



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 18, 2008

Media Contact:

Travis McGlasson
Office 309-495-5951
Cell 309-229-9905

Illinois River Road Celebrates Byway Designation and New Logo with Tour

The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway kicked off a caravan tour of Central Illinois today. Beginning at each end of the Byway, two teams traveled through the byway gateway communities of Canton, East Peoria, Havana, Ottawa, Pekin, Peoria, and Princeton.

At each gathering members of the public were present to listen to the impact the Byway will have on their communities from Illinois River Road representatives, economic development professionals, congressional representatives, and local civic and community leaders. The new Illinois River Road logo was also unveiled in each community.

"Illinois tourism is a \$25 billion dollar a year industry, and the byway is a very viable economic engine for our essential visitor-based economy," said Vickie Clark, Chief Operating Officer for the Economic Development Council for Central Illinois.

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byways Program recognizes roads having outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. The effort to seek the National Scenic Byway designation began in 2004 when a nature tourism committee formed by the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau had nominated sites along and near the Illinois River Road assessed for "visitor readiness." This led to the application process for the byway designation, resulting in the award by FHWA in September 2005.

Currently, the Illinois River Road includes sites in 10 counties throughout the region including; Bureau, Fulton, LaSalle, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Putnam, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties.

"There are nearly 4,000,000 miles of highway across the country, and being one of only 126 routes designated as a National Scenic Byway is truly something special. Growth from the byway efforts benefits us as Central Illinois residents as well as visitors to our region," said Anaise Berry, Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway.

###

The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway is one of a collection of 126 routes recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as the most significant routes throughout the country, based on their scenery, cultural, historical, natural, recreational or archaeological opportunities.



124 SW ADAMS • SUITE 300 • PEORIA, IL 61602
309-495-5909 • Fax: 309-495-5941 • www.illinoisriverroad.org

A program of the Economic Development Council for Central Illinois