

Along the Byway

Iowa Mississippi River Parkway
Commission Newsletter

VOLUME 2 MAY 2002

NSB funds Great River Road Interpretive Center

Dubuque's America's River Project was one of three sites in Iowa to receive Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byway (NSB) funds this spring.

OVERHEARD ALONG THE BYWAY



This visitor to America's River in Dubuque is just like those on the road outside your door. She wants to be as close to the water as possible, to smell its flow and feel its coolness.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta celebrated Earth Day by announcing 136 projects in 38 states, including several in Iowa, will share \$20 million in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) scenic byway grants.

Just down the road outside your door, in Dubuque, the Great River Road Interpretive Center at the Mississippi River Museum received funding to coordinate several interpretive centers, create identification signs, an interpretive guide map and website. The center is envisioned to become a model for all ten states to develop a network of more than 50 centers. The project was approved for \$737,376, including nearly \$450,00 for construction of the

2,000 square foot facility within the Mississippi River Museum at the America's River Project.

The Great River Road Interpretive Center application was successful in part because it helped inventory, preserve, and enhance the qualities of the byway for visitors. Has your community defined visitors' needs as they experience the Great River Road?

Turn to page two for some ideas that can help push this process toward successful outcomes like those captured by the folks at America's River in Dubuque.

BIRD LOVERS ON THE RIVER

Full color maps of birding sites along Iowa's Great River Road will soon be available from your Iowa Mississippi River Parkway County Commissioner. The Great River Birding trail maps, also funded by FHWA scenic byway funds, provide travelers with free interpretive information on safe accessible spots where they can learn about and appreciate the diversity of bird species that use the Upper Mississippi River as a major migratory flyway in North America. The map designates the Great River Road as a special place for bird watching throughout the year. To request copies, contact:

Allamakee: Denise Strudthoff, 563-864-7052
Clayton: M.J. Smith, 563-252-3283
Clinton: Russell Clausen, 563-243-4201
Des Moines: Nikki Hassenfritz, 319-937-8291
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Muscatine: John Oberhaus, 319-726-5395
Scott: Patsy Ramacitti, 563-332-5446
If you cannot reach these commissioners, call Chair Ramacitti at 563-332-5446

**DID YOU MISS THE NSB GRANT WRITERS WORKSHOP? SEE
INSIDE**

COMMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER WELCOMED BY EDITOR

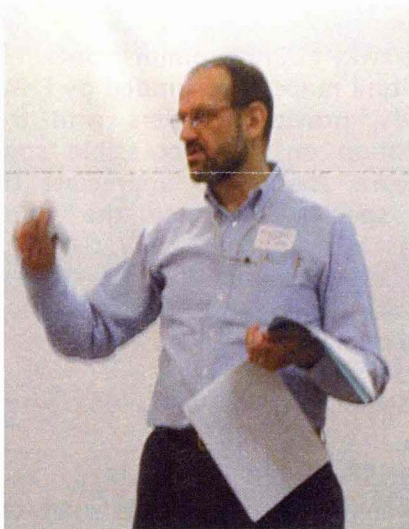
AT: mjsmith@alpinecom.net

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SHOWING THE WAY

If you missed the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC)-sponsored National Scenic Byway Workshop in Bettendorf on April 6, we're sorry. Everyone made new friends and learned first-hand what the grant readers in Washington, D.C. look for in successful projects... **keep these notes handy for your next application.**

NSB projects, like the new interpretive center in Dubuque, come from Federal Highway Administration Grants, and the next round of applications were due in Iowa Scenic Byway Coordinator Margaret Roetman's office on May 31, 2002. The MRPC Commissioners will rank projects in mid June and return them to Jan Thompson, our Federal Highways' contact at the Iowa Department of Transportation. The projects will then be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, D.C. by the end of July.



Dennis Adams, from the National Scenic Byways Office, FHWA, reminds us, "When beginning to think about your community's needs, remember NSB funds are for everything on the edge of the road, such as lighting and overlooks, but not for the roads themselves."

Adams stressed there is strong competition across the country for NSB monies, so it is important to manage community expectations from that viewpoint.

Where to start

For NSB or any project, complete a self-assessment by answering these basic questions in your own mind. Who is our traveler? What is the broad vision? What is the compelling story of our project? In other words, "Give travelers what they want; tell them what they want to hear."

Then talk to business people; find out who is stopping on your road. A well-written application will communicate how you're going to serve the traveler and why an investment will pay off. Be sure your project fits snugly into NSB parameters.

Speaker Cheryl Newman, of the National Scenic Byway Resource Center, suggested a cooperative grant writing approach. Gather partners such as an English teacher, a fund raiser, a computer whiz, and a Julia Child, because eating makes grant work more fun!

The grant application itself

Detailed description – Imagine that you are telling someone about your project. Include what, how, where, why and when. Like a good speech, tell the grant reader what you're going to explain. Explain. Then tell them what you've already explained. Put the grant reader in your shoes. Document coordination between agencies.

