



THE ROAD AHEAD

*Report from a strategic roundtable
held November 20–22, 2013, in Anaheim, California*





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SPONSOR



Acknowledgements

This report provides a summary of the strategic roundtable, *Route 66: The Road Ahead*, held November 20–22, 2013, in Anaheim, California. Both the event and the report were produced by World Monuments Fund (WMF) with the generous support of American Express.

An accompanying video is available at www.wmf.org/video/route-66-road-ahead.

The report was developed and edited by Erica Avrami, WMF Research and Education Director. Graphic design of this report was by Ken Feisel, WMF Art Director. Editorial assistance was provided by Ben Haley, WMF Communications Manager; Brittany Brown, WMF Senior Program Associate; and Kaisa Barthuli, Program Manager, National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program.

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The event and this report are follow-up to the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study*, which was completed in 2012 by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in collaboration with the U.S. National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and World Monuments Fund, and with the generous support of American Express. The three-volume study is available at: www.wmf.org/dig-deeper/publication/route-66-study-synthesis.

About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund's mission is to protect against the loss of the world's architectural heritage, including the built environment, the artistic elements that enhance it, and the cultural traditions that it sustains. WMF builds global partnerships to conserve key cultural sites in response to urgent threats, and broadens public understanding about the central importance of heritage in our lives. Our work makes historic places accessible and sustainable, builds and replenishes skills needed to care for our common heritage, and communicates the benefits of this work to the global public. For additional information about WMF and its programs, please visit www.wmf.org.

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Introduction

Route 66 is a brand unto itself, a storied highway known around the world and celebrated in music, film, television, and literature. National- and state-level tourism research demonstrates a keen interest in American road-trip travel, with Route 66 being the most iconic journey. Demand is high for authentic experiences—old and new—along the Mother Road. Sustainable tourism presents an important opportunity that can generate positive benefits for the more than 300 communities along the route. However, capitalizing on this opportunity means ensuring the preservation of the important heritage resources of Route 66 while also investing in sustainable development.

In 2008, Route 66 was included on the World Monuments Watch, a biennial program that raises awareness about historic places at risk from the forces of environmental, economic, and social change. Through the Watch, World Monuments Fund (WMF) was able to partner with the U.S. National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, a collaboration that has capitalized on the respective strengths of each institution in service to the long-term stewardship of the Mother Road.

As a not-for-profit dedicated to preserving the world's most treasured places, much of the work of WMF involves the physical conservation of historic buildings and sites. As a 2,400-mile stretch of road through eight states and over 300 communities, Route 66 represents a cultural landscape filled with countless heritage resources. To advocate effectively for the preservation of Route 66 as a whole, it became readily apparent that a strategy of simply restoring buildings was not enough. WMF sought to provide a strong case for preserving the route in its entirety—as a dynamic thoroughfare of places, people, and experiences.

The development of an economic impact study of the benefits of historic preservation and heritage tourism along Route 66 emerged as a key need for promoting investment in the route. In 2012, the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* was completed by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in collaboration with the U.S. National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and World Monuments Fund, and with the generous support of American Express. The study shed light on the importance of heritage tourism and historic preservation along Route 66 as a contributor to local, state, and national economies. Tourists spend \$38 million per year in communities along Route 66; preservation through revitalization programs and museums add some \$94 million in annual investments; some 2,400 jobs are created each year; and economic activities directly related to the route add some \$127 million annually to the GDP. Tourism is often the most important or only economic engine for many of the towns along the route, and Route 66-themed motels, restaurants, and shops anchor the downtowns of many small communities.

The study is an extremely powerful tool for demonstrating the positive effects generated by heritage tourism and historic preservation along Route 66 and for leveraging investment at the local, state, and national level. Dozens of organizations are involved in advocating for the





Route 66: The Road Ahead participants at Cars Land

stewardship and development of Route 66, and the study provides concrete quantitative data for rationalizing their cause to public entities as well as private investors.

Following the dramatic analysis and statistics revealed through the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* of 2012, WMF convened a strategic roundtable to explore the sustainability of the highway as a cultural and recreational venue and an economic engine for the eight states through which the route passes. The event, Route 66: The Road Ahead, was held on November 20 and 21, 2013, at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California, close to Cars Land, a Disney venture inspired by Route 66. The event was organized by WMF, with the support of American Express, and arranged as a series of panel discussions drawing more than 100 people representing government, business, tourism, and preservation.

The panel discussions focused on case studies of Route 66 revitalization, tourism research demonstrating the demand for the Route 66 experience, financing tools used to support projects and infrastructure development, and community-based approaches to engagement and experience-making.

The dialogue focused on preservation as a tool for sustainable tourism development, providing positive economic, social, and environmental benefits to the 5.5 million people who live along the Mother Road. Examples of public-private partnerships, tourism marketing strategies, business development, the use of new technologies to communicate to wider audiences, and more fueled lively deliberations about how to capitalize on these successes by working more collaboratively. This report represents a summary of the roundtable discussions.

It has been an honor for World Monuments Fund to collaborate with the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation, Rutgers University, and many others over the past five years to advocate for the Mother Road, an iconic cultural landscape and an irreplaceable icon of American history. It is hoped that this report will promote continued collaboration and dialogue and foster investment in the preservation and sustainable development of Route 66.

The National Park Service and Route 66

Aaron Mahr, Superintendent, National Park Service National Trails Office, Santa Fe and Salt Lake City

The National Park Service has had a long association with the public in working for the preservation of the Mother Road's sites and stories, in partnership and collaboration, to make Route 66 live and thrive.

