be visited.

Exploring the Road

After interacting with the exhibits and experiencing the object theater, people can plan their visits to Route 66 attractions on computers that access the Illinois Route 66 Interactive Website. If they prefer to speak with a person, they can have their questions answered by the friendly desk staff. A rack of brochures provides specific information that can be carried along on their adventures.

Audio Tours

Audio tours are ideal methods for telling stories in vast areas or through long corridors. The interpretive experience is enriched with music from the era, exciting sound effects, and by narratives of people who lived, worked, and traveled along the Mother Road. When combined with a booklet that includes a map of the route and historic photographs, the audio tour is a powerful interpretive option.

Unlike wayside exhibits and interpretive centers, an audio tour isn't necessarily site based. Although most messages on a tour will refer to a specific resource, travelers can listen at their own pace, even while driving between communities.

Most travelers today have some type of audio device in their vehicles; tapping into these devices can increase the accessibility of interpretive messages and provide a sensory rich experience.

CD Tours

Most newer vehicles have compact disc players, making CD audio tours a popular choice for distribution. This technology does have limitations:

- ▶ **Distribution:** CDs would need to be either sent to travelers or picked up from locations along the road.
- ▶ **Space:** CDs can hold about 80 minutes of audio and contain 99 tracks. This could be a challenge on a byway of over 420 miles, and would likely require a series of CDs to be comprehensive.
- ▶ **Updating:** Since CDs are hard copy media, any update of the information would require new CDs to be burned.



An audio tour is excellent tool for connecting visitors intellectually and emotionally to the stories of the road. It is a unique sensory experience that helps to immerse the traveler in a different time and place.



The Audio CD Tour for Gettysburg National Battlefield contains passionate narrators, sound effects of war, and Civil War era music to immerse the listener. A companion booklet shows maps and historic photographs to complete the interpretive experience.



Digital audio players are versatile devices that are growing in popularity. Many can display images and video, increasing interpretive options.

Courtesy of Susan Dugan, South Carolina State Museum



Cell phone tours are another option for providing audio messages. Several companies specialize in cell tours, including Guide by Cell (www.guidebycell.com), On Cell Systems (www.oncellsystems.com), and Museum 411 (www.museum411.com).

Digital Audio/MP3/iPod Tours

A large number of today's travelers are using digital audio players in place of CDs, and this number is increasing exponentially. In 2005, a study found that 22 million adults, or about 11% of the U.S. population, owned digital audio players like iPods and MP3 players. In April of 2007, Apple sold its 100 millionth iPod. In addition, many cell phones now have MP3 players built in.

Digital audio technology opens up a new world of possibilities for interpretive audio tours. These small devices can hold thousands of audio tracks, and several even play video. These players download music from a computer, providing a convenient way of distributing audio files. Audio files are easily added and updated in the library.

Cell Phone Tours

Another exciting audio tour possibility is a cell phone tour. A visitor uses their own phone to call a specified phone number and keys in a number that corresponds to the tour. The audio information, stored on a centralized computer, is sent through the cell phone network. With this system, travelers can access information about Route 66 resources from anywhere in the U.S. The tours can be offered on a fee-basis or for free (normal cell phone charges based on the user's plan would still accrue).

Recommendations

The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project should invest in a high quality audio tour that interprets communities and significant resources along the byway. Audio messages for each resource should be relatively short—perhaps 3 minutes or less.

Route 66 era music and sound effects should be incorporated to create an immersive environment. People who lived and worked along the road should be interviewed so their narratives can be included wherever possible. General interpretive narration should be spoken by professionals, preferably

an alternating male and female voice. When appropriate, a child's voice can be used for effect.

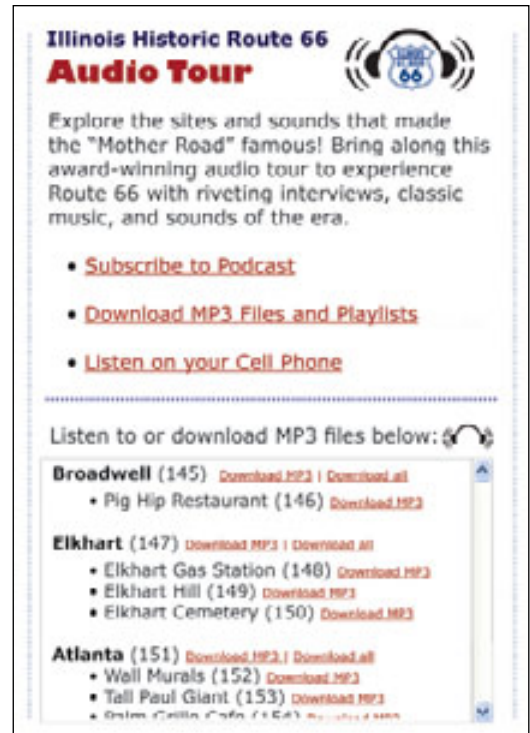
Each community and resource audio clip should be assigned a track number. To achieve integration, a universal “headphones” symbol and the corresponding resource number will be displayed on road signs, wayside exhibits, experience hubs, and traveler's guide throughout the byway.

Due to the limitations of CD tours, it is recommended that a downloadable digital audio tour be created instead. The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project website will serve as the distribution site for the audio files. For maximum versatility, the audio files should be distributed in two ways:

- ▶ **Podcasting:** Podcasts are a series of digital audio files that are automatically synchronized to a portable music player or computer. If a file is updated, added, or deleted on the server, the files are automatically updated on the player.
- ▶ **Downloadable MP3 Files:** MP3 files are small compressed audio clips ideal for distribution over the Internet. Users should have the choice of downloading audio clips for individual resources, all resources in a specific community, or all resources for the entire byway.

When the audio tour has been downloaded into a digital player, the user simply plays the track number that corresponds to a resource. The audio tour can also be easily integrated into a cell phone tour system. Users would type in the same corresponding track numbers into their phones.

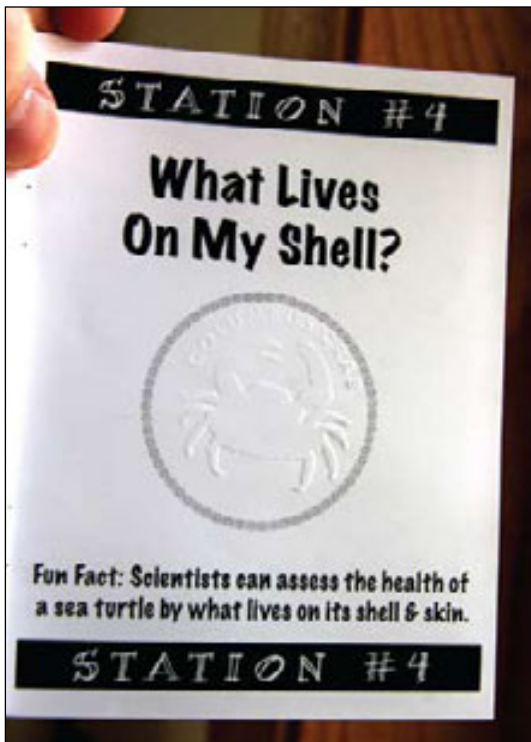
It is still important to provide site-based interpretive waysides as location clues and as alternative sources of interpretation. The use of more traditional sign panels also serves as a prominent public relations tool with residents, reminding them of the important connections that the community has with Route 66.



The Heritage Project website should provide options for accessing the audio tour through a Podcast subscription or through individual MP3 downloads.



When the audio tracks are transferred to the digital audio player, the user simply clicks on the track number that corresponds to a resource and listens to the message.



An embossing stamp creates a unique three-dimensional imprint of an image on a passport page, like this one at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jeekyll Island. A professional-grade emboss stamping system could be placed at outdoor locations.

Courtesy of Kite Notes, www.kitenotes.com/gifts.html



Sample of a desk embosser. A special weather-resistant design would likely need to be developed for the Illinois Route 66 byway.

Passport to Route 66 Attractions

A passport program encourages travelers to explore the diversity of resources along Illinois Route 66 and collect stamped symbols along the way. Passports are especially popular with families and groups who are seeking shared social activities along the road. The passports have “take home” value—they are a physical reminder of the trip.

The passport is a simple booklet that contains a page about each byway community. Resources will have a blank circles for stamps next to a short personal interpretive message.

Ink-based stamps may work well for staffed indoor attractions. However, a professional-grade embossing stamp is recommended for outdoor locations. The device creates an embossed symbol on the page that gives the image dimension. This is more unique and appears more “official” than a normal ink stamp and may help encourage visitors to “collect them all.”

Each stamp will be designed to symbolize the specific interpretive site and its story. For example, The Mill Restaurant stamp would have a likeness of The Mill with its characteristic windmill blades. The Pig Hip Restaurant would be represented with a smiling pig.

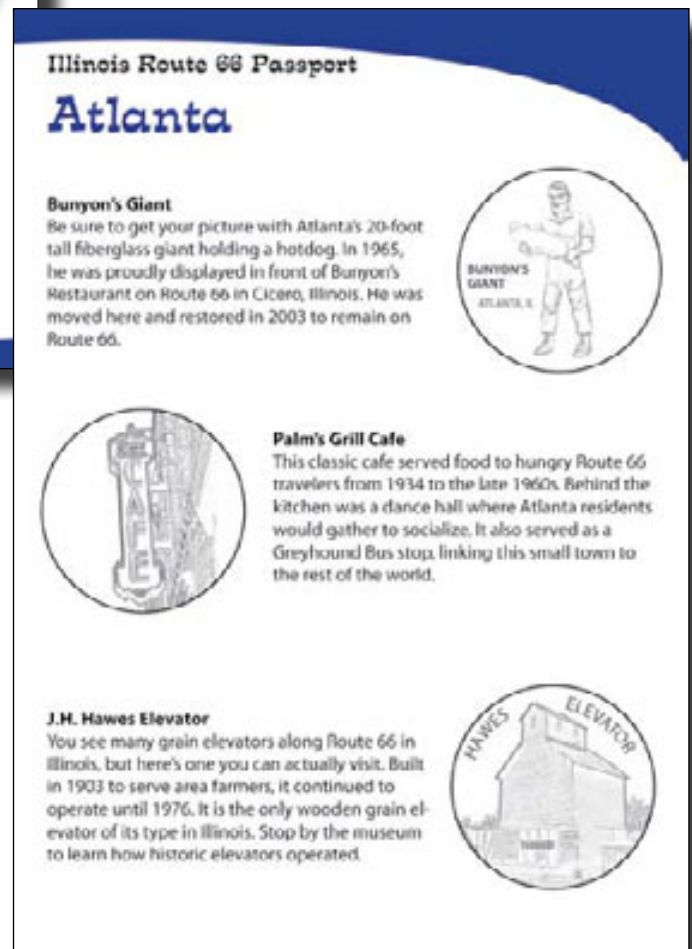
Passport stations could be attached directly to wayside exhibits (see the conceptual layout of the Riviera wayside exhibit earlier in this chapter) or on supports of their own. To fully integrate media, passport station locations should be included on the Traveler’s Guide and website. Passports can be distributed at major community attractions and services throughout the byway. Each passport station should also list local distribution points for travelers who happen upon a wayside.

