

## The Indiana Byway Program

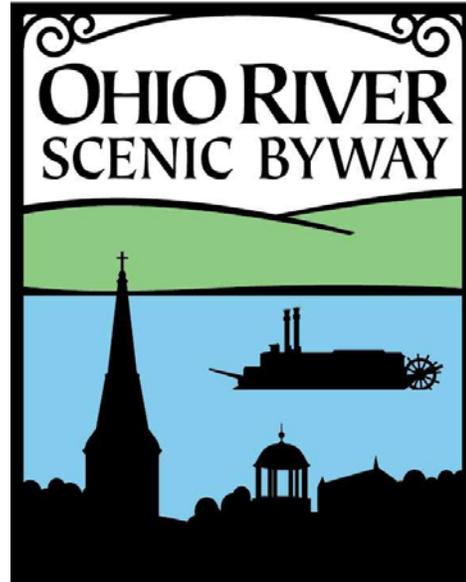
The Indiana Byway Program has been in existence since about 1997 and is designed to preserve, protect, enhance and recognize transportation corridors of unique character. These corridors are notable examples of our nation's beauty, history, culture and recreational experience. Featured highways were designated nationally by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002 from nominations presented by the states. INDOT is responsible for submitting Indiana route nominations for national designation and for submitting projects for discretionary grant funding.

More than just scenic highways byways possess the outstanding qualities that exemplify the diverse regional character of our nation. Because Indiana wants byway designation to mean more than identification by a sign, the Indiana Program emphasizes the same intrinsic qualities used under the federal program. Indiana has been recognized as a leader among multi-state byways.

Indiana has two nationally-designated byways and one state byway. All began as multi-county initiatives in towns representing a range of resources, socioeconomic and geographic diversity. Each was initially designated a state byway. Local support groups, interested in seeking national designation, were willing to tackle a range of corridor issues, develop corridor management plans and work toward implementation of those plans. Working with the Indiana Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources, and the Indiana Division of the Federal Highway Administration, INDOT

provides professional support to the local byway leaders.

## The Ohio River Scenic Byway



The Ohio River Scenic Byway (ORSB) is a 302-mile route that roughly parallels the famous river so important to the early settlement of the continental United States. Most of the route follows state roads, but some sections fall under local jurisdiction. The ORSB extends across 13 southern Indiana counties. In 1998 the Ohio and Illinois portions of the byway joined the Indiana section to form a 967-mile National Scenic Byway.

The Ohio River Scenic Route, Inc., the local support group in Indiana, worked years to establish the byway. Designated a state scenic byway in 1992 and a National Scenic Byway in 1996, the ORSB is based on an economic development strategy that balances tourism with resource management. While promoting its intrinsic qualities, local supporters have

always considered the importance of economic development.

As it winds its way through the hilly topography, the ORSB links river towns, most of which were settled in the early 19th century. While some byway communities appear unaffected by the global economy, significant influence radiates from Cincinnati, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; and Evansville, Indiana. Economic development is also evident near the sites where riverboat gaming has been established. In most every community the need for economic development and growth has required a balance with respect for the region's natural beauty and tranquil quality of life.

The most visible evidence of the ORSB has been the byway route signs and gateway signs. In 2000 INDOT crews installed ORSB route signs on state highways and provided signs for segments under local jurisdiction. In 2002 gateway signs with the ORSB and America's Byways™ logo were erected by INDOT at key entry points to the corridor. Route signs have also been installed in Illinois and Ohio. Since the byway route signs went up, sources in all three states have reported a growth

in requests for information from prospective travelers.

Attempting to create a seamless traveling experience, an interpretive master plan for the three-state byway was published in 2002. A single firm collected resource material, developed initial themes, helped choose interpretive sites and prepared the plan. Interpretation focuses on and helps protect cultural, historic and natural resources, while enabling travelers to sample the diversity and natural beauty. Now, byway leaders in Indiana have initiated an ambitious project to share this resource and bring it to life for the public by creating interpretive displays along the byway. A series of meetings in 2004 generated local input on themes and locations for about 70 displays.

