



Leading Missouri in becoming one of America's most memorable tourist destinations.

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Route 66 Dedicated As Scenic Byway

Known by names such as The Mother Road and Main Street of America, Missouri's Historic Route 66 received another title this month: Missouri Scenic Byway.

Classic cars, Route 66 memorabilia and a keynote speech by author and U.S. Route 66 historian Susan Kelly Kirkpatrick highlighted the May 5 dedication of Historic Route 66 as a Missouri Scenic Byway.

The Route 66 Association of Missouri, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Transportation, celebrated with a ribbon cutting in Springfield. In the mid-1920s, as part of a nationwide grass-roots movement for better roads, community leaders based in Springfield were among those who worked to have the planned highway run southwest between St. Louis and Joplin, through Springfield, and receive the "66" route designation.

The dedication took place on an old strip of Route 66 pavement near the current southeast corner of Glenstone Avenue and Kearney Street.

The ceremony included the unveiling of a new blue and white "Historic Route 66 Byway" sign. The signs will guide travelers from all over the world to the many short segments of old Route 66 that remain as part of other state or local roads.

The Missouri Highways

and Transportation Commission voted Nov. 9, 2005, to designate Historic Route 66 as a Byway at the request of the Route 66 Association of Missouri and after many public meetings in communities

Route 66 heritage. Commercial enticements for products like Burma Shave and destinations like Meramec Caverns appeared not only on billboards and, eventually, electrified signs, but also on

slanted barn roofs and weathered fence posts.

The other roadways designated as state Byways in Missouri are: Little Dixie Highway of the Great River Road; Cliff Drive and Spirit of Kansas City, both in Kansas City; Crowley's Ridge, Dunklin County; Stars and Stripes, Stoddard

County; Old Trails Road and Santa Fe Trail, Lafayette County; and Ozark Mountain Highroad, Branson area.



along I-44. The last stretch of the old nationwide Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985.

Under the Byways program, MoDOT works with local communities and groups to identify existing roadways that offer one or more intrinsic qualities that provide a basis for Byway designation: archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational or scenic. This reimbursement program provides funding for improvements along Byways – 80 percent paid with federal money and 20 percent local match.

In the case of Route 66, the outdoor advertising that helped the highway develop as an economic lifeline remains an integral part of the

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In Sympathy

The Missouri Division of Tourism expresses its sympathy to Rep. Gina Walsh, her family, and Maureen Rone, on the loss of James T. Walsh, husband, father, and son-in-law.



Island Kings

by John Robinson

Ask good Missourians to describe the Bootheel. You'll hear some common themes.

Flat. Farmland. Fault.

Those are honest perceptions. But they only scratch the surface of this complex ecosystem. The area may represent the most dramatic transformation of land use in North America, certainly in Missouri. It used to be a swamp. In the '50s and '60s, Disney shows portrayed the king of that swamp, Francis Marion, "The Swamp Fox."

Today, as a result of a complex network of drainage ditches, The Swamp Fox would have precious little cover. And while this

residents around Mississippi County began the effort to save a thousand-acre virgin hardwood forest, they faced a dilemma. What would they name the park? It could easily be Big Oak, Hickory, Swamp Cottonwood, Green Ash, American Elm, Black Willow, Silver Maple, Giant Cane, Persimmon and Bald Cypress State Park. Fact is, a dozen state champion trees tower over the park's boardwalk, including two national champs. This recipe for greatness blends swamp and lowland forest with soil so fertile that a remarkable variety of trees grow to steroidal proportions.



agricultural marvel continues to evolve from king cotton to rice paddies and shrimp farms, at least three gems reveal the roots of this land.

Having never been there, I thought the centerpiece of Big Oak Tree State Park was a big oak tree. Indeed, when

Even more spectacular, at least in acreage, is Mingo National Wildlife Refuge. It forms the border of Wayne and Stoddard counties, and features a surprisingly accessible glimpse into the heart of a swamp, with all of its critters. Migrating waterfowl appreci-



ate the courtesy of this preserve, and they reward visitors with up-close views of their habits and habitat. The visitor center presents the single most awesome display I've ever seen anywhere in my life. Walking through the front door, you see two buck deer, giant antlers locked together so their snouts are inches from each other. Their ritual territorial fight had changed into a fight for survival when they realized they were hopelessly locked together. They were found in the swamp, where they drowned as they tried to cooperate for a drink of water.

Cutting across the Bootheel's instep, Crowley's Ridge cannot hide. This unusual geologic phenomenon towers an average 200 feet above the delta along 42 miles of designated National Scenic Byway. You can view the ridge from Mingo, and just about everywhere. For an up-close look, travel to Morris State Park in Dunklin County, then accompany your appetite 21 miles north to Dexter, or 18 miles south to Holcomb -- take your pick -- to celebrate another discovery: the best dry ribs in the world.

The Bootheel. Surprise. Things are not always as they seem.

AgriMissouri Hosts Agritourism Workshop

Traveling to rural destinations is becoming more popular as urban residents seek places to pick ripe blueberries, negotiate turns in corn mazes and enjoy Missouri wines. Many agricultural producers are seizing these agritourism opportunities and looking for ways to host larger groups. Group bus tours are one way to increase the number of visitors to an agriculture business.

