

Marketing  
Your Byway,  
Volume III

# Delivering Your Message Online

An Introduction  
to Online  
Strategies for  
America's Byways<sup>®</sup>,  
Revised Second  
Edition

come CLOSER  
 *to America*



Marketing Your Byway, Volume III

# Defining Your Message Online

An Introduction to Online  
Strategies for America's Byways®,  
Revised Second Edition

## Purpose

- Learn why promoting your connection to the America's Byways® brand is important to you and the brand.
- Discover the scope and connectedness of online opportunities.
- Understand the basics of social media—what it is, why it applies to byways and how to effectively participate.

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**IMPORTANT:** This document is intended as an introduction to using various Internet resources and participating in online social media. It is not a comprehensive guide, but a starting point for byway organizations.

Note: No single document can explain or guide you through marketing. Use this basic introduction as a catalyst for further study, including reading books about general marketing and destination marketing, attending conferences, or reviewing online sources and noting how other byways have approached their marketing. No “magic bullet” completes your marketing and you are never done—you always have opportunities to share your byway’s story with audiences waiting to hear it.

# The America's Byways Brand



According to the *America's Byways Graphics Standards Manual* at [bywaysonline.org](http://bywaysonline.org), "A brand can be defined as the sum of all information about a product, service or company that is communicated through a name and related identifiers."

- The America's Byway brand communicates key information about the collection of 150 designated routes to visitors, potential guests, community members, byway supporters, congressional representatives, and other stakeholders
- The brand information is a package of correlated elements that can help constituents make decisions, such as whether or not to visit these byways or to advocate for continued funding

## You've Earned It. Use It.

You worked hard to earn designation as one of America's Byways—use the logo with pride! And, more than that: **If Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Scenic Byway Program funds were used to develop the material, the logo must be used.**

**The more the America's Byways logo is used by individual byways, the more effective the America's Byways brand is for all byways.** In addition, when appropriate, you should add the text, "<Byway Name> is part of the America's Byways® collection of 150 nationally designated routes."

## Brand Benefits

- Greater public understanding and appreciation of the authentic American experiences offered by routes in the collection
- Increased recognition and public awareness of the America's Byways brand
- More credibility from other potential partners, organizations, and media outlets

## Individual Byway Benefits

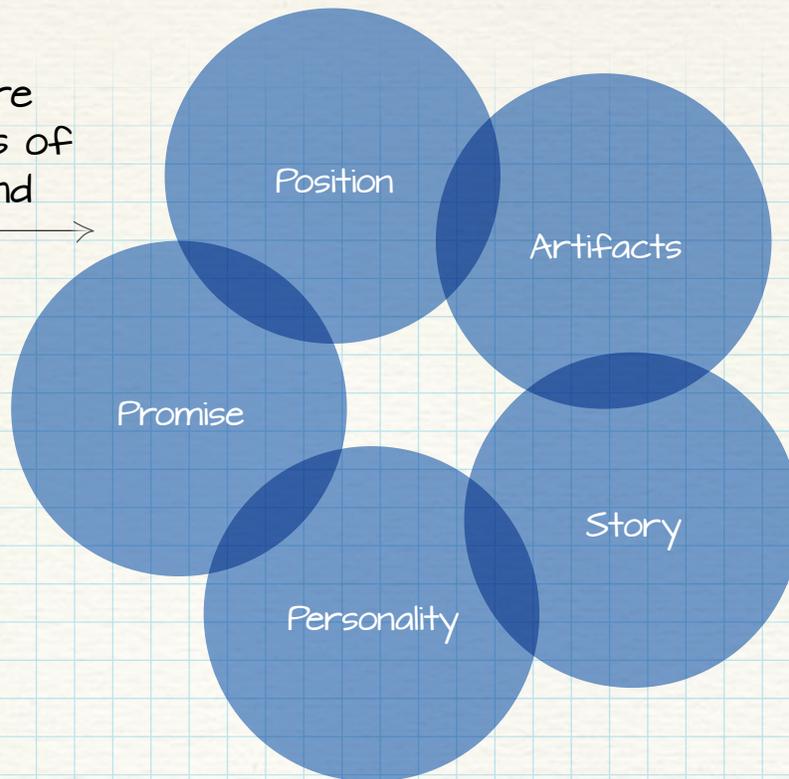
- Greater public understanding and appreciation of the authentic American experiences offered by the byway
- Increased recognition of national designation as part of the America's Byways brand
- More credibility from other potential partners, organizations, and media outlets
- More visitors

come CLOSER



*to America*

## Five Core Elements of the Brand



**Brand Position** - The organization's desired place in the market as it relates to customers, partners, and competition. The America's Byways brand is positioned as the nation's most significant scenic driving routes—a collection of 150 of the best drives the country has to offer, designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

**Brand Promise** - This is the ONE most important thing that the brand promises to deliver — every time! The America's Byways brand promises regionally or nationally significant routes with unique intrinsic qualities for memorable visitor experiences. Travelers can trust they are making the best decision to drive on a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road.