Abstract – Create a clear and concise picture that excites the reader. Give them a clear sense of your customer and why you are intending to serve them.

Budget – needs to be as detailed as possible.

Narrative – use bullets and numbered lists to help the reader. Project narrative should also list specific benefits.

Attachments – photos and drawings are so helpful. If used effectively, they have the potential to bring the grant reader in Washington, D.C. right into your community.

Work Plan – establish the project development process. Why is this a good investment? Detail your partnerships, consider working with schools.

In today's environment, your service or facility must meet multiple purposes. Make the grassroots grow – have a vision for how the locals will fuel the program.

Match – The size and depth of your local match tells a grant reader who is standing behind your project. Consider environmental dollars. Do you have a common goal with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), an agency that has helped develop marine services for visitors?

For inquiries about grant writing, contact Dennis Adams at 202-366-6515 or send email to dennis.adams@fhwa.dot.gov

COORDINATING THEMES ALONG THE RIVER



MRPC Commissioners front left, Al Bohling and Jerry Enzler, back, Gene Enke and Patsy Ramicitti are helping Great River Road stakeholders develop and coordinate themes which flow from community to community along the river.

America's Byways Resource Center representative Cheryl Newman recently met with Mississippi River Parkway Commissioners from the ten states and resource people from Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a riverboat laureate to create common interpretive themes. Two University of Wisconsin professors, Michael Gross and Ron Zimmerman, led the diverse group of storytellers on a mission to develop three levels of interpretive themes for communities and stakeholders to promote.

The first level, termed an overall theme, serves as a big umbrella message for stakeholders: The Mississippi River is the flow of life shaping land and peoples.

Sample Sub-Themes:

- Theme 1: The Mississippi River is a ribbon of life for people, plants and animals.
- Theme 2: As the river has influenced people, people have influenced the river.
- Theme 3: The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures.
- Theme 4: The Mississippi River inspires a variety of folk life, literary, fine art, and musical forms.
- Theme 5: The Mississippi River has profoundly shaped American history.
- Theme 6: The strategic importance of the Mississippi River has resulted in conflict between nations and peoples.
- Theme 7: The Mississippi River architecture reflects distinctive styles affected by cultural and natural resources.
- Theme 8: The Mississippi is one of the world's great rivers noted for its beauty, grandeur and diversity.
- Theme 9: The history of the Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river's economic and commercial importance.
- Theme 10: Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life.
- Theme 11: The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries.

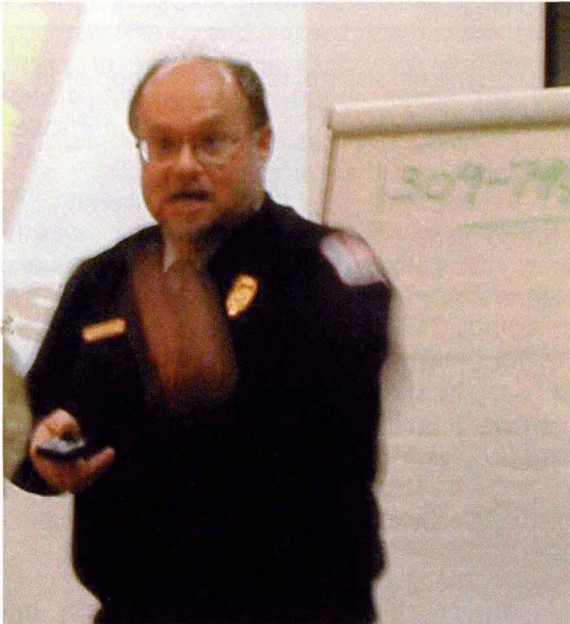
As you look up and down the river, which of the themes relates to your community's story? What about your neighbors to the north and south? Where do your stories fit together?

The next step will be for the national Mississippi River Parkway Commission to adopt an interpretive plan based on these general themes at their meeting in West Memphis, Arkansas August 2-3, 2002.

The third level of themes, or messages, is still being refined. These will be tailored specifically for our visitors. To learn more, contact Newman at The National Scenic Byways Resource Center: 800-4byways, extension 5.

Do something worth remembering.
Elvis Presley

WORKING WITH THE CORPS



Roger Bollman is the Park and Natural Resources Manager for The Rock Island District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The officer who establishes land management policies and former park ranger recently told byway stakeholders, "Our vision is to create recreational services and satisfy our customers, while promoting sound management of the river, a national and global resource." In charge of shoreline services, he manages Class A, class C and free campgrounds and 22 boat ramps. Bollman invites communities, "Take a look at partnerships with us."

His measures of quality include clean facilities, courteous staff and uniform rules. Call Bollman for information or referral to USACE questions at: 309-794-4522.

This newsletter is funded by the Federal Highway Administration.



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