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PRESS RELEASE

ILLINOIS RIVER ROAD CONNECTS VISITORS TO SMALL BUSINESSES

(November 3, 2014) – The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway not only promotes the region’s natural sites between Ottawa and Havana, it now directs visitors to unique and authentic visitor-based businesses located throughout the byway region through its redesigned website and recently launched mobile site. With funding from Illinois Department of Transportation and Office of Tourism grants, these new products enhance the visitors’ experience, as well as provide small businesses opportunities to promote themselves to those traveling the 10-county byway region.

Anaise Berry, Byway Executive Director, states “Byway travelers and nature tourists seek the off the beaten path experience - Exploring communities’ history and attractions, dining in restaurants that aren’t part of a national chain, shopping in distinctive stores, purchasing items made or grown here in the region, as well as staying in lodging facilities such as B&Bs, inns and boutique hotels. We want to connect visitors to the very businesses they’re looking for when traveling the Illinois River Road.” In an economic development study completed by the Illinois River Road in 2012, the byway organization found that byway visitors wanted to know more about these kinds of experiences as part of their trip. Additionally, small byway businesses that were surveyed expressed a desire to be promoted on the Illinois River Road website, so that visiting consumers could find them more easily. “Connecting byway travelers to small businesses is a win-win situation for visitors and small business owners,” stated byway board member and small business owner, Julie Hubbard.

With over 150,000 visitors to the site annually, IllinoisRiverRoad.org helps connect nature and byway travelers to the small businesses that enrich their visit. The Illinois River Road website (IllinoisRiverRoad.org) now allows for those unique, locally-owned businesses that complement the visitor experience to be listed on the site, free of charge. The site also offers advertising opportunities in addition to the free listing.

Launched just in time for October fall foliage visitors and upcoming holiday activities is the Illinois River Road’s mobile site, providing easy access to information about byway communities, nature sites, events, small businesses and attractions throughout the corridor. This new mobile site will assist visitors with trip planning while on the road.

For more information about the Illinois River Road or how to get a business listed, visit illinoisriverroad.org and click on Get Involved.

If you have questions or would like to schedule an interview with Byway Executive Director, Anaise Berry, please contact Anaise at (309) 256-8170 or aberry@illinoisriverroad.org.

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The Illinois River Road was designated one of America’s Byways® 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 Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway is a program of North Central IL Council of Governments.



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