**Brand Personality** - What is the brand known for? What personality traits come to the stakeholder's mind about the brand? The America's Byways brand is known for 150 distinct and diverse driving routes of archaeological, recreational, cultural, natural, historical, or scenic importance, providing inviting, high-quality visitor experiences. While the individual byways are unique, they collectively portray a brand that is vibrant, welcoming, patriotic, interesting, knowledgeable, and thoughtful.

**Brand Message/Story** - This is the history and/or a summary of experiences that add value and credibility to the brand. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation has designated a select collection of byways as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads, based on congressionally directed criteria. All of the designated byways must demonstrate broad grassroots support, careful resource assessment, and conscientious planning to preserve, protect, and promote their corridors' intrinsic qualities. It is an elite collection of worthy driving experiences, unlike any other.

**Brand Artifacts** - These are the tangible elements that represent the brand, such as the name, logo, colors, tagline, fonts, and imagery. Brand artifacts reflect all of the other elements and shape the brand. They create a more tangible way of articulating the brand. The America's Byways logo, "Come Closer" tagline, and fonts represent the collection of distinct and diverse roads designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. The logo is the most visible artifact for individual byways to use to identify brand affiliation.

# Online Goals and Objectives

The long-term online goals for the America's Byways brand and individual byways are to tap the strength of byway-related websites (byways.org, bywaysonline.org, nsbfoundation.com, and individual byway websites) as well as social media to:

- Build strategic public awareness to increase visitor traffic on individual byways for greater positive economic impact and sustainability
- Increase peer-to-peer communication for enhanced learning and better byway management

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## The Brand Internet Presence

Research provided on bywaysonline.org states that “70% of customers want to use a brand to guide their purchase decision.”

Now, combine that idea with the fact that more than 100 million American adults use the Internet to plan travel each year, according to the U.S. Travel Association—and it's clear that a strong brand presence online is an effective approach to building awareness and attracting visitors.

## The Online Opportunity

A strategic way to maximize your affiliation with America's Byways is to enhance your online presence.

For discussion purposes here, the two main types of portals or venues on the Internet are websites for entertainment, information or tools, and social media sites, such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. The broad distinction between websites and social media sites is how visitors engage with the site.

A website provides one-way communication from the site owner to the computer user. It may encourage feedback, purchases, requests for more information, etc., but these communications are sent via e-mail and not posted or shared for all to see.

Social media encourages ongoing communication among the site owner and multiple computer users. At any one time, millions of computer users are engaged in these digital conversations.

Both websites and social media provide important opportunities for individual byways and the America's Byways brand to:

- Engage with current and potential visitors in a more personal way
- Drive visitors to your page on byways.org and your individual byway website for travel research and planning
- Open a continuing dialog with visitors about the driving experience on your byway for further improvements and greater public awareness
- Track and evaluate interactivity, communications, etc.

Sources: <http://www.bywaysonline.org/program/marketing/manual/index>

David A. Shore, Ph.D, Associate Dean and PricewaterhouseCoopers Director, Harvard University; Mercer Management Consulting, Chicago, IL; Prophet Brand Strategy, Inc., Chicago, IL



## A Closer Look at Travelers Using the Internet from the U.S. Travel Association

The public's use of the Internet changes rapidly and researchers continually update their statistics. These observations come from the U.S. Travel Association's 2009 report, and it's likely more travelers now plan their trips using online sources than ever before.