National Trails Intermountain Region is the premier office in the National Park Service responsible for the management and administration of long-distance linear historic resources. When the Route 66 Special Resources Study was underway in the 1990s, we administered four National Historic Trails: the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, Santa Fe, and Trail of Tears. Today that number has risen to nine with the addition of the California, Pony Express, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, El Camino Real de los Tejas, and the Old Spanish National Historic Trails. Our primary role is to work collaboratively with federal, state, and local agencies, landowners, tribes, and volunteer groups to protect, preserve, and develop these long distance historic travel routes for public use and enjoyment.

For this reason, in the early 1990s, Congress and the National Park Service Director asked the National Trails Intermountain Region to study the road for best commemoration and preservation alternatives. We found that the road met all the criteria necessary for National Historic Trail designation, however at the time it was decided to commemorate it through a heritage preservation program—the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program—which we manage.



Since that time, we have worked under the authority of the 1999 Route 66 Corridor Preservation Act to protect and preserve the cultural resources of Route 66, and we provide limited technical assistance and cost-share grants to help preserve those vital and extant buildings, road segments, and stories that comprise the historic road corridor. Although Congress authorized funding support at \$1 million per year for 10 years, to date it has appropriated less than \$300,000 per year. The program has been a success, and with the support of partners along the road, Congress reauthorized the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program in 2009 for another 10 years.



The National Park Service recognizes the completion of a cost-share grant project at the historic Eisler Bros. store in Riverton, Kansas

The Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program will expire in 2019 and it may or may not be renewed. But what is most exciting is that the collaboration demonstrated during the Route 66 strategic roundtable is thriving and growing. We are committing to a common purpose and devotion to preserving this vital element of our shared recent past, and we are nurturing a new spirit of revitalization for Route 66. The challenge that faces us today is to achieve a lasting and sustainable effort to preserve the sites and stories of the road and continue to make them available to the public. Route 66 is a living, evolving thoroughfare of American discovery, and the key to sustainability is to continue to offer economic and commercial opportunities.

The *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* completed by Professor David Listokin and his team at Rutgers University is a powerful advocacy tool for the road. It should serve as a rallying cry for all of us that if tourists are spending \$38 million per year on Route 66, we have an opportunity together to promote the entire road for greater opportunity.

The foundation of Route 66 is the authentic historic fabric of the road—the landscapes, the urban and rural settings, and the community passages. They represent a formative half-century of America, caught in time yet evolving to offer opportunity for the future. I strongly urge that the sensitive balance between preservation and opportunity must be maintained. As the study concludes, preserving Route 66 is a good investment; preservation pays, especially for the smaller communities and town centers. We must remember and make the public aware of the fact that Route 66 still remains among the best ways to experience America. While a debt of gratitude is owed to American Express and World Monuments Fund for supporting the study and the strategic roundtable, enduring thanks are owed to the business owners, investors, volunteers, advocates, preservationists, professionals from tourism and transportation, and others who keep the road alive every day. It is their stories and commitment that create the road experience and educate the twenty-first century American and international public.

The Legacy and Opportunities of Route 66

Kaisa Barthuli, Program Manager, National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program

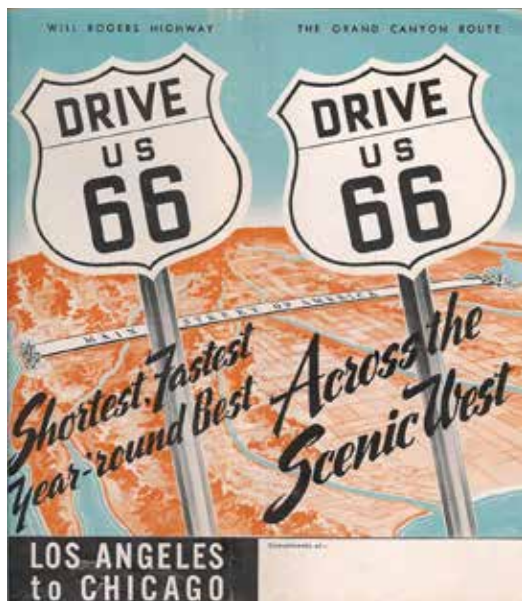
Travel has been romanticized and valorized since history has been recorded. From the *Odyssey*, to the Grand Tour, to the pioneer wagon trails, travel has captured people's imaginations. Perhaps partly for the transcendent qualities it brings—the passage of time and space away from mendacities of life, and encounters with the “other”—it is often

considered a form of personal and cultural enlightenment. It may be said that Route 66 is the most current iteration of the grand travel experience.

Route 66 was the “people’s road.” Every walk of life could be found traveling or making a living alongside it, seeking opportunity or adventure. The highway and the automobile transformed the nation and life as we knew it. It changed how far and fast we could travel, the jobs we could get, family life, and the way our communities grew. It changed architectural styles as livery stables and blacksmith shops morphed into gas stations; restaurants became drive-ins, car hops, and cafes with short-order cooks; and hotels became motels where you could drive right up to the door of your room.

Route 66 was different from other major highways in that it was not a coast to coast highway. Crossing eight states in an arced path from the Midwest to the California coast, it was known as the shortest, best-weather highway across the nation. It was also heavily promoted by the U.S. Highway 66 Association, which was a coalition of businesses and organizations working across state lines to promote the thoroughfare.

After World War II it became a popular vacation corridor, connecting people to national parks, the Southwest, Hollywood, and Disneyland.