Conceptual Illinois Historic Route 66 Passport Designs



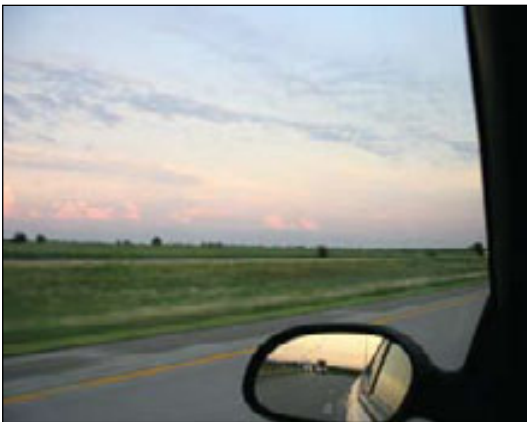
Front cover of the passport. The simple two-color design reduces printing costs.

An inside page of the passport for the community of Atlanta. The circles would be empty for stamping. Short personal messages bring the community's story to life.





A majority of travelers today plan their trips online. A high quality, user friendly website is an essential planning tool for Illinois Route 66 tourists.



Just like the road trip, the website should pop with the potential for adventure and discovery. July, 2007

Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project Website

The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project Website is an essential method of reaching a diverse audience. Anyone with a personal computer can access this interactive medium. The site can serve as an inviting stimulus to get travelers on the road. Potential travelers can preplan their trip, make decisions, and download maps and other information in their own homes.

The Illinois Route 66 website address should be prominently displayed on all brochures, interpretive panels, and other forms of media.

Recommendations:

► **Clearly define the purpose of the website.**

Decide the reason that a website is needed and state its purpose in one sentence. For example:

The Illinois Route 66 Heritage website will encourage users to travel the road because it appears easy to do, fun, and promises an adventure.

This initial step will define and focus efforts to develop an effective website and will ultimately help to create a simple, dramatic site that users understand. If the purpose of the website is primarily to motivate readers to travel the route, then large amounts of historic information is probably not the best use of web pages.

► **Create a distinct personality for the website.**

We know that our audiences are seeking fun and adventure—the website should reflect this attitude. Viewers will decide in a second if the site has value to them. The Route 66

image should appear crisp, fast paced, and fun, just like a trip down the highway. If the personality is slightly irreverent and idiosyncratic, it mirrors the Highway. Bright colors, bold images, and retro 1950s design elements can all add to the fun personality that appeals to users. The website should pop with sounds, music, and bold images, and just like the Road, it should invite exploration.

► **Determine the web content.**

People use the Internet as a tool to find information. The information presented should be concise and easy to access. The format should be simple, attractive and understandable. Since the web does not work in linear ways like print media, information needs to be placed into multiple, hyper-linked pages so that users don't have to scroll down and read long text. All information should be purposely written and be succinct as web users do not want to read long narratives when searching for answers to their questions.

The layout of the site should assist the user in browsing through it. All the pages should share a uniform design. This repetition allows users to instantly understand the page and jump to related information without difficulty. The site design should be unified with all media along the byway.

Broad overviews of the information should be presented to allow users to select the specific information that is pertinent to their needs. Information should be presented visually when possible. Maps that help orient people and give them a holistic overview of the route are more useful to a potential traveler than written directions. Dramatic pictures are more powerful than descriptive narratives

► **Make the website accessible to a wide audience.**

Our web audience includes people who have



Web information should be organized into a hierarchy of hyperlinked pages for fast, user-friendly selection. Visitors to “Getting Around Illinois” (www.gettingaroundillinois.com), for example, can “Find A Location,” “Get Directions,” or “Browse The Map” from the home page.



Information should be presented visually whenever possible. This interactive map on the “Getting Around Illinois” (www.gettingaroundillinois.com) website allows the user to easily zoom and move the map. Layers on the left can add information to the map, including road construction, recreational opportunities, traffic counts, and Illinois government buildings. The buttons below the map allow for easy printing. A similar type of interactive map should be developed for Illinois Historic Route 66.



Dynamic historic photographs can bring the stories of the byway to life. The Copper Country Trail website (www.coppercountrytrail.org) uses large focal point graphics to introduce each section.

disabilities and limitations. They can be from other countries, speak different languages, have various types of computers with different connection speeds, and have varying degrees of technical knowledge. The website should be designed to accommodate the broadest range of users possible. The essential information should be kept simple and easy to access from any computer.

► **Go beyond information; develop an interactive and interpretive site.**

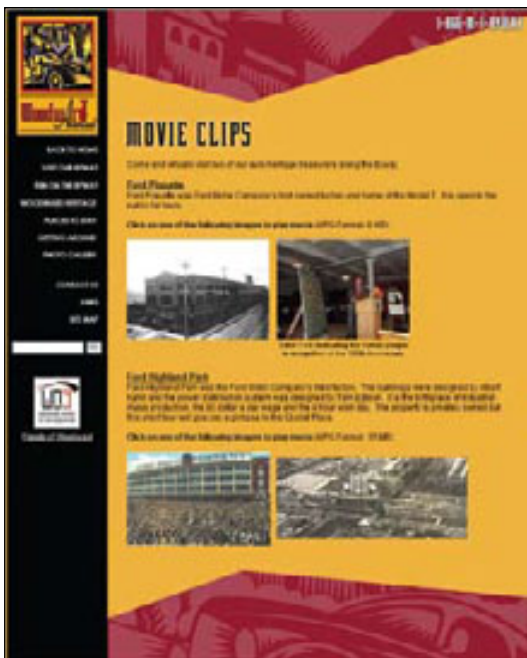
Most websites focus only on providing travelers with information. However, the Internet is a potentially powerful tool for sharing the interpretive themes and messages of Route 66 with a diverse audience. Create an interactive experience. Historic photographs, music, animation, video segments, and games help to bring the exciting stories of the highway to life.

The site should highlight the interpretive opportunities along the byway, like visitor centers, museums, and passport stations. The site will also serve as a distribution portal for the audio tour.

The website is an opportunity to dramatically increase the accessibility of our interpretive messages. When a user clicks on a community or resource, provide a quick intriguing Route 66 storyline to catch their attention. Encourage them to visit the resource to hear “the rest of the story.”

► **Provide useful tools for byway travelers.**

A large proportion of our audience uses the Internet to preplan a trip. Simple intuitive tools should be designed to help with this process. A database-driven website will simplify the process of updating and maintaining information that can change daily. For example, if an attraction’s phone number changes, Heritage Project staff



On Detroit’s Woodward Avenue Scenic Byway website (www.woodwardavenue.us), viewers are treated to movie clips that tell the story of Ford’s historic factories.

should be able to make a simple change in the database, which will be automatically updated on every page of the website that links to the resource.

All resources and businesses should be entered into a database and categorized, providing an easy way for users to search through travel options. Travelers may search for specific amenities (a restaurant near Staunton, a museum in Springfield, etc.) or for particular interests (farming, family activities, car attractions, etc.)

An interactive map feature would also be an important part of the database system. The map should clearly show the different alignments of Route 66 and the nearby attractions. Users should have full control over the map, with the ability to zoom, pan, click, and print. The map would be directly connected to the database, again providing an easy method for updating.

► **Provide useful tools for Byway communities.**

The website can be a significant networking tool for all communities along Illinois Route 66. An easy-to-use calendar database would allow communities to add their festivals and celebrations each year. A protected area of the website could be an ideal place for a news board, allowing the entire community to post and answer questions.



The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road website (www.creolenaturetrail.org) features a “Kids Only” page with several games that relate to the byway. Interactive features like these can enhance the family appeal of Route 66.

Other Websites to Research

The following National Scenic Byway websites are models of professional design that may provide some inspiration for the creation of a new Illinois Route 66 website.

Copper Country:
www.coppercountrytrail.org

Indiana Historic Road
www.indiananationalroad.org

Meeting of the Great Rivers:
www.greatriversbyway.com

Woodward Avenue:
www.woodwardavenue.us

Ohio and Erie Canalway:
www.ohioanderiecanalway.com

Creole Nature Trail:
www.creolenaturetrail.org

Enhanced Visitors Guide: Interpretive Travel Guide to Illinois Route 66

A Visitors Guide is the primary physical medium that establishes the image of Illinois Historic Route 66 in the traveler’s mind. It serves not only as a useful guide while traveling the road, but also as an important pre-planning and marketing tool.

The current Illinois Route 66 Visitors Guide is a well designed booklet that contains a wealth of information about the Byway. The publication incorporates sections on “General Info,” “History,” “Lodging,” other state “Scenic Byways,” and suggested “Itineraries.” The bulk of the document is composed of regional overview maps and descriptions of significant resources in each community. The design is attractive and organized, with fonts and colors that hark to the 1950s era.

Recommendations for Modification

The base information included in the current visitors guide is valuable, but a few additions and changes could make this tool more useful for the traveler.

- ▶ We recommend that the visitors guide be thought of as an “**Interpretive Travel Guide,**” which emphasizes significant Route 66 attractions and their stories, while placing advertising in a secondary role. The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project will need to establish guidelines for which attractions are and are not included on the main page. Each region, community, and resource should have a concise, provocative message that connects it to the Route 66 story.
- ▶ **Wayfinding** should be of paramount concern in this publication. Currently, there are no simple street-level maps

available that show the various alignments of the route between and through Illinois communities. Narrative directions are difficult to follow and should be avoided. In addition to the current regional maps, detailed maps for each major community should be created that show alignments, street names, and the locations of significant attractions. The resource locations can be numbered (to save space) and linked to the descriptions above.

- ▶ As the main physical source of information about the byway, **integration** with other media should be a priority. Communities and resources that are part of the audio tour should be identified with a universal symbol and the corresponding track number. Passport stations, statues, and visitor centers/museums should also be identified.
- ▶ Each page should include a hierarchy of **photographs**, dominated by a picture of the most important Route 66 attractions in the area. Images should be captioned so travelers can visit the sites.
- ▶ Once **unified design standards** have been developed for Illinois Historic Route 66, the design of this guide should be unified with other interpretive media for better visual recognition.

Conceptual Community Page in a revised Interpretive Travel Guide

Lincoln Region

The communities near Lincoln were built along the Chicago & Alton Railroad with some of the most productive farms in the world. Abraham Lincoln tourism on Route 66 begins here.