- The largest segment of online travelers continues to be those between 30 and 49 years of age, and slightly more than half of all online travelers live in households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more.
- Almost all online travelers have access to the Internet at home and frequency of usage is high and gradually increasing.
- More than three quarters of all online travelers, some 105 million adults, reported planning pleasure trips online in the past 12 months.
- Importantly, most see the Internet as a very useful or essential tool for planning many/most aspects of the trip, including where to stay overnight, travel routes, potential places to visit, attractions to visit, as well as learning about what to do.
- Sufficient shopping-related information on the Internet appears to be lacking, and is, thus, viewed as the greatest "weakness" among online travel planners. Improvement in the amount of shopping information should be viewed as a key area for improvement for travel planners, since shopping is one of the top activities enjoyed by domestic travelers.

Travelers meet travelers online - sharing experiences, tips and recommendations.

Byways leaders meet byway leaders online - sharing learning opportunities, experiences and skill development.

Source: Daniel Fesenmaier and Suzanne Cook, "Travelers' Use of the Internet, 2009," U.S. Travel Association. Reprinted with permission.

# Websites

Websites are familiar but essential communication portals on the Internet. Several sites already exist to provide byway-related content. Each website has a unique purpose, delivering very different types of information to specific audiences. You should visit each of these sites regularly and encourage your byway members to do so, too.

## byways.org

Primary Audiences: Traveling public, media

This is the flagship website of the entire National Scenic Byways Program. The primary public site, its purpose is to attract travelers to the individual byways by providing useful planning information. All 150 designated byways have a page on the site and opportunities for showcasing events, photography, and other resources for travelers on the site. All individual byway sites should feature a link to this site. Byways can update their pages by contacting FHWA.



## bywaysonline.org

Primary Audiences: Byway leaders, federal agency managers, state, and tribal byway coordinators, affiliated organizations/partners

This website provides the “business” information to byway organizations, primarily nomination, grant, and marketing support from the FHWA-National Scenic Byways Program in Washington, DC. The site archives the federal announcements and documents related to the National Scenic Byways Program and also includes forums where byway practitioners can network with their peers.



## nsbfoundation.com

Primary Audiences: Traveling public, byway community members/stakeholders, national partners, members of Congress

The National Scenic Byway Foundation uses its website in its mission to serve as a nonprofit advocate of the byway community, sharing information and resources that will help foster cooperative opportunities for long-term byway sustainability.



# Your Website

Many byways already manage their own byway websites or work collaboratively with other byways in their regions or states to maintain attractive and dynamic shared websites.

Because your website reflects your unique route and the integrity of the America's Byways brand, your website should be created by a professional website developer to ensure that it functions intuitively with quality graphics.

Once you choose a website developer, clearly state your communication goals and requirements. Set measurable goals with a reasonable time period. What do you want to accomplish with your site? For most byways, your website will exist to entice visitors and share information with the traveling public. You will want to see incremental increases in new visitors on your website, for example, which you can track through Google Analytics. Keep track of monthly visits and evaluate your progress.

To help you reach those goals, your developer will discuss search engine optimization, or SEO, tactics with you. SEO is the term that refers to enhancing your site to attract Google, Yahoo, and other search engines, so that their responses to byway-related queries will include your byway's website address, or URL (formally known as the Uniform Resource Locator). Visitors who see your URL on their searches are more likely to visit your site. SEO is a way to increase your online exposure.

## Use the Brand Logo

In the early part of your website construction, explain to your developer about your relationship to the America's Byways brand. Share the link to download the logo for use on your site: [bywaysonline.org/program/marketing/downloads.html](http://bywaysonline.org/program/marketing/downloads.html). The logo can be programmed to be a clickable link to the [byways.org](http://byways.org) website, or include the words, "To learn more about America's Byways®, click here," with a link to the [byways.org](http://byways.org) website.

Include the text, "<Byway Name> is part of the America's Byways collection of 150 nationally designated routes," when you first mention the name of your byway in a press release, on a Web page, during interviews, or anywhere it is appropriate.

If you received FHWA grants or other federal funding to build your website, you must use the America's Byways logo on your site.

## Meet 508 Requirements

Section 508, which is an updated amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, addresses accessibility of electronic and information technologies for people with disabilities. This legal code strives to eliminate barriers and encourage new opportunities for all audiences.

If you received FHWA grants or other federal funding to build your website, you must comply with the Section 508 accessibility standards (see next page for details).

## Ongoing Site Management

In addition to professional development, your byway website should be managed by a dedicated individual who is familiar with HyperText Markup Language (HTML), professional writing standards, and content posts that can help achieve the byway's goals and reflect the integrity of the America's Byways brand.

