

Just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in National Scenic Byway Foundation. Don't forget to add info@nsbfoundation.com to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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February 2018 Issue

The Return of Byway Leader Training

This training program, first offered in 2015, is designed for new and renewed byway leaders throughout the nation. Attendees can expect to learn:

- How Byway organizations are thriving without Federal dollars
- Strategies to update your Corridor Management Plan (CMP)
- Priorities for marketing, partnerships and fund-raising
- Byway jargon - Viewshed Protection; Wayfinding; Pull-off Interpretation; etc.



2015 Byway Leader Training Class held in Millersburg, Ohio.

Sponsored by the National Scenic Byway Foundation, the training will be offered in three locations as pre-conference offerings:

- April 17-18, 2018; Kearney Nebraska - along the Historic Lincoln Highway
- June 4-5, 2018; Schenectady NY - along the Mohawk Towpath Byway
- Aug 21-22, 2018; Richmond Indiana - along the National Road

To register for the April conference, contact Sharon Strouse, sharonstrouse@gmail.com by March 1.

Attend one of three Byway Leader Trainings, designed for new and renewed byway leaders this year for only \$50.00 (includes 4 meals/snacks and all materials); overnight accommodations costs vary. Registration deadline 6 weeks before training date.

Apr. 17-18

Before the
**Heartland Byway
Conference**
April 18-20

Held in Kearney, NE
along the Historic Lincoln
Highway at the
Audubon Rowe Sanctuary

Jun. 4-5

Before the
**Byway Storytelling
Summit**
June 6

Held in Schenectady, NY
along the Mohawk Towpath
Scenic Byway

Aug. 21-22

Before the
**Midwest Byway
Conference**
August 22-24

Held in Richmond, IN
along the National Road

Contact sharonstrouse@gmail.com to register or make inquiries.

"This training was a great experience and allowed for great networking among byway professionals." - Jan Gammon, Iowa Lincoln Highway

"The NSBF Byway Leader Training was very motivating and gave some great information." - Joyce Chambers, Indiana Lincoln Highway

Is your scenic byway interpretation in trouble? *(part 1)*

The project is done, the scenic byway is completed, the interpretive plan done, and all of the thousands of dollars spent on interpretation media to bring the byway story alive to your visitors are in place. You are finally all done? NO! You have really just begun.

The problem with a lot of byway interpretation is that it was not planned to be sustainable. Often done by contractors' who are not trained interpretive planners, byway interpretation tends to have lots of information, not inspiration/interpretation and tends to provide answers to questions that no one is asking! The interpretation was done to simply "complete the project", and never tested or evaluated to see if the interpretation actually worked - successfully transmitted messages to visitors - before the final panels or other media were completed. It was not planned to be a living, on-going interpretive system in need of monitoring and yearly updating. Most of the interpretation media are final! Once the panels are up, or the booklets printed, it's all done! Everyone goes home. And that's the problem.



Signage at Hayden Ranch Colorado.

Now a year or so has passed, and most of the residents/visitors have seen the panels, or done the booklet directed drive. Once you have done it - you've done it. So if the byway group is monitoring the byway tourism draw, they will probably see a drop in interest from locals and many visitors over time. The story and presentation are "old news" and the scenic byway slowly returns to being what it always was - a scenic road.

Is your byway interpretation going to be sustainable?

By sustainable I mean that your byway will function for many years in successfully being a tourism draw, as well as a community educational experience and resource, rather than have high interest at the start, and then less and less interest as the years pass. Here are some questions to help you think about your byway sustainability.

1. **Will you evaluate your byway interpretation to see if it actually is successful in interpreting your story to visitors?** If you are spending tens of thousands of dollars on interpretation - spend part of that to make sure the stuff works!
2. **Is the interpretation media planned for more than one market sector to increase the number of groups attracted to your byway?** How will your byway interpretation plan be marketed for such audiences as: school groups, history buffs, natural history buffs, botanists, geologists, etc. What media will you have for each diverse group?
3. **After the project is done, who will be taking care of the byway interpretation to make sure that interpretive panels are in place and haven't been vandalized, and other interpretive media is updated?** For example, the Ohio River Road Scenic Byway goes through three states! Just who is going to make sure the interpretive media for that byway is kept up and maintained and that the interpretation is a seamless experience for visitors in the future?
4. **How will you keep your byway "interesting" and fun for visitors after they have seen the initial panels or booklet many times?** Why should they do the byway again?
5. **With gas prices going up, what are the benefits to visitors to do a scenic byway drive? What's in it for them?** What do they get in return for their investment of time and money to drive the byway? What benefits are you marketing?
6. **If you spent tens of thousands of dollars on your scenic byway interpretation, just how do you really know that you are getting tens of thousands of dollars in benefits from that interpretation?** Where is the proof of pay back?