Historic travel brochure produced by the national U.S. 66 Highway Association



A migrant family en route to California in 1939



A mural in Cuba, Missouri, depicts the "Gold star boys" going off to World War II

What propelled Route 66 to iconic status, however, was its special relationship with the arts. *The Grapes of Wrath*—published in several languages and then made into a movie—the Route 66 song, the Route 66 television show, and the recent release of the Disney-Pixar film *Cars*, which is reaching a whole new generation, have all helped elevate the road to an iconic symbol of the pursuit of the American dream.

Route 66 is also a mirror reflection of the socio-political events of its time. Route 66 can tell almost any story of America, including impacts on tribal nations and stories of race and gender. It was also an important part of several major national events. In the 1930s, it was a Dustbowl corridor for migrants seeking a better life. In the 1940s, it was part of the Strategic Highway Network, playing a major role in mobilizing troops and supplies during World War II. After the war, automobility boomed and mom-and-pop business gained momentum. There was also mass migration west, with the census showing tremendous growth along Route 66, especially in New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Between 1956 and 1985, the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways was built. While many U.S. highways remained intact, this was not the case for Route 66. Perhaps because of its strategic and popular location, it was replaced with five Interstates and deleted from the U.S. highway system. Communities that once bustled with traffic nearly died overnight. Businesses closed or relocated to be near the Interstate exits. Some communities became ghost towns. Route 66 communities and Americans in general were not happy about this. How could this beloved icon of America simply be erased from existence?

Many sprang into action. While the national U.S. Highway 66 Association had closed its doors, within five years after the route was decommissioned most of the eight states through which Route 66 passed had established their own Route 66 associations dedicated to preserving the memory of the road in their states. Many of the associations were instrumental in working with state legislators and departments of transportation to mark the route with the brown signs we see today. With this, the era of Route 66 as a historic road began.

In 1990, Congress passed the Route 66 Study Act. This act called for the National Park Service (NPS) to evaluate the historical significance of Route 66 and alternatives for federal involvement. After substantial research and input from numerous community meetings along the route, the study concluded that Route 66 is of national historic significance as a symbol of our transportation history. A second act was passed in 1999 calling for the creation of the



A souvenir shop in the Black Mountains, near Oatman, Arizona

NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, which was established in 2001. One result of the public meetings was the widespread recognition that it is the authentic places and experiences that are the heart and soul of Route 66. In fact, the NPS program legislation states that the “Secretary of Interior shall assist in the preservation of the Route 66 corridor in a manner that is consistent with the idiosyncratic nature of the Route 66 corridor.”

Inherent in the work of the NPS is collaboration with partners across state lines. Over the past 12 years of the program’s existence, program staff has seen tremendous transformations along the road. Through partnership as well as independent action among individuals and communities, there has been a profound increase in awareness of the importance of preserving the route, and this momentum is clearly growing.

However, there is still much work to be done to secure a long and sustainable future for Route 66. It is often said that Route 66 has achieved immortality through the arts, literature, song, and film. But while it may be everlasting in hearts and minds around the world, on the ground it remains at risk. Even with our collective efforts, the authentic places and experiences of the road continue to be lost due to lack of awareness, neglect, and development pressures. The time is now to secure immortality on the ground.

A key finding of the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* is that people come from all 50 states and more than 40 foreign countries to experience it. While it was once a stretch of pavement to get from one place to another, it has truly become a destination unto itself. The study also found that it is the historic sites and authentic experiences that are the top things people seek on Route 66 today, and that when these travelers come, they spend money. The hard data of this study underscores that preservation of authentic places and economic development go hand in hand on Route 66. This makes perfect sense, because Route 66 has always been a road of tourism and commerce, and that reality is where great opportunity lies. Tourism is infusing otherwise economically challenged communities with much needed dollars.

The Rutgers study also shows that communities along the route spend more than \$80 billion in annual household spending. How can this spending be redirected back into the markets and shops of “America’s Main Street”? Are there new kinds of relationships that can be forged

between states, big business, small business, organizations, and communities? Are there ways to better publicize and market the road to encourage tourism and reinvestment in a way that sustainably supports the people, businesses, and historic (authentic) places along it?

The Route 66 strategic roundtable was no ordinary meeting for Route 66. World Monuments Fund created this very special opportunity for various interests to come together to talk about the future of the road and the legacy of stewardship that we intend to leave. As one of the most famous roads in the world and a coveted American experience, there are numerous prospects for partnering at cross-state and national levels. Whether through sponsorship programs that would allow industry, private, and other entities to invest in specific preservation causes such as bridges or neon signs, or through public-private partnerships that capitalize on heritage resources to generate economic growth, there are a number of opportunities ripe for development.

The Route 66 centennial (1926–2026) represents a key opportunity to bring entities from across the states together to coordinate a national celebration of the road as well as solicit private-sector interest and investment in revitalization efforts. Branding and marketing ideas include a centennial logo, special tours, a commemorative “Bunion Run” and/or cross-country car rally, special arts and music events throughout the year, and marketing/promotion nationally and internationally. While the 100-year anniversary of Route 66



Neon sign in Santa Rosa, New Mexico (right) and the Chain of Rocks Bridge in Madison, Illinois



is still 12 years away, it is not too soon to begin developing a vision for it at community, state, and national levels.

An idea that has been discussed widely is to develop Route 66 as a green highway. As Route 66 is an iconic, historic thoroughfare that facilitated the growth of the automobile, it is ideally suited to the concept of the green highway to promote alternative fuel sources and the next generation of environmentally sustainable methods of travel. Whether through the retrofitting of historic gas stations, the introduction of electric charging stations in communities along Route 66, or events that promote alternative fuel vehicles, the Mother Road provides a unique opportunity for co-branding green transportation and America's Main Street.