Lincoln (105)

The only town in America named for Abraham Lincoln before he became president. In 1853, Lincoln christened the new town with the juice of a watermelon.

- 1 **Lincoln College Museum**
 300 Keokuk Street
 A large collection of manuscripts, artifacts and other memorabilia relating to the life of Abraham Lincoln. 217-732-3155, Ext. 294
- 2 **Railsplitter Covered Wagon** (108)
 Old Route 66 and Hwy. 10
 Recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the "World's Largest Covered Wagon." A giant fiberglass Abraham Lincoln drives the wagon.
- 3 **Tropics Restaurant (closed)** (107)
 1007 Hickox Street
 Opened in 1950 by Vince Schwenoha, who served in Hawaii during tour of duty and came up with the name. Original neon sign with palm tree still stands.
- 4 **Redwood Motel**
 725 Hickox Street
 A classic motel built in 1955 at the junctions of Route 66, 10, and 21. This had previously been the site of a Standard Oil station built in 1934. The current owners are restoring the motel to the 1950s-60s era.
- 5 **Postville Courthouse**
 914 Fifth Street
 A reproduction of the first Logan County Courthouse in use from 1840 to 1847. Abraham Lincoln served as a lawyer on the Eighth Judicial Circuit. 217-732-8930
- 6 **The Mill Restaurant (closed)** (108)
 300 Keokuk Street
 Opened in 1929, this Dutch-themed building with blue trim featured a revolving windmill and waitresses dressed in blue with white aprons. The restaurant was famous for its fried schnitzel. The Mill closed in 1996, but is being restored as a museum.
- 7 **Ghost Bridge** (108)
 The concrete ruins of a bridge over Salt Creek where the 1926 alignment once ran. Enjoy a short hike through the woods along original pavement.

The Railsplitter Covered Wagon

Communities and resources have concise interpretive messages.

Symbols connect to passport stations and audio tours.

Photos of actual community resources are captioned and serve as focal points.

Community maps shows labeled alignments in different colors, street names, and numbered resources that correspond to descriptions above.

Map graphic copyright of Google Maps.

www.google.com/intl/en_ALL/help/terms_local.html



Children enjoy the interactive Route 66 exhibits in the Joliet Area Historical Museum. With recent movie releases like Disney's *Cars* and the associated merchandise, more families are traveling the Mother Road and searching for experiences. July, 2007



An audio program developed for children would feature young narrators telling about their lives working and playing along Route 66. Fun music and sound effects would complete the experience.

Media and Activities for Children

Since Illinois Historic Route 66 is billed as a “family experience,” children’s interests should be addressed in as many types of media as possible.

The goal of designing media for children is to keep their interest on the long drive with exciting and new activities, while providing a level of education that is tied to the Illinois Route 66 themes.

One option is a travel packet filled with kid-friendly activities that can be played while traveling in the family car. The packets could consist of Route 66 coloring books that feature key events and places along the road. The “giants” on the road would be especially interesting to kids, and would feature the various muffler men, Lincoln statues, pink elephants, America’s tallest building, the largest covered wagon, and the largest ketchup bottle. Fun messages or poems would be addressed to the interests of children.

Highway Bingo is a game that could focus on important theme concepts by challenging kids to fill a square by finding an abandoned bridge on old 66, spotting a railroad crossing, sighting a grain elevator, and getting the name of the town where it’s located. Variations of this idea might include sticker books, Route 66 road games (spin a wheel, move your car a number of spaces, and read what happens along the journey), or removable car window decals of different attractions along the way.

An audio program can be developed in which kids listen to other kids tell the stories of various sites from a child’s perspective. For example, a 12 year old boy might talk about working weekends by helping his dad at the gas station. An 8 year old girl tells the adventure of driving Route 66 to California with the family. School children describe what it was like to walk to school through the Odell subway under

the busy road. A child miner explains what it was like working in the Gillespie coal mine. A sister and brother talk about what they do on their family’s farm.

Once at a resource, many wayside exhibit panels will include a “Detour” component that encourages further exploration at the site. Most of these discovery challenges will appeal to children, like looking for stalactites in the Rivera basement (Gardner), finding the Route 4 brass plate on a historic bridge (Pontiac), or counting the birdhouses painted like states along Memory Lane (Lexington).

The Route 66 Passport will also be a popular activity for families with children. The passport’s blank circles encourage travelers to explore sites in order to fill up the book. Kids will enjoy stamping the pages to emboss an impression. Spaces in the book will allow children to record their thoughts and ideas. The passport is a physical reminder of the adventure that will be kept for a lifetime.

Consideration should be given to developing a website link for families with young children that concentrates on immersion experiences and age-appropriate activities, like those available at the History Museum in Joliet or the Isle a La Cache Museum in Romeoville.



Louisiana’s Creole Nature Trail All-American Road has developed a thematic children’s travel packet with toys, binoculars, crayons, and an activity booklet.



The Maryland Bay Game includes an activity fun book and stickers that introduce children to interesting sites along the road from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Ocean City.



Chapter 6—

Issues and Actions for Implementation



The Bevidere Motel and Cafe in Litchfield is an intact complex of buildings that demonstrates the evolution of lodging and amenities. It is an ideal candidate for preserving the “sense of place” along the Illinois Route 66 corridor.

Courtesy of David Wickline



The well-photographed iconic Chain of Rocks Motel sign in Granite City (above) was sold to a collector in 2006. It was replaced with a modern and less charming Economy Inn sign (below).



April, 2007



The famous Pig Hip Restaurant in Broadwell was lost to a fire in 2007. March, 2007

Issue: Many Interpretive Resources are being lost on Illinois Route 66

The appeal of Route 66 as a tourist attraction is based on the ability of visitors to experience it and interact with elements of it. The landscape and the view-shed of the Illinois Route 66 Corridor remains basically as it did during its period of significance; prairie farmland punctuated by grain elevators and small towns. Many travelers seek out famous landmarks that symbolize the Mother Road. These icons are in danger of being lost; the streetscape, the physical evidence of the roadway, mom and pop diners, family run filling stations, roadside attractions, and the neon signs and billboards that made up the cultural landscape during the Roads heyday. The tangible touchstones that visitors are seeking are disappearing almost daily. You only have to scan Route 66 websites or open a book on Route 66 to view photographs of iconic signs and buildings that were present two years ago but are now gone to realize that the sense of **authenticity** is in danger of disappearing.

During a one year period when this Interpretive Master Plan was being developed, our team witnessed the loss of several Illinois Route 66 symbols. The legendary Pig Hip Restaurant was destroyed by fire. The photogenic Chain of Rocks Motel sign was sold and removed. The Wishing Well Motel in Countryside was razed after being weakened by fire. The landmark Towanda Meadows mansion was badly vandalized. Many other resources deteriorated to irreversible states of disintegration.

Route 66 has always changed with the times being a highly commercial corridor that evolved with American culture. Its personality reflects that it has often been on the cutting edge of social and economic change. Many visitors are seeking connections to its history by association with the tangible roadway, historic buildings, and idiosyncratic symbols of its glory days. While museums can serve as repositories for artifacts and new attractions can be created in the spirit of Route 66, visitors especially value

personal contact with the “real thing” in situ. They seek physical evidence that connects them to the past. They want to “feel” what other travelers felt and share experiences of previous generations, in addition, to learning facts about the Road. **It is imperative that key structures and other tangible resources be preserved if the Illinois Route 66 corridor is to remain a vibrant interpretive attraction.**

Some attractions continue to thrive as viable businesses, such as Lou Mitchell’s, the Cozy Dog, and the Ariston. Other icons, like Benld’s Coliseum Ball Room, remain intact through adaptive reuse as antique malls. Filling stations at Odell, Dwight, or Shea’s in Springfield can continue to exude a strong sense of time and place because of the sensitive ways in which they have been preserved and interpreted. The Mill in Lincoln or Sprague’s Super Service in Normal are dynamic preservation projects that exemplify the level of commitment needed if Route 66 is going to increase its attractiveness as a tourist experience in Illinois.

Key resources should be identified and preserved as soon as possible. Some critical structures and artifacts are still available and preservable, but many are ephemeral and reaching stages of irreversible deterioration.

Actions: Recommendations for Saving and Restoring Interpretive Resources

- ▶ Identify and prioritize key highway elements and buildings that require protection and partnerships to stabilize, restore, and interpret. Develop institutional (Project) procedures to facilitate a coordinated effort to evaluate, prioritize, and in some cases, save important resources. Historically significant Route 66 resources have been identified in several documents listed in the appendices.
- ▶ Identify vintage neon signs that are located on the route. Assist owners in preserving and restoring them on site when possible, or

February, 2008



The Mill (above) and Sprague’s Super Service (below) are ongoing restoration projects that will enhance the interpretive opportunities along Illinois Route 66.



March, 2007

facilitate purchase and relocation to a suitable protected location such as a Route 66 park, museum, or visitor center.

- ▶ Assist communities in developing Route 66 streetscapes along their city highway corridors based on Illinois themes, and the unique, site specific stories and resources found in their area.

Resources Recommended for Preservation:

(additional resources can be identified by accessing the IDOT funded study entitled Route 66 Tourism Opportunities by Barton-Aschman Associates, 1996, Appendix A, or by consulting the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program in Santa Fe, New Mexico)

- ▶ **Old Tourist Camp, Joliet:** The old tourist camp near the Chicagoland Speedway should be preserved and interpreted. However, this two-mile stretch of Route 66 is specifically excluded from the Scenic Byway and the property is becoming expensive to purchase. An attempt should be made to remove the cabins to a public location such as the Route 66 Park in Joliet.
- ▶ **Dairy Queen, Joliet:** An attempt should be made to purchase this first Dairy Queen in the country, restore it, and interpret it with street-side interpretive panels and window exhibits.
- ▶ **Castle Car Wash, Cicero:** The Castle Car Wash is a classic Route 66 icon that dates from 1925. It is deteriorating and is in danger of being torn down. An attempt should be made to save it.
- ▶ **Tropics Restaurant Sign, Lincoln:** Preserve the Tropics restaurant sign perhaps by moving it to The Mill Restaurant Museum or another appropriate site.
- ▶ **Marathon Gas Station, Elkhart:** The Marathon Gas Station south of grain elevators dates from 1940s and has ceramic brick finish. Currently for sale for less than \$90,000. A grain company is considering it as an office and may be amenable to restoration advice. The owner is Joe Kolb 947-2417.



