



**State of Illinois**  
Pat Quinn, Governor

**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
Ann L. Schneider, Secretary

**Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**  
David Vaught, Director

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
September 19, 2012

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## **IDOT, DCEO Encourage Public Use of National Historic Routes During Annual Scenic Byway Week**

*New Interactive Website Showcases Illinois' Seven Scenic Byways; Celebrations Scheduled for October 6 - 13*

**CHICAGO**– The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism today announced designation of the 2012 Illinois Scenic Byway Week taking place October 6-13. Byways Week encourages public use of the state's seven historic routes and also launches a new interactive website feature to help travelers plan their trips. The seven scenic byways of Illinois are nationally recognized and are full of natural beauty and nostalgia.

"Illinois' scenic byways help connect travelers to the past while they discover the present," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. "These byways are found in every region of the state, and are a true testament to the network of beautiful roadways from east to west and downstate to upstate."

Visitors can now plan their byway trips and explore what each scenic route holds through the new interactive website feature on [EnjoyIllinois.com](http://EnjoyIllinois.com). From quirky roadside attractions and photo opportunities to historical sites and natural wonders, the new website feature will help visitors discover the unique culture found along each of Illinois' seven byways.

"Scenic byways are more than just roads, they help tell the story of America's development," said David Vaught, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. "During Scenic Byway week, we encourage people to visit Illinois to experience our diverse history, culture and attractions along these great roads."



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Established by Congress in 1991, a National Scenic Byway is a road recognized by the United States Department of Transportation for its archeological, cultural, historic, natural recreational and/or scenic qualities. Illinois' seven byways are found in all regions of the state.

To celebrate Scenic Byway Week, an array of fun and exciting events will take place along various byways throughout the state. Visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](http://EnjoyIllinois.com) for all the latest information. The seven national scenic byways in Illinois are as follows:

### **Great River Road**

Spanning 550 miles along Illinois' Western border, the Great River Road National Scenic Byway offers breathtaking views of the banks and bluffs surrounding the mighty Mississippi River. Passing through towns like Galena, Moline, Quincy, Alton and Cairo, the Great River Road is perfect for a weekend trip or an extended journey to explore, play, shop or simply unwind in Illinois' Great Rivers Country. The Illinois Great River Road was included in National Geographic's "500 Drives of a Lifetime." To learn more, visit [greatriverroad-illinois.org](http://greatriverroad-illinois.org).

### **Illinois Lincoln Highway**

The Illinois Lincoln Highway National Scenic Byway pays homage to Illinois' most famous resident, Abraham Lincoln. Passing through communities like Joliet, Geneva, DeKalb and Dixon, the highway stretches along a 179 mile path from Chicago's South suburbs, then west toward Fulton on the Mississippi River. Travelers will discover the unique cultures of each community along the way, finding a past era woven together with the present. To learn more, visit [drivelincolnhighway.com](http://drivelincolnhighway.com).

### **Historic National Road in Illinois**

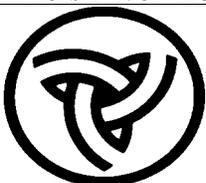
Known as 'the road that built the nation,' The National Historic Road was created in 1806 by President Thomas Jefferson and opened the state up to settlement. Today, the road in Illinois stretches 164 miles from Marshall to East St. Louis. Travelers can journey along the road to see where Lincoln's political career began and take in the local color of communities throughout the Land of Lincoln. To learn more, visit [nationalroad.org](http://nationalroad.org).

### **Historic Route 66**

America's most famous road, the historic Route 66 originates in Chicago and stretches across America. In Illinois, travelers can get their kicks along the 436 mile historic Route 66 from Chicago to East St. Louis, soaking in kitschy roadside attractions, iconic classic American diners, museums and heartwarming Americana along the way. A drive along Historic Route 66 in Illinois is a trip back in time to one of America's most iconic eras. To learn more, visit [illinoisroute66.org](http://illinoisroute66.org).

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### **Illinois River Road**



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The Illinois River Road meanders along the Illinois River from Havana to Ottawa. Natural areas like Peoria Wildlife Prairie State Park, Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge and Starved Rock State Park provide a beautiful setting, allowing travelers to experience Illinois' natural resources and countless species of birds, plants, fish and other wildlife that symbolize the American Midwest prairie, in the heart of the state. The Byway region has nearly one hundred connected nature sites that offer outdoor recreation in the Illinois River Valley. To learn more, visit [illinoisriverroad.org](http://illinoisriverroad.org).

### **Meeting of the Great Rivers**

The Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway offers one of the most breathtaking road trips in the Midwest, through the majestic landscape where the Missouri and Illinois Rivers meet the Mississippi. The road winds along a 33 mile path, following the Mississippi on the western edge of the state, from Hartford to Grafton. The byway passes through towns like Elsah, Alton and Godfrey, offering plenty of opportunities for travelers to discover spectacular landscapes, archeological finds, historic happenings, cultural destinations and countless recreation options. To learn more, visit [greatriversbyway.com](http://greatriversbyway.com).

### **Ohio River Scenic Byway**

Southern Illinois is home to gems like the Shawnee National Forest, Garden of the Gods and the Ohio River Scenic Byway. The byway is a 188 mile journey along the majestic Ohio River, from the Indiana border to the Mississippi River at Cairo. Passing through towns like Golconda and Elizabethtown, the Ohio River Scenic Byway offers a glimpse into an area of Illinois rich with Civil War history, outdoor adventure, geological wonders and more. To learn more, visit [ohioriverscenicbyway.net](http://ohioriverscenicbyway.net).

Travelers can download the Enjoy Illinois travel application or request a free 2012 Illinois Travel Guide at [EnjoyIllinois.com](http://EnjoyIllinois.com).

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Media materials and downloadable images are available on the Illinois Office of Tourism online media center at [illinoismediacenter.com](http://illinoismediacenter.com). For more information, download the 2012 Illinois Travel Guide at [enjoyillinois.com/brochures](http://enjoyillinois.com/brochures).

Additional photography, available electronically, may be obtained by contacting Brian Rehme at [brian.rehme@fleishman.com](mailto:brian.rehme@fleishman.com), or 312-729-3645. For further information, visit [enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com).

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