Vintage motels represent a niche market and provide an outstanding opportunity to leverage heritage tourism and reinvestment on Route 66. There are many excellent motel sites along the road today, but many require enhanced hospitality standards, while others are vacant or slated for demolition. Bolstering the vintage motel as a valuable historic resource and experience is a nationwide need. Route 66 is ideally suited to develop a precedent for the iconic, vintage motel experience across America. In addition to the capital investment and redevelopment possibilities, much can be achieved through enhanced cross-marketing and information sharing, such as forming an association of Route 66 motel owners to share experiences and coordinate promotion, developing guidelines for motel preservation and hospitality standards, and encouraging the rehabilitation of clusters of motels to promote economy of scale.

Another area of untapped potential along Route 66 is its multicultural legacy and evolving demographics. The *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* revealed that twice the national average of Hispanics live along the route, and 15 times the national average of American Indians live along the route in the Southwest, with Route 66 passing through the lands of more than 25 tribal nations. The study concluded that there is major potential (tourism and other) to better synthesize the celebration of Route 66 with the history and culture of Hispanics and American Indians, as well as to better represent the Route 66 experiences of African American, Asian American, and other communities. Telling the full story of Route 66 and optimizing its potential will require an enhanced understanding of who travels, lives, and does business along the route today, and the robust participation of multiple publics.



Day of the Dead celebration at La Posada in Winslow, Arizona



Hopi dancers at La Posada in Winslow, Arizona

Capitalizing on these opportunities requires a renewed cooperative effort. As mentioned earlier, the road was historically promoted through the national U.S. Highway 66 Association. This organization was a collaboration between states and consisted of businessmen and organizations who worked together to promote the road for the benefit of all the states. This coalition unquestionably forged a large part of the enduring identity and legacy of Route 66. Today there are more than eight individual state Route 66 organizations, two national Route 66 organizations, over six international organizations, state and local tourism offices, and more. How can the collective knowledge, experience, and resources of all these groups be coordinated to leverage independent efforts into something greater?

Many have suggested the possibility of a permanent national or federal designation for Route 66 as a vehicle for catalyzing collective action. Currently, there is no national or federal designation for the road, and the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program is scheduled to expire in 2019. National designation would bring an enduring framework for recognition, preservation, and tourism. Possibilities include designation as an NPS National Historic Trail (a 1994 Special Resources Study determined that Route 66 meets the requirements for designation); reauthorization of the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program; All-American Road status for all eligible states through America's Byways, a program of the U.S. Department of Transportation; designation as a National Heritage Area; or designation as a National Historic Road, though this would require the creation of a new federal program/category.

Though a government-endorsed designation may boost efforts in the long-term, there is still a short-term need for coordinated collaboration if such opportunities as those noted above are to be effectively seized. When considering the history of Route 66, it is important to realize that we are in the middle of it, still shaping it. From the days of its construction, to the Dustbowl years, to the war years, to the post-war golden years, to its demise and rebirth, we are now in the revitalization era with important work to do. What we do now and how we move forward will begin the last chapters of the revitalization era, and begin the next chapter, perhaps the "Second Golden Era" of the road. What we have here is the opportunity to develop a legacy, a framework for collaboration that will secure a vibrant future for the road so that it may be celebrated and enjoyed as the national treasure it is for generations to come.

The Value of Route 66

All too often, public policy debates regarding economic growth, job creation, environmental management, and community development undervalue historic preservation as an industry generating positive benefits. Misperceived as the bailiwick of histori-



Route 66 Blowout in Sapulpa, Oklahoma

ans and anti-development advocates, the heritage field has not produced enough robust data to demonstrate adequately the full range of values it provides to society and thus rationalize conservation efforts. The three-volume *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* represents an important milestone in building this body of data and expanding the tools available to qualify, quantify, and monetize heritage values and benefits. It likewise serves as an important call to action for both the public and private sectors to capitalize on the opportunities that Route

66 presents for benefitting its many communities.

The strategic roundtable provided a forum for disseminating the findings of the *Economic Impact Study*, sharing additional information from the road about the positive effects of historic preservation and heritage tourism, and catalyzing collective action. The study analyzed data on museum visitation and spending along the route, Main Street revitalization programs, and the largest survey of Route 66 travelers to date, which included over 4,200 responses. Professor David Listokin of the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University, who served as the study's lead researcher, outlined some of its key findings:

- More than 85 percent of Route 66 travelers visit historic places and museums. These tourists spend an estimated \$38 million dollars a year in Route 66 communities. Given that the traveler survey took place during the worst recession since the 1930s, this is a very conservative estimate of spending.
- Heritage preservation, through Main Street revitalization programs and museums, adds another \$94 million in annual investments.
- The national impact is an annual gain of 2,400 jobs, \$90 million in income, \$262 million in overall output, \$127 million in gross domestic product, and \$37 million in tax revenues.
- At the local level, the restored Route 66-themed motel, restaurant, and gift shop anchor the downtown in many small communities and bring new life and revenue to towns once bypassed by the Interstate Highway System.

These numbers illuminate the connections between heritage tourism and local, state, and national economies, and provide a strong rationale for historic preservation and other heritage-related investments. Yet, despite these positive findings, the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* also underscored the still-unrealized potential of Route 66.