New information and images should appear on the site at least once a month to keep your audience coming back. Information here may be similar, but should not be identical, to the content on your [byways.org](http://byways.org) Web page.

## Use a "Contact Us" Form

To prevent spam attacks and other unwanted automated e-mail, consider using a "Contact Us" form rather than a traditional e-mail link and Captcha verification, which is a data entry request that only a human user could complete. Captcha (or "Completely Automated Public Turing Test To Tell Computers and Humans Apart") is free and available at [captcha.net](http://captcha.net). Be sure your Captcha verification is accessible to all users. For example, in addition to an image- or text-based verification, offer an audio or sound option for visually impaired users.

## Consider Smartphones

Smartphones are the most common mobile communication devices in the U.S., according to Pew Internet research (March 2012). Optimize your website's graphics, fonts, and navigation for small screens and fingertip browsing. Depending on your goals, budget, and technological capabilities, you could invest in customized downloadable applications (apps) to offer travelers interactive itineraries or tours. (Note: This introductory guide cannot cover the many rapidly advancing technical considerations. Ask your website developer for assistance or find optimization programs online.)

# 508 Compliance

Byway organizations that have received FHWA grants or other federal funding for a website must comply with the Section 508 law. These federal accessibility standards are described in detail in the Section 508 Reference Guide from the United States Patent and Trademark Office, under “1194.22 Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications.”

While these requirements may seem daunting, a well-practiced professional developer understands these standards and can ensure that your site complies.

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## KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR SECTION 508 COMPLIANCE

### 1194.22 WEB-BASED INTRANET AND INTERNET INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS

- (a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via “alt”, “longdesc”, or in element content).
- (b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- (c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- (d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- (e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
- (f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
- (g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- (h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- (i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- (j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
- (k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.
- (l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- (m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in, or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).
- (n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- (o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- (p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

Source: Section 508 Reference Guide from the United States Patent and Trademark Office, under “1194.22 Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/cio/s508/03web.htm>.

## E-mail



Your byway group, your stakeholders and your potential visitors routinely use e-mail. This basic communication vehicle on the Internet allows you to easily share information, images, and other digital resources with a large number of people. It works equally well for disseminating immediate news or for regular (e.g., weekly or monthly) updates.

In Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, or other free or for-purchase software programs, set up a “signature” that includes the contact information for your byway:

*Your Name*

*Official Byway Name*

*One of the 150 nationally designated routes in the America’s Byways® collection.*

*byways.org*

*Your BywayWebsite*

*Your Phone*

*Your Byway Mailing Address*

Several e-mail service websites allow you to create a brand-based e-mail template with graphics, such as your logo and the America’s Byways logo, and they help manage larger e-mail address lists.

Consider using these brand-based e-mails for a monthly newsletter or “invitations” to events along your byway.

For quality and consistency, consult a marketing professional. Assign a writer or rotate the duty each month. Keep the information succinct and brief. Include photos if possible. Avoid sending mass e-mails more often than twice a month.

One person should be in charge of keeping the e-mail list updated. With these types of online e-mail services, you must agree to use only opt-in e-mail addresses—that is, recipients who have previously indicated that they wish to receive your e-mails. The system allows them to opt-out of your mailings, too.

Aside from the more polished appearance of your e-mails, these Web-based e-mailing services also give you feedback about your mailings. You’ll receive notices of bounce-back addresses (failed delivery); you can see how many people—and who—opened an e-mail message sent from the system. This is a powerful tool for evaluating your communication outreach and building a base of informed byway supporters.

# Social Media

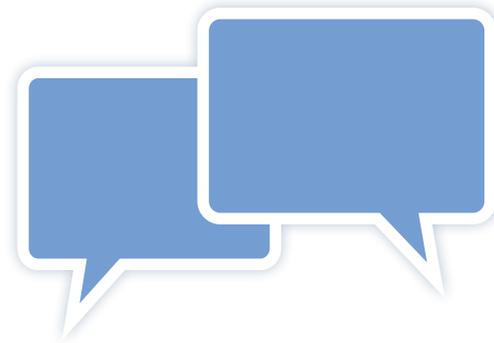
Social media uses the power of the Internet and technology to foster conversations within communities of people of shared interests. Social media includes networking sites (e.g., Facebook), microblogging sites (e.g., Twitter), blogs (e.g., those hosted by Blogger, a Google-based blog site) and image-sharing sites (e.g., Flickr or YouTube).