The classic Tropics Restaurant sign should be preserved and, if necessary due to development, moved to another location along Route 66. March, 2007

- ▶ **Brick Curve, Springfield:** Consider preserving and restoring the old brick curve about two miles north of where the road disappears into Lake Springfield on North Cottonville Road.
- ▶ **Sonrise Donuts, Springfield:** Purchase the Sonrise Donuts sign on 9th Street for display at a Route 66 interpretive site. The interior still has the classic diner fixtures which could be included in an exhibit, perhaps at the Bel-Aire Motel Route 66 Discovery Center.
- ▶ **Belevidere Motel and Cafe, Litchfield:** The Belevidere Motel and Cafe on Sherman and Clyde is a large, intact, 1940s motel complex located just south of the Ariston Restaurant. Owner may be willing to sell but price will be a factor.
 - The entire complex is a time capsule of motel evolution; a continuum of renovations and structures from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s in a relatively intact state. Its highest appeal is related to its completeness and relative preservation as a complete entity.
 - It is close to other Route 66 attractions like the Ariston Cafe
 - It has ample parking next to the structures to encourage visitation and to permit gatherings for meetings and events.
 - The cafe building has the size, durability, atmosphere, and location to permit renovation as a welcome center or interpretive facility. Adaptive reuse as an office, antique store, or other commercial use is also an option for saving the facility. However, once the complex is piecemealed, it loses its historic value.
 - One concern is the need for continuous maintenance of roofs, doors, windows, and aging siding.



The Heritage Project should be prepared to collect artifacts such as the neon Sonrise Donuts sign or even some of the diner's contents. August, 2007



The Belevidere Motel and Cafe in Litchfield is a complex of well preserved buildings along Route 66. April, 2007



A Surrey Restaurant sign along Route 66 through Fairmont City is hidden in a wall of vines. This is an ideal candidate for restoration and relocation. February, 2008



Additional historic Route 66 signs are needed to guide travelers through urban traffic and hard to find turns.

- ▶ **Old Neon Signs, East St. Louis:** Several old signs in the East St. Louis region should be preserved or purchased and relocated to a historic display at an appropriate Route 66 site. This includes the Trailer Court neon sign in Pontoon Beach, the Bel Air Drive-In sign in Mitchell, the Twin Oaks Gas-For-Less sign near the entrance to the Chain of Rocks Bridge, the Surrey Restaurant sign with the antique car image on top at Fairmont City, and the Nite Spot Cafe sign in Fairmont City.
- ▶ **Town and Country Motel, Edwardsville:** The Town and Country Motel at 5345 Chain of Rocks Road south of Edwardsville should be considered for preservation. It is currently owned and occupied by Charles and Otto Baumann; both men are past retirement age. The house is the former office which is flanked by four tourist cabins. All structures appear well maintained. The original neon sign still stands near the road.

Issue: Corridor identification and visitor orientation is needed as aids to wayfinding

Actions: On-site solutions

- ▶ Replace all missing and weathered brown IDOT Route 66 signs and review locations where more are needed.
- ▶ Install *Route 66 Access* signs at Interstate exits and major highway intersections where Route 66 can be accessed.
- ▶ Initiate a program for creating *Route 66 Heritage Community* signs that welcome visitors to towns on Historic 66.
- ▶ Develop standardized *Route 66 Attractions* signs that identify and direct travelers to major attractions along the corridor.
- ▶ Include street-level community maps on experience hubs and select wayside exhibits that show the Route 66 alignments and attraction locations.

- ▶ Work with communities to develop “streetscapes” that reflect their connection to Route 66. This may include banners, artwork, murals, landscaping, building facade restoration, and lighting.

Actions: Off-site solutions

- ▶ Include interactive mapping features on the website that illustrate Route 66 alignments on a street-level view. Maps should be printable so they can be taken on the trip. A feature should also provide directions to a Route 66 resource from any address in the country.
- ▶ In the printed Visitors Guide/Interpretive Travel Guide, provide regional overview maps and detailed local maps that clearly shows alignments, street names, and resource locations.

Map graphic copyright of Google Maps.
www.google.com/intl/en_ALL/help/terms_local.html



Interactive maps give travelers the tools for effectively planning their trip on Illinois Route 66.

Issue: Wayside exhibits and experience hubs cannot be fully funded in one federal highway grant

Actions:

- ▶ Design and fabricate all experience hubs in the first phase of the project since they will also serve visitor needs for identification and orientation. They will also be visual proof of positive project accomplishments within each community.
- ▶ Provide at least one wayside exhibit in every community that has Route 66 attractions.



Each community should have at least one wayside exhibit that celebrates its connection to Route 66.



The Matthew Scott home in Chenoa is a beautifully restored historic building. But, without an appointment, visitors can't view the finished interior. March, 2007

Courtesy of Tom Teague, "The Magic of Route 66"



Primary sources of information, like people and documents, need to be recorded for future generations. Joe Shaheen, founder of the Springfield Speedway.

Issue: Many roadside attractions are only open intermittently or seasonally.

Actions:

- ▶ All attractions should advertise hours and days of operation. The website, Visitors Guide, and other media should clearly indicate when these sites are open to avoid disappointment for travelers.
- ▶ Attempt to provide an alternative interpretive experience when a building or site is closed. For example, wayside exhibits can include photographs of the interiors of gas stations or historic diners.
- ▶ Avoid marketing attractions that are frequently closed or unavailable to the public.

Issue: Many facts and human interest stories about Route 66 are being lost as people age and pass away.

Actions:

- ▶ Develop a protocol for accepting and collecting artifacts and documents. Work cooperatively with the Illinois State Library in Springfield to develop a Route 66 Archive.
- ▶ Work cooperatively with Illinois State Universities and/or the State Library to develop a protocol to collect interviews with people who have lived, worked, or traveled Route 66. Support a training program for interviewers.

Issue: Schedules, budgets, and individuals responsible for implementing this Interpretive Master Plan must be determined.

Actions:

- ▶ The Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project Board of Directors will determine priorities, schedules, and budgets for implementation of the items outlined in the Interpretive Master Plan.
- ▶ Interpretive planning firms will be hired to complete detailed schematic designs, write text and scripts, and fabricate experience hubs, wayside exhibits, welcome centers, and other interpretive elements as determined by the Project Board of Directors.



Illinois Route 66 at sunset. December, 2006



Appendices



Campbell's 66 Express "Humpin' to Please" semitrailer at Henry's Rabbit Ranch, Staunton. April, 2007

Appendix I: Results of Illinois Route 66 Public Information Gathering Sessions

During the summer and fall of 2007, Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted ten regional community meetings that were organized by the Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project. Input was solicited from residents to determine the important resources and stories of their communities, which helped to guide the development of this interpretive master plan. The complete results of these public information gathering sessions are included in this Appendix.

Countryside Region Public Meeting: July 30, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway.

What “must-see” places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

- ▶ Buckingham Fountain, Chicago: Start of Route 66 (East)
- ▶ Wishing Well Motel
- ▶ Electro-motive Division of GMC (manufactured locomotives)
- ▶ Lyonsville Church (was only church on Route 66 for awhile) Hazel Sharp-Joliet and Wolf Road (used during Civil War-enlistment, graves)
- ▶ Dell Rhea Chicken
- ▶ Robert Vial 1856 House (restored house, Wolf Road, Plainfield)
- ▶ Flagg Creek Heritage Society Museum (community history)
- ▶ Rolling Lanes Bowling Alley-Country Cup Restaurant-cheapest breakfast around (was the Chevron Bowling Alley)
- ▶ Marx Brothers lived here-Joliet and La Grange Road (northeast corner: raise chickens to get out of the Great War)
- ▶ Route 66 Drive-In Theater: Route 66 and La Grange Road (where plaza is now... no longer there)
- ▶ Sabans Restaurant (east of East Ave.-right where it ends)

- ▶ Quarries: Carved out either side of Route 66. Company blames it on a minor earthquake. Closed 1997-98.
- ▶ Historic water tower in Lyons (museum, block or two off Route 66, near river)
- ▶ The Portage Site (beginnings of Chicago-Joliet landed here-walk to Lake Michigan)-Harlem Ave. (north of I-55) End of Mud Lake. Statue, signage, volunteer interpreters.
- ▶ The Orchard Rest: Joliet and La Grange (may be an existing postcard... no longer stands).
- ▶ McCook: Snuffy’s
- ▶ McCook: JC’s Pub

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Share the story of the Robert Vial house: 1856, how the community grew, very early settlers (1834-lived in log cabin)
- ▶ Cabin courts on Harlem Ave. in Lyons (car dealership there now)
- ▶ Isn’t much left... I-55 went over Route 66 (highway, services are gone)
- ▶ Marx Brothers story
- ▶ Wolf Road cabins (used to be on the mall site... 1933 for World’s Fair... rent to tourists). Vial family also owned the cabins.
- ▶ Santa Fe Speedway: Large collection of photos and artifacts. Near Route 66. Track of clay. Early 1990s. Still a

billboard that exists (55 south, right-hand side, top of another building. No longer exists)

- ▶ Car shows: At the William Tell Motel. Countryside (2), Lyons (1), Berwyn (1-Sep).
- ▶ General Motors Stamping Plant: Willow Springs Road (half-mile away. Now UPS distribution center... world's largest package handling facility)
- ▶ Building out in the Forest Preserve that was an Al Capone hideout.
- ▶ Willow Brook Ballroom (still exists). Archer Ave. West of Willow Springs Road. Was called Oh Henry. Created in the early 1920s. Top name in Big Band era. Still operates as a ballroom and banquet facility. Has historic photos.
- ▶ Resurrection Mary story: Appears outside of Resurrection Cemetery, still dressed in ballroom gowns. Still comes out of the grave to go dancing. Picked up as a hitchhiker. Saloons even put a glass out for her.
- ▶ Willow Springs Museum (have artifacts from the Willow Brook Ballroom).
- ▶ The Flame: High-end dinner and banquet place. Joliet Road, across the street from the Wishing Well.
- ▶ Get to California in two days (one 4-hour rest). Exit the Interstate to visit communities

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Former Countryside Mayor Carl LeGrant
- ▶ Stan Johnson
- ▶ Corvette Car Club and Sales Museum, Naperville on Ogden Ave.
- ▶ Steve Dahl, Chicago radio personality, WCKG-FM
- ▶ Flagg Creek Heritage Society, Hazel

Sharp and Alice Latham

- ▶ Willow Springs Historical Society, Jean Thode

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Illinois needs better signage to bring visitors off the highways to sites.
- ▶ Little physical left to see in this area.
- ▶ Remapping by GPS and road mapping. Harley-Davidson, Map Atlas, excellent map for Route 66. Harley Davidson in Berwyn... Norway, Italians, Germans, Japanese
- ▶ Need an International Welcome Center in Countryside
- ▶ Publicize Countryside. Sponsor a run or other events. Raise awareness. One of the largest Harley Davidson rides there is. Photo opportunities.
- ▶ Antique car clubs that ride Route 66 every year. "Power Tour." From start to finish.
- ▶ Volo Auto Museum (in Volo, Illinois).
- ▶ Route 66 Motors: Sell antique cars
- ▶ United Sidecar Association: Rallies
- ▶ Natural starting point for the real Route 66 experience (avoid Chicago traffic).
- ▶ Berwyn is also doing a lot about Route 66... flags
- ▶ Pictures and photos of things that were there... signs that illustrate the sites.
- ▶ Mercedes Club of Chicago: Outing every year
- ▶ State Bicycle Association: Rode on portions of the Route.