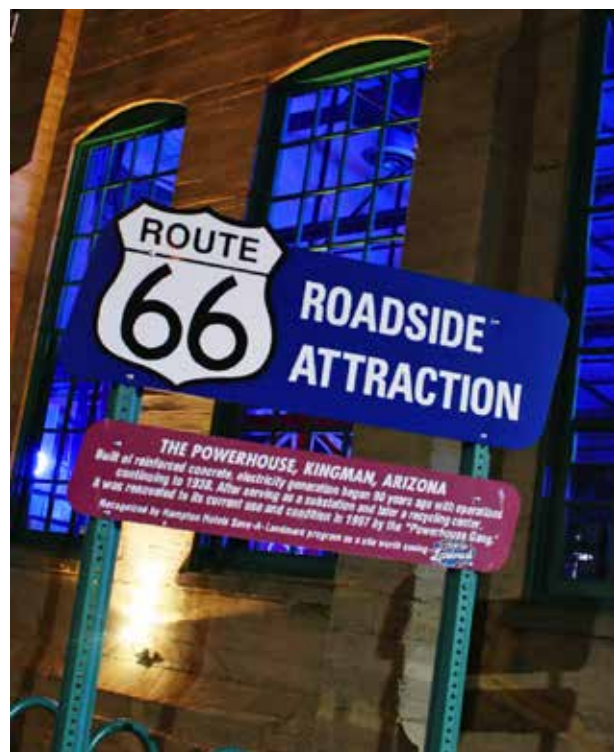
As Glenn Schlottman, Community Relations Manager for the Arizona Office of Tourism, noted, tourism “can be considered an export industry because of the exchange of services for money from outside the area of focus. As travelers visit destinations along Route 66 they spend money in motels, restaurants, on gas, and in shops. The money they spend comes in

from outside the destination, often outside the state, and possibly outside the country. This money moves through the destination, state, and country in the form of taxes, wages, and new expenditures. For example, a traveler driving through Arizona and only stopping in Winslow has the potential to make a statewide impact. In 2012, Arizona received 38.1 million overnight visitors. Those visitors contributed \$19.3 billion in direct spending to the Arizona economy.”

At the national level, travel ranks number one among all U.S. industry exports. According to the U.S. Travel Association, the travel industry accounts for more than 7 million jobs and 2.7 percent of the nation’s GDP. In 2013, international travel exports totaled \$180.7 billion, exceeding travel imports by over \$57.1 billion and thus creating a significant trade surplus. Nearly 70 million international visitors came to the U.S. in the same year, with 46 percent from overseas and more than half from Mexico and Canada. The overseas travelers, however, account for 79 percent of total international travel receipts, with sightseeing, national parks/monuments, and art galleries/museums ranked within their top five leisure travel activities. These figures track with the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* traveler survey, which found that 67 percent visited national and state parks and landmarks, 86 percent went to historic places, 81 percent went to notable places, and 80 percent visited roadside attractions. It also found that international Route 66 tourists spend three times that of domestic visitors.

Yet Route 66 has much more room for growth in the international market. The *Economic Impact Study* traveler survey found that 85 percent of travelers are from the U.S., while only 15 percent are from other countries, though the log books at points of interest suggest that 20 to 60 percent of travelers are from outside the U.S. Language may have been a barrier in the survey process, which could have skewed the numbers lower. But there is clearly an opportunity to expand the Route 66 international market.

Jamie Sweeting, Chairman of Sustainable Tourism International, spoke of the opportunities created by Executive Order 13597, which was issued by President Barack Obama in 2012 to restore and increase U.S. competitiveness in international travel and tourism (the U.S. market share of international traveler spending dropped from 17 to 11 percent of the global market in the decade between 2000 and 2010). This followed on the heels of the Travel Promotion Act



Delgadillo's Route 66 Gift Shop and Visitor Center, Seligman, Arizona (left) and Visitor Center in Kingman, Arizona

of 2010, which established Brand USA, a public-private partnership to spearhead the nation's first global marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination. This mandate provides a ripe opportunity to engage federal agencies and explore new industry partnerships to boost tourism development along Route 66.

Amir Eylon, Brand USA's Vice President for Partnership Development, North America, echoed the possibilities presented by Route 66. President Obama has issued a challenge to increase international visitors to the U.S. to 100 million by 2021. This goal can only be reached by moving visitors beyond the major U.S. gateways. For Route 66, that means drawing travelers past the "bookends" of Los Angeles and Chicago and into the hundreds of communities along the 2,400 miles of the Mother Road. Eylon stressed that authenticity is important to mature international markets, and unique experiences provide the lure to explore. Research has shown that one of the major draws of the U.S. to international travelers is the American road trip, and Route 66 is the most renowned thoroughfare and journey. There needs to be a concerted effort to help tell the stories of Route 66 to the rest of the world.

Traci Ward, Director of Consumer Marketing for Visit California, underscored the importance of the road trip. In the markets they survey, people were drawn to the American road trip because of the opportunity to stop and explore places along the way, and to increase knowledge and understanding of other communities and cultures. To market the state, Visit California ensures a good product by selling not only iconic destinations, but also an "authentic" Cali-

Route 66 Tourism in Arizona

Arizona is home to over 200 miles of Route 66. Historic main streets pay homage to the route's past while welcoming visitors with modern accommodations. Along the route are several national and state parks, including Petrified Forest National Park, which is the only national park that the Mother Road bisects. The route is also the primary way to access the Grand Canyon National Park, which recorded over 4.4 million visitors in 2012. Route 66 runs through the Navajo Nation and the Hopi, Havasupai, and Hualapai Indian reservations. Many unique roadside attractions still exist along the route.