On May 23, the Missouri Department of Agriculture will co-sponsor a workshop entitled "Growing Your Group Tour Market" at the George Washington Carver State Office Building, 1616 Missouri Blvd., in Jefferson City. The workshop runs from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. It will educate agricultural operators about the facilities required to host a bus tour, how to find group tour operators and how to market their businesses to group tour operators.

"Group tours are a great way to add value to any agritourism business," said Tony Stafford, director of MDA's Agriculture Business



Photo courtesy of Shatto Milk Company

Development Division. "The more people who visit a site and experience the Missouri products first-hand, the more potential that business, and our state's economy, have for growth."

AgriMissouri Commission member Donna Cordle, a leading tourism industry expert from Legacy Dimensions, will open the workshop. A panel discussion led by agritourism business leaders and additional tourism industry insiders will follow. Sarah Gehring, member services coordina-

tor of AgriMissouri, will also host a presentation on the benefits of membership in the AgriMissouri program. AgriMissouri is a promotional program through MDA which helps Missouri companies and producers effectively market their goods and services as Missouri-made.

The cost to attend is \$10 for AgriMissouri and Missouri Travel Council members, \$15 for non-members. For more information, contact Sarah Gehring at 573-522-9213 or e-mail: Sarah.Gehring@mda.mo.gov.

Important Cooperative Marketing Dates

May 31, 2006	Notification of FY07 awards. Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Request deadline for FY06 projects.
June 30, 2006	FY06 Program year ends.
July 1, 2006	FY07 Program year begins. FY07 Brochure application due at MDT between July 1, 2006, and April 15, 2007.
July 18, 2006	Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Workshop, Harry S Truman Building, Jefferson City, (time to be announced).
August 31, 2006	Final Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Request must be postmarked by this date.
Sept. 1, 2006	FY07 small-project winter/spring marketing applications due at MDT by 5 p.m.
FYI to All FY2007 Applicants	If you have media deadlines prior to the award notification date you may still submit your product approval requests prior to the deadline. We will issue conditional product approvals subject to the funding of the projects. Obtaining product approval ensures that your ads are in compliance with the CMP guidelines and will be reimbursable.

Questions? Call 573-751-3246 OR 573-526-1551.

ADD your Business to the 2007 MISSOURI VACATION PLANNER

Between now and June 15, 2006, the Missouri Division of Tourism is accepting submissions from the industry for the 2007 *Official Missouri Vacation Planner*.

The annual publication carries more than 3,000 listings and chart items for attractions and accommodations around Missouri. Each year, a half million *Vacation Planners* spread the Missouri message to travelers throughout the United States and abroad.

Industry members must use the Missouri Tourism Web site extranet (www.VisitMO.com/directory) to submit their

listings for the 2007 *Planner*. Username and password information, extranet usage instructions and detailed descriptions of listing categories and criteria are available at the extranet Web address. Industry members may contact Mike Murray, *Vacation Planner* editor, at 573-522-5501 if they run into difficulties submitting their listings.

No listings from the 2006 *Planner* will be automatically carried over to the 2007 edition. Industry members

must update and re-authorize their listings online, even when there has been no change in their information. In addition, members are encouraged to update their Profile in the extranet, including e-mail address, so MDT will have current contact information to reach members with future deadlines.

The *Vacation Planner* carries listings and chart items in the following general categories: things to do, outdoors, equestrian, wineries and breweries, bed and breakfast, lodging, camping, golf and canoeing. Listings and chart items are published at no cost to business owners. Paid advertisements in the 2007 *Planner* are arranged through Madden Preprint Media, the publication's contract publisher. Call 800-284-0584.

Copies of the 2006 *Official Missouri Vacation Planner* may be ordered by calling 800-519-2100 or logging on to www.VisitMO.com.

NO listings from the 2006 *Vacation Planner* will be automatically carried over

must use the extranet to submit listings

Submissions until
June 15, 2006

more than **3,000** listings

2006 LEADS AVAILABLE

The following leads and buyer profiles are available. If you have not received leads and would like them e-mailed, please contact Donna Cordle at DonnaCordle@msn.com.

- American Bus Association
- Bank Travel Conference
- Bank Travel Conference buyer questionnaire profiles

Important Calendar Dates

May 6-10

International Pow Wow 2006,
Orlando, Fla.

May 13-21

See America Week / National
Tourism Week

May 23

"Growing Your Group Tour
Market" Agritourism Workshop,
Jefferson City

June 4-6

Missouri Association of
Convention and Visitor Bureaus
Annual Meeting,
Branson

June 12-13

Missouri Tourism
Commission meeting,
Lake of the Ozarks

June 23-25

Focus On Cultural Tourism,
Chicago

July 18

Joint Meeting Planner's
Tradeshaw,
Jefferson City

August 19-22

ESTO,
St. Paul, Minn.

August 20-21

Missouri Showcase Marketplace,
Excelsior Springs

September 10-12

American Society of
Travel Agents,
Orlando

September 18-20

Missouri Governor's Conference
on Tourism,
St. Charles

September 28-29

Censtates TTRA Marketing /
Research Conference,
St. Charles, Ill.

October 10-11

National Conference for
Attraction Professionals,
Boca Raton, Fla.

October 11-13

TIA Marketing Outlook Forum,
Boca Raton, Fla.

November 3-7

NTA Annual Convention,
Salt Lake City