Joliet/Plainfield Region Public Meeting:
July 31, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway. What "must-see" places or things would

you show him/her in and around your community?

- ▶ Route 66 Experience: Welcome Center in Joliet-Information center for surrounding communities.
- ▶ Broadway Park: Rich and Creamy Ice Cream Stand
- ▶ Iron Works Site: Scotts Street, Rt. 66
- ▶ Building of very first Dairy Queen. 501 Chicago.
- ▶ Rialto Theater
- ▶ Route 66/Lincoln Highway aligned through Plainfield- 3 blocks
- ▶ White Fence Farm
- ▶ Montana Charlies (flea market)
- ▶ Lockport: I&M Heritage Corridor,
- ▶ Antique shops, mainstreet Wilmington
- ▶ Gemini Giant
- ▶ Polka Dot Restaurant
- ▶ Mar Theater
- ▶ Coffee shop
- ▶ Mill Town Market
- ▶ Camz: shop
- ▶ Midewin Prairie
- ▶ Abraham Lincoln Cemetery
- ▶ Plainfield churches: St. Mary's church (restaurant), Methodist church, Sharon United Methodist Church, Congregational Church, Wheatland Church (Scotch church)
- ▶ Castle Eden: 1903 White House look-alike, Panama Canal plans finalized
- ▶ Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket
- ▶ Lincolnway Barber Shop (1881): 4th generation owner
- ▶ Eagle Hotel: Wilmington, Water Street: oldest commercial building on Route 66... 1869?
- ▶ Original historic buildings in downtown Plainfield.
- ▶ Gardner: two-cell jail, streetcar, Riveria
- ▶ Arch Bridge north of Gardner... now torn down
- ▶ Casino: nice to stay, free parking

- ▶ Joliet Murals
- ▶ Manor Motel, 66 and Route 6
- ▶ Children's Garden in Elwood
- ▶ Auburn Brick Road
- ▶ Odell Gas Station
- ▶ Dwight-Keeley Institute
- ▶ Rialto Art Center
- ▶ Riviera: last remaining roadhouse on Route 66 where Al Capone hung out... unique bathroom (throne room)
- ▶ Halfway House, Plainfield: on stagecoach trail. Halfway between Chicago and Ottawa. Building still exists.

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Christian Anderson story
- ▶ Lyons-car on its own rollercoaster
- ▶ Castle Eden story
- ▶ Dairy Queen story-June 22, 1940
- ▶ Story of the Keeley Institute
- ▶ Pig Hip Restaurant-story of the people who restored the building
- ▶ Joliet manufacturing: Iron Works, cars, prisons
- ▶ Liberace quote and the Rialto Theater
- ▶ Joliet Central High School... first community college
- ▶ School music programs started in Joliet
- ▶ From Plainfield, Route 126 going west was once designated as Route 66B.
- ▶ Rueben Flagg: lumber for first building in Chicago was from Plainfield, delivered along old stagecoach route
- ▶ First stoplight on Route 66 was in Dwight at Route 47. 1914
- ▶ Joliet limestone
- ▶ Replica gas pumps (plaque with significant story)

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Michael Lambert, Plainfield Historical Society President

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Joliet Kicks... Route 66 signage will be installed (50-60)
- ▶ People are looking for Americana. Preservation is important. Choose places that symbolize what visitors are looking for.
- ▶ Roadside Attraction program. 2001. Entice Hampton Inns to become involved with Route 66. Brought in a half millions dollars from Hampton. 18 Attractions are set up now. Develop more in a brochure that would tell visitors where to go. Add other things to do in the area at each Attraction.
- ▶ Quarries and Route 66. Section of road closed in McCook/Hodgkins. Quarries build roads... proposed observation and education center right by fence on Route 66

Pontiac Region Public Meeting:

August 1, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway.

What “must-see” places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

Pontiac

- ▶ Route 66 Museum
- ▶ Old Log Cabin Restaurant-north end of town
- ▶ Old police station on Division: area of a bad tornado (may now be a house)
- ▶ Town square and the Court House (inside and outside)-classic small town America

- ▶ Old District 6 police headquarters-shaped like a pistol
- ▶ Swinging bridges-earliest was in 1888
- ▶ Chautauqua Park
- ▶ Above ground pool
- ▶ Humiston Woods
- ▶ Poor Farm Cemetery
- ▶ Painted barn
- ▶ Odell Station
- ▶ Highway 4 Bridge
- ▶ Three Roses B&B, Pontiac-1890s home (Sharon Hansen)
- ▶ War Museum
- ▶ Historic house museums: Jones House and Yost House
- ▶ Events: Thresherman’s Reunion, Hang Loose Weekend, cruise night
- ▶ Stoplights: Reynolds St. and Route 66... one of the last on the route
- ▶ New Lincoln statue and other sites
- ▶ Palamar Motel (Ladd St.)
- ▶ Old City Hall Shoppes
- ▶ Route 66 Association preservation flyer, brochure, website
- ▶ Old tool shed... part of the original building to build Route 4... Highway Department... could be a myth...
- ▶ Bump, Push, and Jerk.. Bloomington, Pontiac, and Joliet Railway-interurban (bridge across from the Log Cabin)
- ▶ Painting a Route 66 Mural on back of the museum (26’ tall)

Chenoa

- ▶ Tourist camp run by the town... now a city park
- ▶ Drug store still in business from 1890s.
- ▶ Matthew Scott House
- ▶ Steve’s Cafe

Dwight

- ▶ Keeley Institute for alcoholics
- ▶ Ambler-Texaco Station
- ▶ Frank Lloyd Wright Bank
- ▶ Windmill

- ▶ Old VA Hospital, once part of the Keeley Institute

Gardner

- ▶ 2-cell jail
- ▶ Riviera Supper Club

Odell

- ▶ Subway under the street

Lexington

- ▶ Memory Lane-mile-long linear park
- ▶ Scrogin Cemetery
- ▶ Old cabin in park

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ 1964-first person to put \$10 in car
- ▶ Martin Oil Company: 8 gall for \$1
- ▶ Route 4 got built faster than the others... Al Capone
- ▶ Red-light district in Godley-one house in each county-existed because of the coal mines-1900s-1930s
- ▶ Stretch of Route 66 that was made into a 3-lane road around Joliet... disaster, lots of wrecks
- ▶ Train wreck through Pontiac. Around 1935-36.
- ▶ Braidwood. "Hole in the Wall Road." Prohibition story.
- ▶ Pontiac and one-arm bandits
- ▶ Ditch accident
- ▶ Nickname... "Bloody 66"
- ▶ Julia Child-spent a lot of time in Odell
- ▶ Story of the Keeley Institute in Dwight-Bing Crosby stayed there
- ▶ Bank of Dwight: Robbed in the 1930s and everyone was locked into the safe
- ▶ Dad had gas station 2 miles south of Dwight in the 1930s. We lived in 3 rooms and gas station was the 4th room (Gecheneudtner)
- ▶ Uncle had gas station, cabins,

restaurant and bar on Route 66 in Elwood. In the 1930s, he said that he ran to bank, got all his money, put it in a bucket, and stored it in his cistern. He claimed to be the last to get money there before the bank closed (Gecheneudtner)

- ▶ Started working on 66 in 1941 at Dick Jones Garage in Odell. I have stories about my father working on 66 for 50 years (Jones)
- ▶ Talk to the people at the Route 66 Museum.

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Diaz Sign Art and Wall Dogs. Travel country painting murals. Historic to the town. Atlanta, Lincoln, Pontiac, Chenoa. Planning an event for 2009 in Pontiac (Ben and Joe Diaz, www.diazsignart.com)
- ▶ Larry McClellan
- ▶ Baker's Glass Shop.
- ▶ Phil Becker-Dwight, Ambler/Becken Texaco
- ▶ Harley Schmitt, Dwight
- ▶ Fred Strufe-Dwight, Arrow Motel
- ▶ Even Glow-people who can remember buildings and people
- ▶ Route 66 Museum
- ▶ Historical societies
- ▶ Senior citizens
- ▶ Church histories

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Every small community is part of the project/experience. Not just the large communities.
- ▶ Clean up Old 66... broken up pavement. Or part of the charm? May be recycled into the bike trail.

- ▶ Signage for all segments of Route 66.
 - ▶ Would like to see larger historic signs, shields
 - ▶ Smaller towns embrace Route 66 (larger towns don't need to).
 - ▶ Key is the common theme: This is essentially small town America. Historic preservation is vitally important.
 - ▶ International tourists come here to see "America." They are also here to meet the people.
 - ▶ Red Carpet Corridor: Joliet to Towanda (90 miles). Small communities partnered together as a region. Customer service important. Each community promote others along the corridor.
 - ▶ Easy access to a website to discover information... Route66news.com. Newspaper articles about anything happening along Route 66.
 - ▶ Blues Brothers corridor... Polka-Dot Diner... 1950s theme has stuck to the route.
 - ▶ Better shops...standardized merchandise and souvenirs... unified effort across the state (Illinois Route 66).
 - ▶ American produced merchandise.
 - ▶ Local historical societies in the communities.
 - ▶ Need to do oral histories of the older local citizens.
-
- Springfield Region Public Meeting:**
August 6, 2007
- A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway. What "must-see" places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?
- Springfield
- ▶ Route 66 Hotel and Convention Center- museum of Route 66 artifacts-one of the first Holiday Inns in Illinois
 - ▶ Cozy Dog Drive-In (one of the few commercial establishments still operating)
 - ▶ North Cottonhill Road: goes underneath Lake Springfield in the 1930s. Section of old brick road. Recognize this... photo opportunity.
 - ▶ Shea's Gas Station
 - ▶ Stonegate Farm (from before the Civil War. On Old Chatham Road. Life Magazine photo)
 - ▶ Lincoln attractions- part of the soul of Springfield. Presidential Museum is on Route 66- Living museum.
 - ▶ Lincoln Home National Historic Site- includes a restored 1860s neighborhood
 - ▶ Small mom and pop motels on both sides of Springfield. Photos: Bel Aire, Abe Lincoln (by Cozy Dog), Pioneer, several along bypass area, Yukon
 - ▶ Route 66 followed Indian trace (Edwards trace)
 - ▶ Partnership with State Fair... on Route 66.
 - ▶ "Main Street of America." 5th and 6th street through historic downtown area... major visitor center now. Keep the main street element.
 - ▶ Springfield is becoming a museum capitol. National Land Surveyors, Korean War Museum, Lincoln Presidential Museum, Illinois State Museum (5 facilities around the state)
 - ▶ Consider new attractions: Route 66 Drive-In Theater (website, www.route66-drivein.com), Kicks (amusement center)- launch new projects and eras.
 - ▶ More places/sites within a shorter distance than other areas along Route 66 in Illinois. Route 66 follows I-55... flexibility
 - ▶ Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation, museum. 1951 Vehicle patrolled Route 66 in Litchfield. In operation until 2004.

