



May 2020 - Byway News & Views Americans Hit the Road for the Great American Road Trip Revolution

Can there be any good news in the tourism industry? For Byways, yes there is, even within the current Covid-19 crisis. When Americans feel it is safe to travel again, they're going to join the Great American Road Trip Revolution. The first trip they plan to take is within 100 miles from home in the family car. They will be traveling to achieve real relaxation and stress release, away from everyday life. With great stories and engaging travel experiences, Byways offer that opportunity.

Americans were hitting the road in very large numbers even before the crisis. Seventy-five percent, nearly 184 million Americans travel for leisure. Over 80%, or 147 million leisure travelers engage in heritage and cultural activities. And 75-85%, somewhere between 138-156 million leisure travelers use their own car to take these trips.

Ford Motor Company documented in a 2018 study that 54% of travelers who drive their own cars on leisure trips prefer to take "the scenic route."



That's nearly 80 million American leisure travelers who want to travel the Byways, America's most treasured roads.



Why do Americans want to take “the scenic route?” Americans are stressed out, tired, short on money, short on time, and constantly bombarded with blaring marketing messages, pervasive noise, a stream of bad news, disruption, and a neverending parade of electronic, visual and sound stimulation. From time to time, they just want to get a break from it all! Yet, they're not just leaving something behind, they're running towards something to engage in.

All of this represents a golden opportunity for Byways and related destinations, because real relaxation only occurs when people physically remove themselves from their normal surroundings, turn off their electronics, and engage in a new situation that stimulates their minds and involves their emotions. Only this level of engagement in a new experience displaces thoughts of work.

Getting people out of the house is very important. Those who work with their minds, rather than their hands, which is most of us, stay connected to work and never really get to experience the feeling of being completely away and free from the workplace, even for a few hours. This is especially true with millions working from home during this crisis. Tensions are high at home among family members living together 24/7.

Any experience which requires customers to get out of the comfort of their homes, get into their cars, and engage in an activity during their leisure time, has to be enticing, exciting, motivating, engaging, and pleasant enough to make the effort required worthwhile. Let's motivate them to search out their favorite Byway story and hit the road!

***Byway organizations:** It's time to mobilize and tell the leisure traveler about the authentic experiences along your Byway, again. Gear up your public relations and publicity to target markets within 100 miles of the Byway. Shout out your Byway story and the great destinations that are open and available for visiting this summer. From museums to hand-dipped ice cream shops, I will not be surprised at an overwhelming response. - Sharon Strouse, NSBF Executive Director*

Public Relations and Publicity Tips

The NSBF Website Library Resource has a new publication addressing “Public Relations and Publicity for your Byway” written for byway organization leaders. This fact sheet emphasizes that effective publicity planning sets the stage for significant byway experiences. Personal contacts stimulate interest and enthusiasm about the byway and its activities. Byway leaders should have their snappy byway “elevator speech” ready at all times.

Your publicity plan should ensure that press releases contain a newsworthy, catchy headline and lead statement. The writer has three seconds to grab the reader’s attention. Always include a quote or testimonial by a local tourism professional, a local leader, an enthusiastic byway visitor, or a byway leader. Wrap up press releases with a paragraph of general information about how to find out more about the Byway, events, etc.

It’s always a good idea to unearth stories that attract human interest media attention. An idea is to interview a family to find out what they learned from a byway experience. Storytelling is an art, so always find and share meaningful experiences. Sprinkle in some action photographs with people enjoying themselves. Label the photographs identifying the context and providing names left to right in the caption. Local weekly papers are always interested in quality photos.

For NSBF members: download the new [Public Relations and Publicity Fact Sheet from the NSBF Byway Resource Library](#) at [nsbfoundation.com](#), login with your member code to access all the library resources.

For non-members: Contact sharon.strouse@nsbfoundation.com

Online Store Selling Ideas – from *Tourism Currents*, a NSBF business member

An online store might help Byway small businesses diversify their income streams during tough economic times, but business owners need to have reasonable expectations for ecommerce. [Here are some simple online selling ideas](#) from our education partners at *Tourism Currents*.

2020 is a perfect year to embrace Louisiana’s Boom or Bust Byway

As anyone who has lived through good times and bad knows, prosperity sometimes disappears as quickly as it arose. Rather than lamenting its absence, however, embracing the erratic nature of life can go a long way toward enduring whatever winds blow our way.



In Northwest Louisiana, one can fully appreciate these cycles along the aptly-named Boom or Bust Byway. Both oil refining and agriculture help define this region, though neither has had consistent success throughout the decades. The area's charismatic residents constantly find ways to reinvent themselves, however. They rise to the occasion like a prizefighter willing to go one more round. Cultural and culinary heritage are celebrated regardless of the state of the economy.



The natural bounty of sunflower fields, sultry swamplands, and majestic sunsets are the constants in the less-than-predictable human world.

While many associate Louisiana with N’awlins’ raucous revelry, this route – at the opposite end of the Pelican State – introduces the traveler to more tranquil pursuits. Among them is relishing the lilting liquid rhythms of Caddo Lake, largest natural freshwater lake in the south. Whether an angler or a paddler, gazing up at stout cypresses is sure to give you an authentic bayou vibe. You may even spot a graceful white waterfowl or surly gator.

Virus fears and social isolation may be the latest “bust”. But should you pay a visit to the vibrant landscapes of Northwest Louisiana, the good-natured, resilient locals will be living their lives with passion and a fresh sense of optimism that the next boom surely can’t be far down the road.



We celebrate our 2020 Byway Organization Award winners, including the Boom or Bust Byway!

Read more about our annual member byway awards at nsbfoundation.com

NSBF Calendar of Events

National Scenic Byway Program - June 15, 2020 - Nominations due
Byway Leader Training - September 16-17, 2020 - NSBF Office & Library, Millersburg, Ohio
Heartland Byway Conference - Tentative October 27-29, 2020, Leavenworth Kansas
Byway Leader Training - White Mountains, New Hampshire - postponed til May 2021

(see nsbfoundation.com for details)

A 'National Scenic Byway Foundation Members' Facebook group has been created. This resource allows members to access exclusive content and engage with fellow byway stakeholders, right in their newsfeeds. Whether asking questions, providing feedback, or simply posting a picture, this new feature is a valuable connection tool. Ask to join the National Scenic Byway Foundation Members Facebook group today, and then invite others!



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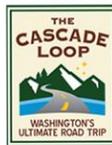


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