

Wayshowing and Wayfinding

Signs, Markers & Advertising



Wayshowing vs. Wayfinding

Wayshowing is what byway leaders do to provide appropriate signage and guides for travelers to navigate with ease along the byway. Wayfinding is what the traveler does to maneuver along the byway.

The goal of Wayshowing is to give visitors to your byway the best possible visitor experience, enabling visitors to reach their desired destinations with ease. Wayshowing is a designed system of information to help visitors find what they are looking for. This includes planned paths to tourist destinations. Remember that the most efficient way to a destination is not always the one the visitor wants. Visitors may be delighted during wayfinding by surprises along the way.

Byway leaders will use multiple wayfinding strategies including maps, signage, brochures, smart phone apps, digital and GPS data to name a few options. Tourism Bureaus and Visitor Centers, Traveler Information Centers, Welcome Centers are typical sources of information.

Multiple Message Sources

Use multiple information sources. Visitors are diverse and use different means to fulfill their travel plan. It is common to provide maps, brochures and guides at the entry points to the byway. The byway leader should seek partnerships with tourist-oriented retail businesses and nonprofits. Museums, chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus, retail shops, restaurants, convenience stores, and motels are good locations to make general tourist information available. Do not forget to re-stock materials. Traveler information may be delivered in print, websites, social media, signs and in-person.

Maps & Orientation

A map is essential to orient travelers to the byway route itself, along with where they will find services such as food, gas, restrooms, lodging, and opportunities to enhance their visit along the byway. If there are major attractions, trails, overlooks, or interpretive displays, these should be identified on the map, as well. Be sure that the scale of the map is accurate and large enough so visitors can read it easily and estimate travel times accurately.

Route Markers

Signage appears as route markers. It is always en-

couraging to the travelers to see byway identification markers. Normally the state byway logo is displayed. It is encouraged to have a unique display of the byway name and a possible graphic that represents the byway. The placement and number of route markers are a function of the number of intersecting highways and byway length.

Gateway and Confidence Markers

Gateway or entry signs may be used to highlight entry points to your byway. These often appear in the form of an elaborate wall or sign off the right-of-way. Confidence markers are signs that ensure the traveler that they are traveling on their desired path.

Site Identification Signs

Site identification signs alert travelers to a scenic view or historic marker they are approaching.

Tourism Signage Program

In many states, the Department of Transportation alone or in conjunction with the Tourism Department have developed a Tourism Signage Program which provides for "informational" signs. There are different types of tourism signs that have a unique color to set them off:

- Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS);
- Supplemental Guide Signs; and
- Attraction Logo Signs.

TODS are official blue-background guide signs posted at intersections on two-lane and four-lane roadways and interstate highways for tourist-oriented attractions, gas, food, lodging and camping facilities.

Supplemental Guide Signs are official brown guide signs available on four-lane roadways with interchanges or intersections and on two-lane roadways with interchanges for national/international attractions.

Attraction Logo Signs are available at interchanges on interstates, freeways, expressway interchanges and bypass interchanges.

Off-Premise Commercial Advertising

Preserving the scenic beauty of a byway requires a delicate balance with promoting the attractions along the byway and enhancing the visitor's experiences. Outdoor advertising/billboards are a prime example. Some pristine places have been destroyed by the

proliferation of billboards. Official designation of a scenic byway may or may not prohibit off-premise commercial billboards from being erected. Check with your state Department of Transportation.

Traveler Information Radio System

Traveler information radio systems (TIRS) are used to convey information for travelers. This is a low-watt AM radio broadcast with its own infrastructure requiring licensing, towers, and broadcast capability. It requires people (volunteers or paid professionals) to produce messages and update them on a regular basis.

Training Visitor Contacts to Be Ambassadors

Be sure that the frontline employees receive thorough and regular training about how to greet visitors. Employees should be thoroughly familiar with the byway and related points of interest. The byway leader should provide frontline employees and volunteers with hospitality training and specific information about

highlights along the byway corridor and beyond. Tourists are a demographic with highly diverse interests and needs. Be informative. Be prepared to return in a year. Appreciate turnover among the frontline representatives of the byway. Provide them with a “talking points” sheet that is quick and easy to grasp. Feature highlights, discover the top 100 FAQs!

FAM Tours

Conduct a Familiarization (“FAM”) Tour for locals to show them what is in the area and details regarding location, different sized vehicle parking, hours of operation including seasons and holidays, admission fees for different ages and other amenities. Most residents and business or nonprofit organization operators have not visited all the byway corridor’s most popular tourist destinations.

Make first and lasting impressions!

REFERENCES

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Kansas Scenic Byways Enhancement Guide for Traveler Information

Dahlquist, David. Wayshowing for Byways: A reference manual. US Forest Service. https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5310034.pdf