- ▶ International visitors: 75% of visitors on Route 66. Route 66 is number one to see America. Lonely Planet lists as top 10 in 2006.
- ▶ Activities and festivals highlighted in each community throughout the year. Illinois Main Street program.
- ▶ Watt Brothers Pharmacy
- ▶ Pioneer Motel
- ▶ Mel Donuts
- ▶ Old State Capitol Building

Sherman

- ▶ Double H
- ▶ Champion Spark Plug sign

Divernon

- ▶ Round Barn (milepost 82)

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Several rerouting of Route 66. Why? Story about the road routes/alignments. Three alignments of 6th St.
- ▶ Story of the truckers, truck stops along the way.
- ▶ People dreamed about taking Route 66 all the way to the West Coast. It is the American dream. 40s-60s simpler era. Intangible for international visitors.
- ▶ Story of commercial establishments, especially those still operating (Cozy Dog Drive-In, Route 66 Hotel and Convention Center)
- ▶ Story of police on Route 66 (Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation)
- ▶ ROW-marker in back of Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center
- ▶ Mississippi Valley Trail
- ▶ State's ownership of the Lincoln Home during the active use of Route 66 with visitor center and parking area on Ninth St. Souvenir and antique shops were along Eighth St. During Route 66 era,

state managed Lincoln Home Historic Site. Could tie into the Route 66 story. How the state drew off of transportation route.

- ▶ Capitol... links to Chicago. Route 66 must have had a great impact for connecting the cities.
- ▶ Grey Hound Bus Lines: Stopped in every town along the Route. May have a history/artifacts

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Illinois State Library-historic maps, individual city maps, books, documents, periodicals.
- ▶ Extensive oral history department at the University of Illinois
- ▶ Illinois State Library's Archive and Research Center will be collecting oral histories and materials for National Park Service Route 66 project.
- ▶ Lincoln Library/Springfield Public Library: Sangamon Valley Collection. County and Springfield history, photographic resources
- ▶ National Park Service-State Library: Archive and Research Center to Illinois Route 66. Collecting materials and documenting resources.

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Visual signs for Route 66 important.
- ▶ Interpretation of things that were there, even if it doesn't exist now. Pig Hip Restaurant.
- ▶ Small mom and pop types of businesses. Develop and enhance alignments to encourage the businesses.
- ▶ Restore the neon lit signs along the Route.

- ▶ Have stops along the way to take photos near historic sites.
- ▶ Route 66 Visitor Center/Museum... centralized location, already have a million visitors, tell the whole story.
- ▶ Cars movie-every character is based on a real person or thing. Relate to children.
- ▶ Cars of the era:
- ▶ Purchase of Bob Waldmire's van... Cozy Dog
- ▶ Develop an identity program... various facilities/sites can connect to Route 66. "Blue" or "gold" program. Rate facilities/sites based on information available. Encourage developers to improve... certification.
- ▶ Focus too much on Route 66... many sites and facilities just off of the route. Wineries, etc. Promote.
- ▶ Springfield is closely linked to St. Louis. Highway is all about linking communities.
- ▶ Oral history specifically developed for Route 66 Heritage Project.
- ▶ Information for businesses and non-profit organizations of funding sources.
- ▶ Should be funding available to continue research of stories after the plan... Many lives lost on Route 66, unsolved murders
- ▶ Get the General Assembly, Federal Highway Administration, IDOT, on board to preserve the historic road.
- ▶ Put a call out to businesses that began along Route 66. Century Farms. May have artifacts, verbal histories, etc. Provide a designation. Caterpillar, Black Angus Restaurant, Hall of Fame businesses
- ▶ Architecture was unique to catch the traveler's eyes.
- ▶ Communities can designate historic structures.
- ▶ Countless antique malls that may have artifacts from Route 66. Ebay.
- ▶ Tastefully handle the reincorporation of signs/structures.

- ▶ Billboards: fascinating history, Burma Shave signs

Lincoln Region Public Meeting:

August 7, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway. What "must-see" places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

Lincoln

- ▶ Postville Courthouse, where Lincoln served as a circuit rider lawyer
- ▶ The Mill-being restored by Route 66 Heritage Foundation
- ▶ Hallie's Restaurant-famous for Schnitzel
- ▶ Ed Madigan: buried in cemetery off of Route 66
- ▶ Kickapoo Park: Scully's Estate
- ▶ Named by Abraham Lincoln
- ▶ Christened with watermelon-Christening scene is on Route 66 by railroad depot
- ▶ Mark all 4 alignments
- ▶ Tropics Restaurant: history and connection to Coon Hound Johnny and bootlegging days
- ▶ Rail Splitter Covered Wagon: Woodlawn and Route 66 intersection
- ▶ Redwood Motel-restoring; same look as original
- ▶ Courthouse Square historic district: shops, restaurants, courthouse
- ▶ Lincoln College Museum-original town plat, dates to time of Lincoln
- ▶ Route 66 Bike Trail-recent trail breaking
- ▶ "Seedling Mile" of original Route 4/66
- ▶ Krotz Antique store
- ▶ Ghost Bridge
- ▶ Courthouse
- ▶ Mount Pulaski Courthouse-original (not on Route 66)
- ▶ Murals: Painted by Wall Dogs

- ▶ Telephone booth on top of City Hall
- ▶ Lincoln statue in the State Bank
- ▶ Indian Mother Statue on County Courthouse lawn
- ▶ Logan County Senior Citizens Center (Oasis)

Atlanta

- ▶ Palms Grill Cafe-in the process of restoring
- ▶ Hawes Elevator and Museum
- ▶ Library museum
- ▶ Clock tower at the library- saved clock from old high school building
- ▶ Bunyan statue
- ▶ Working on a segment of the original Route 4-just north of Atlanta
- ▶ Murals: Painted by Wall Dogs

Elkhart

- ▶ First place to be settled
- ▶ Governor Oglesby lived and died here
- ▶ Variety of historic buildings-chapel, arch bridge, library
- ▶ Highest point in Logan County
- ▶ Photographs of Route 66 in Elkhart
- ▶ Unique gas station-Texaco-“endangered list”
- ▶ Loop alignment

Broadwell

- ▶ Ernie Edwards: icon of Route 66
- ▶ Pig Hip Restaurant- will have a marker

McLean

- ▶ Dixie Truck Stop

Funks Grove

- ▶ Sugar grove between Bloomington and McLean
- ▶ Funks Grove Nature Center: example of prairie
- ▶ Funks Grove historical cemetery and church

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Story of how the city of Lincoln got its name and of Christening with a watermelon
- ▶ Story of how Abraham Lincoln practiced law in the city
- ▶ Route 66 retraces slave routes from the underground railroad.
- ▶ What year was the highway constructed?
- ▶ Any reason why 66 was chosen as the number for designation?
- ▶ Elvis Presley in Pink Cadillac seen driving Route 66 in 1965 near fairgrounds in Lincoln (Huskens)
- ▶ Building of the Postville Courthouse (Huskens)
- ▶ Abraham Lincoln is well known internationally
- ▶ Recognize Lincoln as a central city for commerce, tourism, and industry. How do we get people here?
- ▶ Lincoln has a dual history of Route 66 and Abraham Lincoln.
- ▶ Dead Man’s Curve or Devil’s Curve, curve coming into Lincoln north of town-1960s-also known as Blue Inn Curve.
- ▶ When buildings are gone, all we have are stories.
- ▶ Elkhart-House by the Side of the Road-4 tables, 4 seats-Shirley Temple visited-“Shirley Temple sat here”-moved the building, sawed in half, moved to country.
- ▶ Old gas station (right across the road)-fed an apple to Gene Autry’s horse
- ▶ Story of the Pig Hip name, copyright, and the people who frequented it.
- ▶ Stories about well-known people who stayed at the Redwood Motel...rooms like the 1950s. Original postcards still exist showing the motel.
- ▶ Stories of motels along Route 66
- ▶ People that stopped at facilities through the different eras.

- ▶ Coonhound Johnny: worked for Al Capone and was a whiskey runner around Lincoln during bootlegging days. Was raided a couple of times. Moved building into town as a recreation center in the 1950s.
- ▶ Glaciation: Brought soil and gravel. Created the rich farmland that was formally prairie (examples of prairie at Funk's Grove and remnants along railroad right-a-ways). Many gravel pits now operate.

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Ivan Ray
- ▶ Ernie Edward, Pig Hip Restaurant
- ▶ TW "Terry" Werth (had Redwood Motel stories)
- ▶ Paul Beaver
- ▶ Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau
- ▶ Old postcards
- ▶ Genealogy (across from the Depot)
- ▶ Lee Hensen created a website of Lincoln
- ▶ Original town plat of the city of Lincoln
- ▶ Abraham Lincoln tourist society

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Two different signs used on the highway can be confusing.
- ▶ Include Lincoln on maps
- ▶ Book of postcards of every business along Route 66 in Illinois; include stories; market the book-proceeds help fund byway projects.
- ▶ Find a way to let the younger generation and community to learn more about Route 66 (people from the eastern part of the U.S.)
- ▶ Route 66 Garage Sale: Funds are going toward restoring the Mill. Other

community projects and events for fundraising. First year was June, 2007. Brought attention to Route 66 and community.

- ▶ Postage cancellation in each community should have Route 66 along the road. Would have an inexpensive collection.
- ▶ Incorporate remodeling of businesses into city plans... in the era of Route 66.
- ▶ Route 66 murals and signage would be important-
- ▶ Burma Shave signs
- ▶ "Illinois Route 66 Byway Community" sign in each community to welcome travelers
- ▶ Interpretive museum
- ▶ Kiosks and visitor centers to share information
- ▶ Visitors are seeking to experience what people experienced during the Route 66 heyday... information for businesses to market and attract clientele. Create new places for people to experience. Recreation of an experience-give the real thing.
- ▶ Restoration of motels and restaurants... assistance/funding for development
- ▶ Concentrated efforts in historic preservation throughout the county... will be important for securing assistance
- ▶ Businesses that still exist and operate should have Route 66 sign to identify... Logan's Gas Station
- ▶ Promote both Abraham Lincoln and Route 66. Abe66.com
- ▶ Generate more interest in the community through other organizations.
- ▶ Get the stories out to the young people and the community.