Grand Canyon National Park

The Arizona Office of Tourism, in partnership with Northern Arizona University's Hospitality Research and Resource Center, has produced several community-based reports on tourism visitation. In the 2010–2011 Kingman/Grand Canyon West Tourism Study it was found that:

- 20 percent of survey respondents experience Route 66 during their trip, and 14 percent stated Route 66 was the primary purpose of their trip.
- Route 66 travelers are more likely to stay multiple days (74 percent stayed overnight vs. 59 percent of general travelers), and they spend more money over the course of their trips than average. However, their spending per day, per party, is less at \$219 vs. \$261.
- Route 66 travelers are more likely to travel by auto, RV, or motorcycle than by tour bus or other forms of transportation.
- The top five countries of visitors to Kingman/Grand Canyon West that experienced Route 66 were Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Italy.
- The top five states of visitors to Kingman/Grand Canyon West that experienced Route 66 were California, Arizona, Wisconsin, Washington, and Texas.



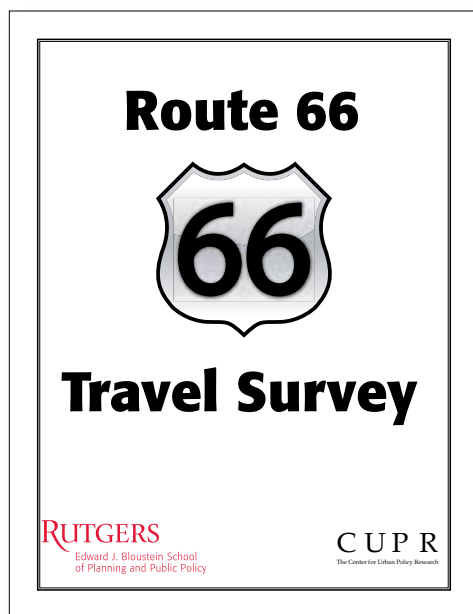
Summit Inn Restaurant in Oak Hills, California (left) and Elmer's Bottle Tree Ranch in Oro Grande, California

ifornia lifestyle. This applies to Route 66 as well. While individual places are important, there is also a symbolism and attitude to Route 66 as a whole that can enhance its tourism potential. Much can be done to create inspiration around the ideas Route 66 represents: freedom, the open road, the American dream. From the mom-and-pop businesses, to kitschy roadside attractions, to the music, film, and literature it has spawned, Route 66 is emblematic of creativity and exploration. Working with destination marketing organizations and state tourism offices can help to tap this essence and inspire new platforms for promoting the Mother Road.

Ward likewise noted how tourism can be an important economic engine at the state level as well. International and domestic tourists spend \$106 billion annually in California—that is \$202,000 each minute. And every one percent increase in visitor spending creates more revenue and over 8,000 jobs. Listokin noted that, on the whole, communities along Route 66 have a higher level of unemployment than the national average, with many living in poverty. Jobs are of vital importance and the promise of the experience economy can have a profound effect on communities like Clinton, Oklahoma, a town of 9,000 people with a Route 66 Museum that hosts 35,000 visitors annually, with 10,000 coming from abroad. The multiplier effect of historic preservation means that it gets more value for money spent when compared to oth-



Route 66 Museum in Clinton, Oklahoma



er forms of economic activity and can help revitalize challenged communities. The growth of historic tax credits and other federal incentive programs provide stimuli for this type of development.

The breadth of Route 66 means that there is as much a domestic market to be tapped as a global one. As of 2000, 5.5 million people lived in the 1,200 census tracts within one mile of Route 66. This represents household income and expenditures of \$200 million daily, and the route could capture more of this activity. Arizona offers a welcome center at exit 359 on I-40 near Lupton on the Arizona-New Mexico border. Visitor sign-ins for 2012 show that, of the top eight states visiting the welcome center, seven are Route 66 states. This is good evidence that people living along or near the route are primary domestic travelers of the Mother Road and thus an important constituency.

Many local constituents are not effectively engaged in the opportunities the Mother Road offers. The *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* revealed that twice the national average of Hispanics live

along the route, and 15 times the national average of American Indians live along the route in the Southwest. However, 97 percent of the surveyed travelers along Route 66 were white, with only a trace representation of Hispanic visitors. As noted previously, there are many more stories to be told about the experiences of multiple communities along Route 66, offering new opportunities for engagement.

There are also untapped constituents with regard to age. While there is a younger population living along the Route 66 corridor, most Mother Road travelers are middle-aged, with a median age of 55 years, and 30 percent are retired. One out of nine is 20–30 years of age. The traveler demographic skews toward older visitors with more income and time, but the Disney Pixar movie *Cars* provides a tremendous vehicle for engaging younger audiences in the history and experience of Route 66, as the movie portrays the plight of the small towns that were bypassed and left in economic ruin by the interstate highways. This opens the door to the potential educational value of Route 66 for future generations. New research undertaken by the Wagner Group and reported by the U.S. Travel Association's Travel Effect report card finds that "regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class, children who took educational trips had higher grades and were significantly more engaged in learning, both in and out of school." Travel Effect research on family vacations likewise indicates that "76% of parents believe that family vacations are worth the time and money because they 'give my child experiences that they will remember years down the road.'"