Social media allows you to:

- Listen and learn.  
Through social media, you can listen to what your visitors say about you and what potential visitors would like to experience. Ask for their stories. Read their reviews. Anticipate their needs before they express them directly to you. You can also learn from other byways. Adapt their best practices for your byway.
- Connect and link.  
Aside from the potential connections between your byway and travelers via social media, you can build connections to the brand and the byway community. You can link to community organizations and events, itineraries and tours, and information about the local attractions that provide reasons to spend time (and money) on the byway.
- Attract and engage.  
Social media works best with concise, interesting, and timely messages that personally engage readers and encourage dialog. Don't sell. Although posing a question in a post may spark some reaction, you'll find that natural-sounding comments, "inside scoops," or personal observations generate more responses.

## Joining Travel and Tourism Conversations

When your byway joins one of the social media venues, you are joining a global conversation based on posted images and comments. These posts can live for a long time, sometimes as part of "viral" threads or as elements of larger conversations.



Just as you would interact thoughtfully with another person physically in front of you, you should also participate with consideration, professionalism, and tact online.

Your online presence should convey:

- Brand integrity
- Authenticity
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Compelling, relevant, useful, accurate, and timely information

Share your passion for your byway with your visitors. Please remember: you represent the America's Byways brand and everything you say and show should reflect the honor of your designation.

# Social Media Tips

- Offer exclusive information or insider tips. Give your friends/followers/fans unique insights to special events, tours, or photo opportunities along your byway and within your byway's communities.
- Ask for their feedback and ideas. Keep the conversation going by asking for their input. Your questions can be fun or serious, as long as they're relevant. Always respond to the feedback.
- Use a casual voice. Your voice—how you speak online—shouldn't be stuffy or too commercial. Keep it personal, casual, and comfortable, yet professional in essence. It's okay to comment on your favorite picture-taking spots along the byway or meeting someone who was 100 and recalled the byway's construction. People love those kind of personal stories.
- Remember that any post is permanent. Even if you delete it, the Internet doesn't. Think before you post. If you're not sure that you should say something, don't. If you wouldn't say it at work, don't post it online. Avoid political, religious, racial, or offensive comments of all kinds.
- Regularly monitor what others post online about your byway. Check your accounts daily (see more about monitoring on the next page). Say "thank you" for the positive comments. If negative comments appear online, address the issues promptly with a positive post. Don't be defensive. Explain what you've done to remedy the situation and invite the individual to come back soon. However, immediately remove inappropriate posts by others that include profanity, pornography, game requests, sales pitches, or scams or related links. Do not respond to them online. Respect your audience and remember that this is a global public forum with people of all ages, from all cultures.
- Be authentic. Say who you are and identify your byway affiliation. For example, if you're blogging, identify yourself as a byway representative. Don't pose as a tourist or manipulate comments from others.
- Never use words with all-capitalized letters. In the digital world, a word in all capital letters is read as shouting. You wouldn't shout at the guy sitting next to you. Don't shout online.

- Cite your sources. If you quote numbers or words, you should cite the original source or author. If you cannot find the source, be suspicious of the citation. Use Snopes.com or other credibility websites to verify information.
- Link to appropriate sites. Before you link to any website, Facebook page, or other online venue, check it for credibility and appropriate content. Know where you're sending your visitors.

## BRAND REMINDER!

Online, keep your personal life separate from your byway activities. When you post as a byway representative, you post for your individual byway—and you post for the America's Byways brand. What you do and say via social media can impact America's Byways as a brand.

When you create a social networking page, site or blog and post opinions and information, you are legally responsible for all content.

"I use social media every single day; not only for my day job, but to fuel my passion for travel. If I'm researching my next trip, I turn to Flickr, Twitter and Facebook, to deepen my knowledge, highlight any potential flash points, and unearth hidden gems in the region. True social media is a meadow of minds; a place where an organic community can mingle at the push of a key. Social media allows us to sprinkle our thoughts and ideas in front of complete strangers, and also provides a platform to confidently confide, observe or converse with anyone who desires the same thing. It's energized by personal equilibrium; and I value social media for continually growing my knowledge of the world around me, because at the very least, it enhances the journey of my core passion: travel."

Ant Stone, Social Media Content Provider  
Reprinted with permission from TravelBlogs.com and the author (trailofants.com).

