



Illinois River Road Receives New Grants To Focus on Cycling & Byway History

Peoria, IL (August 7, 2012)—Two recent grants will allow the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway to celebrate the history and archaeology of the byway and make the byway more of a destination for cycling enthusiasts.

The Illinois River Road received a \$70,500 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration enabling the byway to share hundreds of historical sites & stories with byway travelers through downloadable audio narratives. These narratives will educate, entertain and enlighten travelers about the rich history of the region. Local citizens will be called upon to share their knowledge and experiences of the region and its historical resources for these narratives. These stories will be shared via illinoisriverroad.org. This project will complement the extensive collection of nature-based sites throughout the Illinois River Road corridor.

The second grant is a \$271,069 award that will go toward the design and purchase of 362 bicycle racks to be placed at key sites and communities along Illinois' National Scenic Byways throughout the state. This is a collaborative initiative by the seven Illinois Byways and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources designed to enhance the attractiveness of our Byways as a destination for the cycling community. Two dozen of these bicycle racks will be located in Illinois River Road sites and communities. The rack design, featuring byway logos and QR codes, will allow visitors to easily and quickly obtain information about the byway on which they are traveling. The QR codes will connect travelers to information about communities, places to eat, shop, stay and in some cases connect to other bike paths and trail systems. This system of bike racks will welcome cyclists to Illinois' byways as well as act as a conduit for byway information.

Byway Director Anaise Berry says these grants will help further the Byway's mission of spurring rural economic development. "We want to provide a living museum that will enhance people's experience of the nature, history, archaeology and other intrinsic qualities of the Byway. These grants allow us to provide and maintain the unique recreational and educational experiences for visitors and residents alike that will help to sustain local communities' economies and quality of life."

The Illinois River Road was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, which recognizes roads having outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. It stretches 291 miles alongside the Illinois River from Ottawa to Havana and is notable for its natural and historic qualities. The Byway covers ten counties including Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall, Stark, Fulton, and Mason. The Byway has six gateway communities including Ottawa, Princeton, Peoria, Pekin, Canton, and Havana. Learn more at www.illinoisriverroad.org. If you have questions or would like more information please contact Byway Director Anaise Berry at 495-5909 or aberry@edc.h-p.org.

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