Another way to display information in the town of Rangely, Colorado.

Seen it, done it - what's next?

The fact is that byway interpretation, like any other interpretation, can get boring after a while, and in need of freshening up! And if the interpretation was boring to start with, this becomes critical in the long-range interpretation sustainability and marketing plan. Quite simply, byway interpretation has to be updated - in some cases seasonally, and in many cases yearly or at least every two years or so. So who is going to do this, and with what funding? Without this freshening up, it is hard for byways to maximize their tourism draw potential and be sustainable as a tourism generator for communities and regions more than a few years after their initial development.

The second part of this article will be featured in the March 2018 Newsletter.

John A. Veverka, Certified Interpretive Planner at John Veverka & Associates wrote this article (www.HeritageInterp.com). Want to highlight your Scenic Byway? Send us an email with your idea or article, at info@nsbfoundation.com.

African-American History Along Scenic Byways

America is full of history, some is difficult to remember but there is much we can learn and be inspired by. There are many cultural and historical locations along byways that you can visit during Black History Month. Below are a few byways and resources that may provide inspiration for your local byway.



*New Revived United Methodist Church along the Tubman Byway.
Photo from harriettubmanbyway.org*

- **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** - The Tubman Byway is a self-guided driving tour that winds for 125 miles through the beautiful landscapes and waterscapes of Maryland's Eastern Shore. At the heart of the Byway is the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, which opened in March 2017, and the lands in the area are part of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, designated by Congress in late 2014. Learn more about the [Tubman Byway](#).
- **Black History in Georgia** - The state of Georgia highlighted nine historical tours to meet the demand of tourists from all backgrounds who are eager to learn more about black heritage. Preservationists are responding with vibrant, revealing and engaging exhibits. Learn more at [Explore Georgia](#).
- **West Virginia African-American Heritage Tour** - The African American Heritage Tour was developed by New River Gorge National River and its partners as a smart phone app to uncover and tell the stories of the many black coal miners, railroad workers, and other community members that helped shape West Virginia. Learn more at [New River Gorge National River](#).
- **Selma to Montgomery March Byway** - Journey through history along the trail that marks one of the major historic events in 20th-century American history, the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Learn more at [America's Scenic Byways](#).
- **National Museum of African American History and Culture** - Not directly related to a scenic byway, there is a lot of information available at the National Museum and on their website. Learn more at [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#).

Changes to Facebook - what you need to know!

Have you been hearing about the "Facebook Apocalypse?" It's the latest sign that Facebook plans to decrease the visibility of brand/organization Pages in follower News Feeds, unless those posts "encourage meaningful interactions between people."

The reason is simple. Facebook wants you to spend more money on sponsored posts and ads. That's actually not a bad idea; their advertising can be very precise, and is currently quite affordable.

As we discussed in the most recent NSBF webinar, if you have great Page engagement right now, keep doing what you're doing unless you see that it isn't working any more. Make sure your posts are short, snappy, relevant, interesting, and almost always include a visual of some sort or a video.



Other moves that can help ensure that people see your posts:

- Experiment with Facebook Live video
- [Encourage your Page followers to select the "See First" option](#) to see your posts first in their News Feed, and
- Consider setting up a Group connected to your Page to foster more follower interaction

All the more reason to pay more attention to your own website, blog, and email list. YOU control those, not Mr. Zuckerberg.

Tip brought to you by Tourism Currents - www.tourismcurrents.com

Know the joys of exchanging ideas with like minded Byway communities.

JOIN THE
National Scenic Byway Foundation

Gain a voice; access tools and training; and spread your Byway message.

Visit our website and learn more about membership benefits: www.nsbfoundation.com

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