# Summary

The Internet can be a powerful tool for America's Byway community when the byway community works together.

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## Monitoring and Evaluation

Regularly monitoring your online presence can help you gauge public perceptions of your byway and build positive awareness among relevant audiences. A vast array of monitoring and evaluation tools are available online, some providing daily statistics and others offering more in-depth data weekly or monthly.

Online monitoring and evaluation tools are relatively new. Social media has proven especially difficult to quantify in economic terms. You can track your followers and views; most social media sites offer "insights" or some other tool as part of the membership.

Independent monitoring services, which may range in cost from free to tens of thousands of dollars, provide a snapshot of your exposure online. Learn what people are saying about you, who they are, and where they're located. "Sentiment" evaluations show favorable or negative comments and their sources. This information can help you determine where to work on building more relationships, expanding your online community.

Google Alert is one example of a free monitoring service that is easy to use and provides daily reports of online activity related to your byway based on keywords. Its companion, Google Analytics, provides free website usage data. However, America's Byways Resource Center does not endorse any particular service and we recommend that you consider speaking with an online marketing professional about options for your byway.

## Considerations Before You Begin

Build your online presence (website, Facebook, blogs, etc.) according to what you can realistically handle. Know why you're online and set goals. Then choose which venues fit best.

There are many social media venues online, and America's Byways Resource Center cannot endorse any of them. However, our experience indicates that the types of sites noted in this guide can be ideal for building public awareness, reinforcing the brand presence, and generating visitors to individual byways. But, as with all types of media, in order for you to gain the most from them you must approach these communication channels with thoughtful planning, resources, and a commitment to follow through.

Assign a responsible online liaison. Share and monitor news with other byways, relevant travel sites, and America's Byways Resource Center to strengthen your online presence.

Social media requires at least five hours a week to respond to comments and post new content. To most effectively maintain your online presence, assign one person to be responsible for updating [byways.org](http://byways.org), uploading fresh content to your individual byway website, posting new blog articles, status updates, and tweets, as well as monitoring the comments/alerts and providing any additional input or comments.

It's not difficult, but it takes time and thoughtful preparation. For media such as Facebook or Twitter, try to post two or three times per week on specific days of the week to help you manage your outreach and encourage visitors to look forward to your message(s) each week.

Champion the America's Byways brand. Use the logo. Always mention that your byway is part of the America's Byways collection.

# Website Checklist

WEBSITE	TIMING	CHECKLIST
<p>byways.org</p> 	<p>Quarterly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check that information is current, especially your contacts; send updates to dba@byways.org (note which page(s) on the site you are updating by including your byway name and its URL from your browser)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer byway stories (press releases) to the same contact as noted above</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Always link to your byways.org page in communications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prominently display the logo and link for each social media site where your byway is active, such as Facebook, Twitter or Blogger</li> </ul>
<p>Individual byway website</p> 	<p>Monthly or more frequently</p>	<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> America's Byways logo</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Link to byways.org page</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Brand text that identifies your byway as “part of the America's Byways collection of 150 nationally designated routes”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 508 Accessibility compliance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask local stakeholders, especially businesses and organizations such as the chamber of commerce, CVB, hotels, etc., to include a link on their websites, and provide both your byway logo and the America's Byways logo for embedding on their sites</li> </ul>
<p>Wikipedia</p> 	<p>Twice each year</p>	<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> America's Byways logo</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Link to byways.org page</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Brand text that identifies your byway as “part of the America's Byways collection of 150 nationally designated routes”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sources (see the National Scenic Byways page for examples for citations)</li> </ul>