Why should we be interested in preserving the route? Travelers think it is important. The *Economic Impact Study* survey asked visitors about Route 66's most important characteristics; among them were historic sites, notable places, and landscape. The survey likewise underscores the unrealized potential of the route, often due to insufficient visitor infrastructure. Travelers note the need for better accommodations, more vibrant businesses, improved mapping and wayfinding, and enhanced guides and rating systems. As noted previously, capitalizing on these opportunities means working collaboratively across the eight states and more than 300 communities through which the Mother Road passes. A key element of this is continued data collection. While the *Economic Impact Study*, along with other Route 66 studies, are tools that provide important insights into the potential of the Mother Road, ongoing data collection is needed to learn more about business owner and traveler trends, needs, and experiences. By measuring the value of Route 66 and its preservation, more effective strategies can be developed to enhance tourism infrastructure, market Mother Road places and experiences, and revitalize communities.

Key Issues

Among the great challenges of preserving the historic corridor of Route 66 are its length and its diversity of stakeholders. Passing through eight states and hundreds of communities, Route 66 interests are represented by a host of federal, state, and municipal agencies as well as various local associations, not-for-profits, and private interests. The decommissioning of Route 66 as a federal highway in 1985 decentralized its management as a linear corridor-cum-experience. It is generally no longer identified on maps or GPS systems as a singular route, as some sections have been incorporated into new roads. The various states independently market their sections of Route 66 as tourism destinations, determine signage, and maintain associations dedicated to preserving important elements of the Route 66 landscape and experience. Individual communities and states have had great success in building upon their Route 66-related identities through downtown revitalization and redevelopment projects, traveler amenities, and cultural and experiential opportunities from cuisine to public art, history museums to festivals.

Much more could be gained through interstate collaboration and more unified branding, though this poses complex challenges. The diverse landscapes, communities, and enterprises of Route 66—encompassing vast stretches of rural desert as well as two of the most populous cities in the United States—preclude a singular approach. While the Mother Road is a vital asset to many small towns, it is just one cultural resource among many in Chicago and Los Angeles. Yet these are critical gateways to Route 66, as the majority of travelers use these large “bookend” cities as starting points. Making effective connections across this varied and complex corridor requires collective visioning, robust communication, and ongoing cooperation.

Through dynamic discussions, participants in The Road Ahead roundtable exchanged ideas and honed in on a number of key issues to tackle in the future, summarized in the following pages.



Make Experiences

While the historic character of Route 66 is important to preserve and serves as a critical draw to travelers, there is a need to make and remake experiences as both the road and society evolve over time. Restoring a building and reinvesting in a downtown are important components to revitalizing the road, but ensuring robust engagement with both the people and places of Route 66 is what makes the experience of Route 66 authentic and quintessentially American.



Rock Cafe in Stroud, Oklahoma

Businesses

The Rock Cafe in Stroud, Oklahoma, was built in 1934 and opened in 1939. During World War II it was a Greyhound bus stop, thus making it an indelible aspect of Route 66's history. While the war reduced tourism along the Mother Road, as a major military transport corridor it was heavily trafficked with the movement of troops and supplies between military installations and the migration of thousands of workers toward defense plants in California, Oregon, and Washington. With a hotel across

the street, the Rock Cafe was a hub of soldiers on their way to war. In the following decades, the café remained a stopping point for family vacationers, young people "on the road," and truckers. With the construction of I-44 and the demolition of the neighboring hotel in the 1980s, the Rock Cafe fell into decline and closed its doors. Dawn Welch bought the Rock Cafe in 1993, and with no experience running a restaurant and a simple business plan of ten burgers, fries, and cokes, she reopened its doors. The café's inextricable link to Route 66 re-emerged through inquisitive tourists, committed historians like Michael Wallis, and Welch's own perseverance. She restored the building with an NPS cost-share grant and lots of elbow grease, grew the business over time, published a cookbook, and served as an inspiration for the character of Sally in the Disney Pixar movie *Cars*. Even after a fire devastated the Rock Cafe in 2008, it was refurbished and reopened just over a year later, continuing its service to both the community and the Route 66 visitor, still steeped in history and standing the test of time.

Kevin Mueller and his wife Nancy purchased the iconic Blue Swallow Motel in 2011, which at that time had been lodging travelers for 70 years. While the motor court lodgings had seen better days, dedicated owners had kept the complex in working condition and battled the draw of the Interstate by providing an authentic Route 66 experience. The Muellers capitalized on this history by offering guests the opportunity to step back in time. By enhancing the vintage decor and creating an intimate stay, rather than a



Tour group at the Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, New Mexico

stopover, the Blue Swallow does hospitality the old-fashioned way. Each room is different, but all echo period charm from the furniture down to the light switches. The common area is a warm meeting place for conversation and coffee, and the atmosphere encourages socializing among guests. At only 12 rooms, the motel cannot accommodate large overnight groups, but caters to bus and motorcycle tours and other day visitors by offering a box lunch and a place to stretch your legs. With nearly 70 percent of the clientele coming from overseas, the Blue Swallow offers not only a genuine Route 66 experience, but also an introduction to Americana. S'mores nights around a campfire, barbecues, music, and more create a vibrant sense of community against the neon backdrop of the Blue Swallow.



