



Local Scenic Byway Receives \$110,000 Grant

Peoria, IL (December 12, 2008) — The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway continues to receive great news that will impact our region. The program was recently awarded more than \$100,000 from the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byways Grant Program. This money will be used to complete a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of byway-related support businesses for economic development opportunities throughout the corridor, and a study on potential expansion of the route to the north and the south.

Economic Development for Central Illinois COO, Vickie Clark, says the Byway federal grant funds will contribute to creating a stronger visitor based economy along both sides of the Illinois River. "Receiving continued grant funding shows the value and the potential this program creates for community economies all along the river. This particular grant allows us to take the next step in preparing byway communities for economic development. Creating more tourism businesses will provide more authentic experiences for visitors and more opportunities for them to spend money. This helps us directly influence the economy of these communities and also builds the community vibrancy needed to attract new residents to the area. It's a win for all of us."

"Our area's Scenic Byway is quickly becoming a tourist magnet for travelers from around the region," said Congressman Ray LaHood. "With the National Scenic Byway destination, the Illinois River Road will play a vital role in enhancing the economy of our region by attracting visitors who may have gone elsewhere. The River Road is a great path for exploring the natural beauty and wonderful communities of Central Illinois, and a perfect destination for folks looking for get-aways close to home."

Earlier this month the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway organization announced the launch of its website (www.illinoisriverroad.org) and new road signs being put up along the route by IDOT. The signs and the website are both designed to assist those traveling along the scenic route.

The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway was also awarded \$40,000 from the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism for marketing-related projects.

For more information or interviews please contact Renee Charles at 309-495-5905 or rcharles@h-p.org or Byways Director Anaise Berry at 495-5909 or aberry@edc.h-p.org

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