# Social Media Checklist

MEDIA	TIMING	CHECKLIST
<p data-bbox="215 373 418 426">  <b>Facebook</b> </p> 	<p data-bbox="643 384 837 541">Add posts a few times each week or even daily (but not usually more than once daily)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="881 384 1369 447"><input type="checkbox"/> Review the tips at <a href="https://facebook.com/business">facebook.com/business</a> and at <a href="https://facebook.com/help">facebook.com/help</a> for more information</li> <li data-bbox="881 457 1417 520"><input type="checkbox"/> Assign one person to be the administrator (admin) with the responsibility of posting and monitoring</li> <li data-bbox="881 531 1409 594"><input type="checkbox"/> Continually promote your byway's Facebook page and ask people to "like" it</li> <li data-bbox="881 604 1385 667"><input type="checkbox"/> "Like" other byway pages or pages from local partners and other byway-related organizations</li> <li data-bbox="881 678 1393 772"><input type="checkbox"/> Reference America's Byways in your posts and include the America's Byways logo; occasionally provide the link to <a href="https://byways.org">byways.org</a> in your posts</li> <li data-bbox="881 783 1360 846"><input type="checkbox"/> Review your Facebook "Insights" and weekly usage updates to monitor your activity</li> <li data-bbox="881 856 1417 951"><input type="checkbox"/> Be wary of links to websites outside of the America's Byways collection; always check that the links are legitimate sources</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="215 989 402 1041">  <b>Twitter</b> </p> 	<p data-bbox="643 999 837 1157">Add posts a few times each week or even daily (but not usually more than once daily)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="881 999 1393 1062"><input type="checkbox"/> Assign one person the responsibility of tweeting and monitoring conversations</li> <li data-bbox="881 1073 1190 1104"><input type="checkbox"/> Continually invite followers</li> <li data-bbox="881 1115 1393 1209"><input type="checkbox"/> Reference America's Byways in your posts and include the America's Byways logo; occasionally provide the link to <a href="https://byways.org">byways.org</a> in your posts</li> <li data-bbox="881 1220 1433 1283"><input type="checkbox"/> Provide news, fun facts, and information to someone planning a trip on your byway; never hard sell</li> <li data-bbox="881 1293 1433 1388"><input type="checkbox"/> Be wary of links to websites outside of the America's Byways collection; always check that the links are legitimate sources</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="215 1423 386 1476">  <b>Flickr</b> </p> 	<p data-bbox="643 1434 854 1528">Add posts weekly or when new images become available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="881 1434 1417 1528"><input type="checkbox"/> Create a "Group" page for your byway to feature or when new images photographs that your visitors take and post become available</li> <li data-bbox="881 1539 1385 1602"><input type="checkbox"/> Assign one person the responsibility of posting photos and monitoring discussions</li> <li data-bbox="881 1612 1190 1644"><input type="checkbox"/> Continually invite followers</li> <li data-bbox="881 1654 1401 1749"><input type="checkbox"/> Reference America's Byways in your posts and include the America's Byways logo on your page; show your America's Byways signage in photos</li> <li data-bbox="881 1759 1433 1854"><input type="checkbox"/> Be wary of links to websites outside of the America's Byways collection; always check that the links are legitimate sources</li> </ul>

## WEBSITE



YouTube



## TIMING

Add posts weekly or as relevant videos become available

## CHECKLIST

- Create a page for your byway to feature videos taken by you or your visitors
- Assign one person with the responsibility of posting videos and monitoring comments
- Continually invite followers
- Reference America's Byways in your posts, include the America's Byways logo in your videos, and show your America's Byways signage and the link to [byways.org](http://byways.org) in your videos
- Check "Insights" under your Account tab to monitor your activity
- Be wary of links to websites outside of the America's Byways collection; always check that the links are legitimate sources



Blog



Add posts weekly or daily

- Create a blog to post articles about your byway
- Assign one person the responsibility of writing articles and monitoring discussions
- Continually invite followers
- Reference America's Byways in your posts and include the America's Byways logo on your blog (show your America's Byways signage in photos posted on your blog, too); occasionally provide the link to [byways.org](http://byways.org) in your posts
- Provide news, fun facts, event information, seasonal stories, Points of Interest features, etc., that would interest someone planning a trip on your byway; never hard sell
- Be wary of links to websites outside of the America's Byways collection; always check that the links are legitimate sources

# Getting Started

Online opportunities are constantly changing with new technology developments. The amazing rise of social media for personal and organizational use makes it a valuable communication tool for byways. The Internet hosts thousands of valid social media venues. While America's Byways Resource Center cannot endorse any of them, we have gathered information about getting started with three of the most popular (and free) possibilities: Facebook, Twitter and blogs.



## GETTING STARTED WITH FACEBOOK

This social networking platform allows users to connect and interact with each other as “friends.” They can send messages to each other, and they can “like” the pages of brands, companies, organizations or artists, for example.

Like all other forms of social media, Facebook presents an opportunity to share information, insights, event news, and other updates to potential byway visitors. It also invites “word-of-mouth” testimonials and photographs that encourage new visitors to seek more information from your byway website.