Litchfield Region Public Meeting:

August 9, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway.

What “must-see” places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

- ▶ Sky View Drive-In
- ▶ Ariston Cafe
- ▶ Carnegie Library
- ▶ Two different Route 66 alignments-three alignments
- ▶ The Overhead Cafe-invented “chicken in a basket”. One of the first rooms selling Route 66 memorabilia
- ▶ Old truck scale (no longer exists-new one on I-55). Normally open only to west-bound traffic.
- ▶ Belvidere Motel, oldest alignment
- ▶ Prairies along the railroad-remnant of the vast Illinois prairies
- ▶ All 3 segments pass through Staunton. Needs to be promoted
- ▶ Mt. Olive-Soulsby Station, Union Miners Cemetery
- ▶ Mill Cafe (doesn't exist-had a juke box).
- ▶ Route 66 Terminal (truck stop-one of the largest-doesn't exist)
- ▶ Parson's Marathon Filling Station next to Belvidere Motel-entire strip of structures from the 40s and 50s. Could be renovated and refurbished.
- ▶ Nieman-inventor-International Harvester-whole machines still in shed-adapted Model T automobiles-state was trying to work with site as a working heritage farm
- ▶ Original brick road north of Auburn.
- ▶ Original concrete pavement south of Exit 88 on I-55, 8 foot lanes for several miles
- ▶ One billboard 1.5-2 miles south of Litchfield-Heritage House Smorgasbord

- ▶ in Springfield (east side of road)
- ▶ Artifacts that were manufactured in different communities along the route (glass oil can from Litchfield)
- ▶ Mt. Olive-Flour Mill built in 1856... connection to Route 66. Still in operation.
- ▶ Lake Lou Yaeger-Litchfield
- ▶ Walton Park-Litchfield
- ▶ One of the largest stills in the country-

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Stories of truck scales and truckers
- ▶ Trucking industry big in Litchfield. 5 different trucking companies here... Schmidt truck lines, Buskie truck lines
- ▶ Saratoga Club considered the nicest restaurant between St. Louis and Chicago
- ▶ Skinny's Cafe
- ▶ Little empathy for architecture
- ▶ Story of Mother Jones in Mt. Olive.
- ▶ Story of Soulsby Station. People come and look, but leave without the information they need.
- ▶ “One armed bandits”
- ▶ History of Parson's Marathon Gas Station.
- ▶ Story of juke boxes
- ▶ Traveling is important
- ▶ Coal mining industry-several mines relied on Route 66 to ship coal before railroads were prominent. Slag piles still exist.
- ▶ Funk brothers would drive cattle to Chicago. Cattle trails may have become Route 66.
- ▶ In 1927, roads were impassible between Staunton and Mt. Olive during heavy rains. In 1930, when Route 66 was established, solved this problem. The highway changed lives... connected people. Concrete ribbon meant a lot to

communities.

- ▶ Route 66 was going to follow Route 4. Illinois wanted to boast that they had the first all-paved section of Route 66... temporarily made Route 4 the alignment. 1926-1930...maps show "Temporary Route 66".
- ▶ Before 1926, maps called "trail maps" instead of "highway maps."

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Centennial book for Litchfield
- ▶ Maps of coal mines in the area.
- ▶ Newspaper articles available in the Litchfield library
- ▶ Director of community college

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Tremendous interest from visitors in Europe, we do little to encourage this tourism.
- ▶ Bikers travel the entire route
- ▶ A small prairie (7 acres between I-55 and Old Route 66... owned by IDOT) exists north of the weigh station (2 miles north of town)-help to enhance and preserve the natural heritage. Some prairies were established on the west side. Interpretive trails.
- ▶ Germans, Austrians, Dutch. Not just a road; it's a dream, idea, adventure, going places. Have a real interest in the New World... sense of adventure... don't know exactly what they're looking for. Like the wide open spaces
- ▶ Need someone to provide information in each community.
- ▶ Audio information recorded in different languages for each site. Like the Odell Gas Station.

- ▶ Sets of Burma Shave signs
- ▶ Mail Pouch Chewing Tobacco silos.
- ▶ Meramec Caverns advertising on barns.
- ▶ Collect oral histories of Route 66.
- ▶ Collect pictorial histories of Route 66.
- ▶ Original billboards to provide an experience.
- ▶ Make the route user-friendly. Need signage to direct visitors to significant sites. Confusing signage... some signs have years, others don't. Listing of attractions.
- ▶ Visitors experience communities and who lives in them.
- ▶ Interpret the commercial value of the Route 66... it was the "interstate." Rail center, truck lines...umbilical cord to the world.
- ▶ Proper signage important to foreign visitors. Germans have been coming since 1990. 95% travelers go east to west. Visitors can miss features depending on which alignment they choose. National Scenic Byway signs could solve this.
- ▶ Several original square concrete right-of-way markers falling in disrepair that should be saved (Henley)

Bloomington/Normal Region Public Meeting: August 27, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway. What "must-see" places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

Bloomington/Normal

- ▶ Pine Street in Normal: 4 buildings
- ▶ Downtown Bloomington: The square (buildings)
- ▶ McLean County History Museum (downtown Bloomington)

- ▶ State Farm buildings downtown
- ▶ Lincoln Connections
- ▶ Illinois State University
- ▶ Steak 'n Shake, original – Monical's Pizza
- ▶ Miller Park, southwest part of town and zoo, tourist park
- ▶ Center for Performing Arts
- ▶ Beer Nuts factory
- ▶ Beich Candy
- ▶ Uptown Normal
- ▶ Constitution Trail (multi-use trail in Normal)

Funks Grove

- ▶ Maple Sirup Camp
- ▶ Sugar Grove Nature Center: Family Heritage and History, maple syrup
- ▶ Funk Prairie Home (Shirley)

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ State Trooper: Chester Henry
- ▶ 1900 Fire, 6 blocks downtown
- ▶ Railroad (C & A)
- ▶ McLean Stevenson, born in Bloomington
- ▶ Adlai Stevenson

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Historical Society: McLean County,
- ▶ Greg Koos: Executive Director of McLean County Museum of History
- ▶ Jo Rayfield: ISU archivist
- ▶ Funk book: contacts included
- ▶ John Weiss' book about Route 66 in Illinois
- ▶ Route 66: Goin' Somewhere (The Road in McLean County), 1995, Terri Ryburn, LaMonte
- ▶ Route 66: Using the Road to Teach Local History, Terri Ryburn, LaMonte

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Visitor/Education Center: focus on younger generations
- ▶ Education is key
- ▶ Included in classrooms?
- ▶ Not much left as far as the original goes- some things that are left are in need of much repair. Volunteer efforts could help.

Carlinville Region Public Meeting: August 29, 2007

A Route 66 tourist has come to town who is interested in the old highway.

What "must-see" places or things would you show him/her in and around your community?

Carlinville

- ▶ Blackburn College
- ▶ Bike Trail- ITS road, main street. Along side Route 66 in most places. Map is available.
- ▶ Macoupin County Courthouse
- ▶ Old Macoupin County Jail
- ▶ Notre Dame
- ▶ Sears Catalog Houses- 154
- ▶ Historical Society in Carlinville
- ▶ Orphanage at Carlinville- mafia connections
- ▶ Honeybee in Carlinville
- ▶ Square and Gazebo in Carlinville
- ▶ Christmas Market celebration in Carlinville
- ▶ Lincoln Rock- speech – plaque on Methodist Church
- ▶ Carlinville square- round about , original brick pavement
- ▶ Beaver Dam State Park
- ▶ Palmer House- governor

- ▶ Loomis House- ghosts
- ▶ Melody Inn- dance

Benld

- ▶ Huddle Inn- Huddlesons
- ▶ Episcopal Church- Up John architect
- ▶ CCC Camp- county fairgrounds
- ▶ Coliseum Ballroom- 2nd largest ballroom, 1926
- ▶ Russian Orthodox Church, 1895
- ▶ Benld Bike Trail- IL train terminal
- ▶ Capone Still- East side of Benld
- ▶ Sugar consumption high
- ▶ Red Light District on the way to St. Louis, in Benld/ Mt. Claire
- ▶ Whirl-A-Whip

Staunton

- ▶ Temple Building, built by miners. Theater, now furniture store.
- ▶ Hospital in Staunton
- ▶ Staunton- classic car collection
- ▶ Henry's Rabbit Ranch, Staunton
- ▶ Final pavement laid in Staunton for Rt. 66- tavern issues
- ▶ Labor Temple Building
- ▶ Old clock tower
- ▶ WPA mural at Post Office

Girard

- ▶ GAR monument- Girard cemetery
- ▶ Oak Leaf Country Club in Girard

Virden

- ▶ Miners Memorial, Virden
- ▶ WPA Mural

Gillespie

- ▶ WPA Mural

Litchfield

- ▶ Ariston Cafe, Litchfield

Mt. Olive

- ▶ Mother Jones monument, Mt. Olive
- ▶ Soulsby Station, Mt. Olive

Hamel

- ▶ Meramec Caverns mural

Bunker Hill

- ▶ Lincoln monument and statue

Mining

- ▶ Coal Mining Industry (18 in area)- Route 66's use in the business
- ▶ Greenridge Coal Mine/Village (between Girard and Nilwood)
- ▶ Still building- coal mine- No. 5 mine, code word

Others

- ▶ Orchards
- ▶ Road to the Capital- Springfield travelers
- ▶ Orchard Inn
- ▶ Artic/Ortic (sp?) Inn- mafia connections
- ▶ Barn at Lake Williamson- milk and stills. Right on Rt. 66
- ▶ Connection to Chicago and St. Louis and prohibition
- ▶ Drug Store Museum and Soda Fountain
- ▶ ITS station- now a home
- ▶ Arch- 1927 at high school
- ▶ American Hotel, now apartments. Lincoln Apartments
- ▶ Prairie Farms
- ▶ Original Pavement and Alignment of the actual road itself- Half Mile Section North of Country Club. Laid continuous pavement.
- ▶ Turkey Tracks
- ▶ Civil War- Medal of Honor. Cemetery
- ▶ Union Activity- funeral homes in Gillespie and Benld
- ▶ 1st Vietnam Memorial in Dorchester, 1967
- ▶ Agricultural fields-juxtaposition with agriculture and mining
- ▶ Railroad tracks through Benld and Gillespie
- ▶ Chicago and Alton Railroad

What stories from your community would you share?

