



Transportation Budget Affecting National Scenic Byway Program

National Byway Foundation Passes Strategic Plan & Looks for Support from Budget Cuts.

Peoria, IL (April 15, 2011) – The United States Department of Transportation awarded over \$387 million in funding to scenic byways since the program's inception in 1995. The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway (IRRNSB) was fortunate enough to receive nearly \$1 million of that funding since 2007. Unfortunately, the structure of the newly proposed Transportation Bill means the Byway's access to those funding dollars may be in jeopardy. If the reauthorization bill passes as is, fifty-five programs will be consolidated into five streamlined categories to compete for federal funding, and the National Scenic Byway Program will no longer be funded as a separate and distinct program.

Local communities along the Illinois River Road may suffer if funding is lost. "Economic development and small business growth is at stake if the Byway doesn't receive the funding it needs. This program has the opportunity to create many new businesses along the byway and boost local economies," says IRRNSB Director Anaise Berry.

Berry, who is also the chairperson of the National Scenic Byway Foundation, says because of this changing Transportation program, the NSBF has updated its strategic plan to include stepped up efforts to help local byway programs like the IRRNSB through increased efforts to educate legislators and the general public on the importance of the programs. "The foundation's new strategic plan includes goals of generating interest and funding for Byway programs in order to keep them alive and well for future generations to enjoy."

The NSBF program offers Secretarial-level designation, technical assistance and a small, merit-based grant program designed to spur innovation, partnerships and economic growth. While it is a comparatively small program, the scenic byways program has a huge impact across the nation and in right here in our region. This program enables domestic and international travelers to truly *experience* America by traveling roads off the beaten path and exploring the history, culture and beauty of our communities and roadways.

Anaise Berry is available for interviews to discuss how this national foundation will benefit the local Byway program and ensure growth for regional communities along the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway.



100 SW WATER STREET • PEORIA, IL 61602
309-495-5909 • Fax: 309-495-5941 • www.illinoisriverroad.org
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