Facebook has about 800 million users, according to the facebook.com newsroom. Some reports have indicated that this leading social network is peaking in the United States and Canada, but it is maintaining a global presence and gaining users in other parts of the world. Facebook administration claims that more than 50% of its active users log on to Facebook in any given day.\*

Before you create a byway page on Facebook, you must have a personal profile. The Facebook site walks you step-by-step through setting up your profile. Once that is set up, you can create a “Page” for your byway. According to Facebook, “Profiles represent individuals and must be held under an individual name, while Pages allow an organization, business, celebrity, or band to maintain a professional presence on Facebook.... People who choose to connect to your Page won't be able to see that you are the Page admin or have any access to your personal account.”

1. Go to [facebook.com/pages/create.php](https://facebook.com/pages/create.php).
2. Click on “Create a Page” beneath the “Sign Up” area.
3. Select “Local Business or Place” from the drop-down menu.
4. Select “Tours/Sightseeing” from the drop-down menu.
5. Fill in “Name of Other Business.” Please set up your name as: <byway name> National Scenic Byway (or All-American Road). For example, Northwest Passage Scenic Byway All-American Road. IMPORTANT: Check your spelling! You cannot change the page name after you create your page.
6. Enter your byway organization's contact information.
7. Click “Create Page.”
8. Choose your photos: Your “profile” photo should feature your byway logo as this will appear next to all of your posts. The large “cover” photo should be a striking visual that reflects the energy of your byway.
9. Upload a jpg of the America's Byways® logo for one of your photos.
10. Add information about your byway, including photographs and more. Check the “Settings” section for privacy and posting limitations you may want to use, such as limited profanity allowed in user posts.
11. When you have completed the sign-up process, if you have a personal Facebook page, go to your personal page and “like” your new byway page. Pages cannot be searched by others until they have at least one friend who likes them.
12. “Like” the America's Byways brand page. Also, search for other byways, partners and businesses and “like” them, too.
13. Next, set up a vanity URL for your page. For example, [facebook.com/northwestpassagescenicbyway](https://facebook.com/northwestpassagescenicbyway). Visit [facebook.com/username](https://facebook.com/username) and follow the instructions to obtain your vanity URL.
14. Post weekly or even daily to your Facebook page and monitor your news feed.

\* Source: Tim Bradshaw. “Is Facebook Peaking in the US?”, <http://blogs.ft.com/fttechhub/2011/06/is-facebook-peaking/>, June 13, 2011.



## GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER

The microblogging service Twitter connects members via brief and frequent posts, called “tweets,” which are limited to 140 characters. Users can “follow” each other; followers automatically receive updated posts.

1. Go to [twitter.com](https://twitter.com).
2. Click on the green box that says “Get Started - Join!”
3. Enter your full name, desired username (use your byway name in the username), a password and e-mail. NOTE: You may have only ONE Twitter account for every e-mail address—so, if you already have a personal e-mail account linked to a personal Twitter account, you’ll need to use a different e-mail address for your byway’s Twitter account.
4. Click “Create My Account.”
5. Upload a picture of your byway or your byway logo to use as your icon.
6. Under “Settings,” you have 140 characters to tell the Tweetosphere a little bit about your byway. Be sure to include “America’s Byways.”



## GETTING STARTED WITH BLOGS

Blogs or “weblogs” provide an immediate, dynamic, and personal approach to communicating with travelers. Think of them as online journals or article-by-article newsletters. They are similar to websites, but usually they use one page with many entries arranged with the newest article at the top. Older entries are often archived. Blogs usually offer a place for readers to add their comments or related information.

Creating a blog and maintaining it requires writing skills and time. Your blog can help showcase your byway’s scenic qualities, highlight seasonal attractions and build excitement about special events. An effective blog can create a loyal following and generate awareness of your byway.

Before you jump into blogging, learn about the blogosphere (keyword: writing blogs) and research other types of travel blogs (keyword: travel blogs).

One of the more popular blog-hosting sites is Blogger from Google. It links to your Gmail and other Google platforms. Simple online instructions guide you through the set-up process.



### WHAT’S THAT BOX?

A Quick Response (QR) code allows code readers, typically downloaded onto mobile phones, to scan the matrix barcode and link to a URL or other data at a high speed.

You can generate your QR code for one page of your byway’s website using free sites online (keyword: QR). Put your QR for your home page on brochures, signage, coffee mugs, business cards—anywhere you want people to be able to quickly access information about your byway.



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