A key multi-state project established a unique website and created a travel brochure highlighting the ORSB corridor. [www.ohioriverscenicbyway.org](http://www.ohioriverscenicbyway.org) went live in fall 2004 as an engaging user-friendly website that entices travelers and residents to explore and unwind. The companion brochure features byway themes, events and resource sites depicted on a useful map.



Map by Mapquest

## The Historic National Road

The Historic National Road (HNR) is a 156-mile, nine-county corridor across central Indiana. Most of the byway today is signed as US 40, but some stretches are state highways, county roads and local streets. First conceived under Thomas Jefferson in 1806, the road became the nation's first federally funded interstate highway. From Cumberland, Maryland to Vandalia, Illinois, the road was originally created to link the eastern seaboard with the western interior. The National Road is truly the road that built the nation.

The HNR in Indiana features a collection of historic architecture from the earliest day of the road through the automobile era. Views along the route alternate from agrarian scenes to rural countryside and pike towns. Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Richmond are located on the National Road.

The Indiana National Road Association (INRA) was founded by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana to focus historic preservation along the byway and to build community awareness and pride in the road. They have achieved significant progress.

With local citizen involvement and Historic Landmark's support, INRA seeks to improve development practices along the HNR. An early "coffee cottage" gas station in Terre Haute was saved and relocated. INRA joined local residents to support the application of "context sensitive design" techniques through the Town of Cumberland. In Greenfield INRA helped create a program to fund historic façade preservation along the byway. INRA also supports Plainfield's preservation and relocation of an original tollhouse

and Richmond's preservation efforts in the Whitewater River Gorge.

The HNR in Indiana was designated a state scenic byway in 1996 and a National Scenic Byway in 1998 for its cultural and historic qualities. In 2002 Indiana joined Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Illinois, to earn the very highest national designation available...All American Road.



To create a byway image and establish a common thread for travelers, representatives of the six National Road states engaged in lively debates over route signs. The image seen here has greeted byway travelers in Indiana since early 2002. The other states followed suit and installed similar signs along their segments of the route. In 2004 INDOT installed gateway signs incorporating this and the America's Byways™ logo at high traffic locations. Gateway signs alert motorists that they have an opportunity to sample this significant national resource.

The Interpretive Master Plan kicked off in 1999 was completed in 2002. With that foundation the INRA board took a page from the board of the ORSB and

initiated an interpretive display project of its own. Interpretive panels, historical markers and audio media will invite travelers to share and understand the history, culture and special quality of this All American Road.

Tradition is an integral part of the National Road's identity. To celebrate its unique character, the HNR in Indiana has successfully staged four antique auto tours. Vintage cars from Indiana and around the Midwest descend on small town Indiana to travel back to the Golden Age of automobiles. The

Indiana National Road Association has received national recognition for these tours and is a featured example among "Best Practices" for byway events.

Marketing and promotion are vital to byways. In 2004 INRA concluded a two-year effort to create an image for the byway organization, develop membership brochures and driving tour guide, and to establish a dynamic new website. Sample the Historic National Road in Indiana at:

[www.indiananationalroad.org](http://www.indiananationalroad.org).



Map by Mapquest

### Indiana Historic Pathways

In December 2004 Indiana designated the first new byway in the state since 1996. Indiana's Historic Pathways (IHP), two corridors in southern Indiana best described as the "Y" formed by US 50 and US 150 will commemorate the vital role of transportation in settling the Hoosier State. The local byway support group successfully completed the formal application process in August of 2004.

Buffalo traveling between Wisconsin and Kentucky salt licks traversed southern Indiana. Early Native Americans subsequently followed the buffalo. Years later stage coaches and

the railroads carried passengers and goods along these corridors as settlers moved north from the Ohio River and westward from Cincinnati through Vincennes on the way to St. Louis. Highways, like US 50 and US 150, generally followed the railroads.

After designation the new byway will look forward to crafting a corridor management plan based upon the vision of byway stakeholders. With support from key state and federal agencies, signage, interpretation and marketing are likely in the future of Indiana's newest byway.

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