- ▶ Betting on Football, Carlinville semipro team follow up with Mr. McLaughlin
- ▶ Richard Rowett- civil war general (7th Regiment), breeder of beagle dogs, horse won Kentucky Derby in 1899
- ▶ Ottwell- Started development for 4H
- ▶ Car Club out of Girard, Challengers, 50-60s, Wed. night dances. Accidents by members on Route
- ▶ Girard- Circus, Barnum and Bailey, stranded and made money at show to get out of town
- ▶ Birger Gang- leading crime family in local area. Capone gang came down and took over. Attempted to bomb from an airplane on rivals.
- ▶ Tie Rt. 4 to Rt. 66
- ▶ Stagecoach Routes came through Macoupin County. Trail crossed Macoupin Creek by Carlinville
- ▶ Ed Taylor getting recipe for chili from jailed Mexican
- ▶ Loomis House and Courthouse scandal story
- ▶ Staunton Rib Feast Cook-off
- ▶ Coal hauling on Route 66
- ▶ Tour de Doughnut Bike Ride
- ▶ Tour de Coal Bike Ride
- ▶ Staunton Homecoming
- ▶ Staunton Christmas Walk
- ▶ Illinois Traction System (ITS) trolley network/Route 66: trail

Are there people, documents, or other resources that could help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ White City- Midstate Motorcycle Club- Scrambles Race Track- now hill climbing and still in operation
- ▶ Girard Sesquiental Book- available at Library

- ▶ Civic Center in Benld
- ▶ Illinois crime book, by Bill Nunes
- ▶ Microfilmed all newspapers in IL- collected Staunton Star Times clippings. Other local papers from the era. 1920... State Bond Issue 4. Highway was not called Rt. 4 or 66, instead called the “hard road by ---’s place”
- ▶ Research place names
- ▶ Hard roads were needed for farmers with milk cows and transporting- Good Roads Movement
- ▶ ITS trails, www.its-trail.org
- ▶ UIS collection of oral histories- Collin Davis- check local libraries (Gillespie)
- ▶ Frank Fries- Mr. McLaughlin
- ▶ John Madden and mayors from local areas- poster for speech against Hitler
- ▶ Owner of Coliseum- murdered
- ▶ Gillespie High School TV station- films of senior citizens interviewed (personal stories)- at library
- ▶ Carlinville is tied to Chicago- money for the fire
- ▶ Forbidden Archaeology, Coal Man, 1898
- ▶ Bloody Williamson
- ▶ UFO-Air Ship Flap, 1898, Carlinville
- ▶ Tony Fassero, Benld
- ▶ Mr. DeMusie, Benld, owns site of Capone still
- ▶ Mary Newman, Benld library
- ▶ Mrs. Farro, owner of Coliseum, “Murder in Benld”
- ▶ Staunton Chamber of Commerce, www.stauntonIL.com
- ▶ Illinois DNR website

Chicago Public Meeting:

November 1, 2007

When a Route 66 tourist visits Chicago, what are some “must see” places, things, or activities that he/she should experience?

- ▶ Buckingham Fountain

- ▶ Chicago “walkable” environment
- ▶ Boat tour
- ▶ Cultural institutions
- ▶ Architecture
- ▶ Lou Mitchells, get milk duds
- ▶ Motor Row
- ▶ Lakeshore Drive
- ▶ “Where the road begins”, hub for transportation, road wouldn’t exist without Chicago, follows the old railroad tracks west.
- ▶ Bridges on Jackson and Adams great place for interpretation
- ▶ Ogden Ave. (motor related est.)
- ▶ Exploration of the west started in Chicago. Tie Chicago to exploring the west.
- ▶ Chicago now serves college students and downtown residents who could profit from this connection to the past.
- ▶ Chicago is described as the most “American” of U.S. cities—also state considered most “American”
- ▶ Castle Car Wash: unique 1925 gas station—needs to be saved

How should Route 66 be interpreted and celebrated in the Chicago area?

- ▶ Bridges on Jackson and Adams great place for interpretation
- ▶ Rentable/purchase GPS units, “Navigon” devices that guide you through the city
- ▶ MP3 guides for city walking tour
- ▶ Sense of adventure—discover on your own
- ▶ Brochures of attractions along the route
- ▶ Architecture Foundation as a visitor center—docents could include Route 66 in their tours—on the corner of Jackson & Michigan Ave.
- ▶ Route 66 monument on Rt. starting point adjacent to Buckingham Fountain—use sidewalks—street objects (pylons) like on Halstead and Adams or Old Town between Division and North

- ▶ East-West corridors really lack identity. Within city need to develop walking tours and other opportunities that spur development on Ogden, Jackson and Adams—signage on Ogden Ave. and Douglas Park
- ▶ DVD guide should be considered—series of modules (chapters)
- ▶ “New road of opportunity”—testimonials from the past
- ▶ Parking locations where people can feel comfortable getting out and about—maybe some photo opportunities on Ogden where people can stop and have their picture taken
- ▶ Something patterned after Mrs. Oleary’s Fire Fun Run—maybe a bicycle tour
- ▶ Take the El and other transportation to see the city
- ▶ Graphic identity for all information

East St. Louis Region Meeting:

December 5, 2007

When a Route 66 tourist is in town, what are some “must see” places, things, or activities that he/she should experience?

- ▶ McKinley Bridge/Chain of Rocks Bridge/Eads Bridge as period crossings into St. Louis
- ▶ Cahokia Mounds
- ▶ Collinsville has five national historic sites nearby
- ▶ Fairmont City National City Stockyards (plans to revitalize sections of it)
- ▶ McKinley Bridge has a six sided kiosk; monument to steel; bike/traffic/pedestrian access
- ▶ East St. Louis Riverfront/casino/ Collinsville Ave. goes past City Hall—all on route to Eads Bridge
- ▶ Fairmont Raceway on Collinsville Rd.
- ▶ Luna Cafe/Twin Oaks Motel/Apple Motel/on route to Chain of Rocks Bridge

Historic toll booth will be restored to bridge.

- ▶ Gateway Classic Cars will have a museum
- ▶ Majestic Theater/Spivey Bldg. in E. St. Louis
- ▶ Katherine Dunham Museum in E. St. Louis
- ▶ Gateway Raceway
- ▶ St. Louis Road in Collinsville drive-in diner
- ▶ Miles Davis home in E. St. Louis
- ▶ First Bulgarian Church in U.S. in Granite City (Maple Blvd.)
- ▶ Bel Air Drive-in Pontoon Beach
- ▶ Springer's Creek Winery in Edwardsville (Sam Makler) in Edwardsville (historic structure on 66)
- ▶ Louis and Clark Nelson Campus College
- ▶ Yanda Log Cabin-Glen Carbon (covered bridge)
- ▶ Granite City, Zippel home, one of first homes, now a museum.
- ▶ LeClaire Historic District in Edwardsville, old car show, Rt. 66 Festival
- ▶ Mother Road Pottery in Hamel
- ▶ Scotties, Church of the Neon Cross, Railroad terminal (Rt. 66 Station)—all in Hamel
- ▶ Merimac Caverns barn north of Hamel
- ▶ Willoboughy Farm interpretive center
- ▶ Niedinghause Granite City
- ▶ Historic homes in Edwardsville
- ▶ Louis and Clark Historic Site

What stories about your community would you share with travelers?

- ▶ Mary Meachum Underground Railroad. Slaves would cross rivers in skiffs. Some of the farms along river in Granite City have symbols (graffiti) chisled in foundation

- ▶ Library in Collinsville historic museum has stories on ketchup bottle and other interesting info.
- ▶ Gangster stories in Madison Area (Buster Wortman)
- ▶ Famous people in E. St. Louis, Miles Davis, others (contact the library)
- ▶ Stories of the stockyards, railroads, etc. in E. St. Louis
- ▶ Richards Brick, oldest mfr. Of brick in U.S.—still operating, one of first. Historic LeClaire District (Madison Co. Historical Soc, Edwardsville)
- ▶ Sports championships in E. St. Louis

What documents, people, or other resources will help us learn about Route 66 in your community?

- ▶ Reginald Petty in E. St. Louis is community historian
- ▶ Bill Nunes/Andrew Theising E. St. Louis history
- ▶ Elmer Stille in Granite City (historian)

Do you have opinions about how Route 66 should be revitalized?

- ▶ Inventory old 66 structures, encourage owners to participate in renovation
- ▶ Clear map of what is considered 66 (wayfinding an issue)
- ▶ In this area need a more detailed Madison/St. Claire County map because of confusion
- ▶ GPS downloadable map
- ▶ Audio guide with oral history “stories”
- ▶ Balance interests—not everyone is a history junky

Appendix 2: 2007 Guest Registry Data

Illinois Route 66 Museum and Hall of Fame, Pontiac

Visitors from the U.S.:

Alabama.....	19
Alaska.....	19
Arizona.....	73
Arkansas.....	9
California.....	125
Colorado.....	30
Connecticut.....	8
Delaware.....	3
Florida.....	65
Georgia.....	19
Hawaii.....	11
Idaho.....	5
Illinois.....	3,523
Indiana.....	214
Iowa.....	60
Kansas.....	20
Kentucky.....	23
Louisiana.....	2
Maine.....	1
Maryland.....	14
Massachusetts.....	34
Michigan.....	164
Minnesota.....	72
Mississippi.....	7
Missouri.....	68
Montana.....	6
Nebraska.....	6
Nevada.....	8
New Hampshire.....	9
New Jersey.....	9
New Mexico.....	3
New York.....	38
North Carolina.....	29
North Dakota.....	9
Ohio.....	133
Oklahoma.....	5
Oregon.....	15
Pennsylvania.....	25

South Carolina.....	9
South Dakota.....	4
Tennessee.....	18
Texas.....	95
Utah.....	6
Vermont.....	4
Virginia.....	14
Washington.....	19
W. Virginia.....	5
Wisconsin.....	103

TOTAL U.S..... 5,610
(minus Illinois: 2,087)

International Visitors

Australia.....	40
Austria.....	18
Belgium.....	37
Brazil.....	2
Canada.....	59
China.....	20
Czech Rep.....	1
Denmark.....	13
Finland.....	27
France.....	48
Germany.....	110
Greece.....	2
Holland.....	28
Hungary.....	2
Italy.....	62
Japan.....	19
Netherlands.....	52
New Zealand.....	7
Norway.....	48
Poland.....	3
Serbia.....	2
Singapore.....	3
South Africa.....	2

Spain.....	11
Sweden.....	12
Switzerland.....	31
United Kingdom.....	197

TOTAL International...856

Visitation by Month

January.....	101
February.....	56
March.....	289
April.....	357
May.....	700
June.....	866
July.....	1,399
August.....	847
September.....	850
October.....	645
November.....	255
December.....	101

TOTAL 2007..... 6,466




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