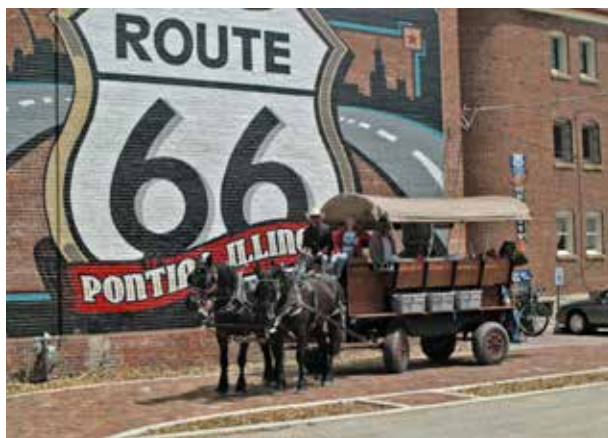
S'mores night at the Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, New Mexico

Communities

The Palms Grill in Atlanta, Illinois, circa 1934, was once a favorite halfway stopover for travelers between Chicago and St. Louis. The Interstate drew traffic away from the town, and the restaurant closed in the 1960s. By the early 2000s, 90 percent of the businesses in Atlanta's downtown were boarded up. This small bedroom community and determined preservationist Bill Thomas saw a tremendous economic development opportunity in its Route 66 heritage. The building that once housed the Palms Grill was owned by the Atlanta Public Library, and through a creative mix of public and private financing, the building was restored. The restaurant reopened in 2009, and the rental income helps to support the Public Library Museum, which is also housed in the building. However, this vision was about far more than preserving a historic asset—it was about tapping into the experience economy and creating a marketable product that engages visitors in a variety of ways. The “blue plate special” and the pie provide a home-cooked culinary adventure for visitors and Atlanta residents alike. People can learn about the historic clock-tower in town, still hand-wound by seven citizens who serve as the keepers of the clock, and visitors can become honorary keepers of the clock as well. The Atlanta murals, the Paul Bunyan statue, and the Route 66 Arcade Museum of vintage (and playable) video and arcade games create a range of opportunities for both new and traditional Route 66 travelers. These novel experiences spawned the development of service and gas sta-



Winding the town clock and the Paul Bunyan Statue in Atlanta, Illinois



Horse-and-carriage ride, the Pontiac-Oakland Museum & Resource Center, and the Livingston County War Museum—all in Pontiac, Illinois

tions, and also paved the road for electric car charging stations along Route 66. The increase in patrons saw employment rise in the town, and sales tax revenue in peak travel months rose more than 40 percent from 2008 to 2012, an increase Thomas attributes to Route 66 attractions.

The city of Pontiac, Illinois, 100 miles outside of Chicago, had a more serendipitous start to its Route 66-related revitalization. Ten years ago a tour bus

traveling the Mother Road accidentally stopped in Pontiac, and because it had a restaurant it soon became a regular stopping point for similar coaches. In the past two years alone, the city has hosted 150 tour groups. Offering both historic venues and modern amenities, and capitalizing on its Norman Rockwell ambience and hospitality, Pontiac has welcomed visitors into its community and local traditions. The mayor himself greets most groups, residents volunteer as guides, there are horse-and-carriage rides, visitors are offered goodie bags and city pins, and footprints through the downtown allow for easy navigation. The city's Route 66 murals have inspired a school dedicated to art, and museums, shops, and restaurants round out the experience. The war museum was the groundbreaker, and more recently a vacant downtown building was converted to a Pontiac car museum, attracting domestic and international travelers alike. The benefits of this community commitment, coordination, and marketing well outweigh the costs, as tourism has helped to bolster the economy of this town of 12,000 significantly. Ellie Alexander, Pontiac's Director of Tourism, has also teamed with neighboring towns to cross-market and promote, encouraging Route 66 travelers to spend time in these small communities and to experience the authenticity of modern life along the road.

States

The Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) provides a human connection to its section of the highway through its Faces of Route 66 commercial campaign featuring characters and stories of people living along the Mother Road. After being shown across the U.S. and in Canada, the commercial helped to drive up website inquiries by 22 percent, with "Route 66" being the most-searched keyword. As IOT Deputy Director Jen Hoelzle demonstrated, the international market clearly is interested in the characters and come to see a journey along the Mother Road as the trip of a lifetime. While the narrative and lure of Route 66—its people

and places—can be aggregated and marketed at the state level and beyond, there needs to be a strong connection to the communities that ultimately create the product. Coordination across municipal and state borders can provide shared benefits in terms of branding and marketing, but it is the towns, shops, motels, restaurants, sites, and people along the road that ensure the visitor authentic and unique experiences.

At the other end of the road, Visit California spends \$42 million annually marketing the state around the world. Route 66 is part and parcel of that legacy and landscape. Just as early Mother Road travelers were once drawn to the gateway of the Pacific, with its promise of sun, surf, and sand, tourists today are still lured by the uniquely Californian adventure. As Traci Ward, Visit California's Director of Consumer Marketing, explained, the places and destinations are important, but the lifestyle and brand is an equally significant element in creating a robust tourism product. The authenticity of the Route 66 experience is thus both local and global; it is what happens on the road as well as how we perceive the idea of the road from afar.

Across States

The idea of Route 66, not just its people and places, is what allows one to see beyond eight individual states and understand it as a voyage along the open road, through some of the most varied and spectacular landscapes in the world. Stephen Johnson of Eagle Rider motorcycle tours explained that by renting Harley Davidsons to Mother Road travelers, they sell dreams. Two thirds of their business is focused on Route 66, and 97 percent are international tourists. They dream to ride in the open wind, to feel the freedom of the road, and to have the quintessential American experience that only Route 66 can provide. So while the destinations and personal connections are critical components, the Mother Road is also about the journey and creating experiences along the way.



Illinois Office of Tourism's Faces of Route 66 campaign

Celebrate Creativity

Preservation is not simply about saving the past, but about investing in the future. Despite its colorful and dynamic history, nostalgia alone will not drive the revitalization of Route 66. The Mother Road also represents a long and continuing tradition of creative innovation through architectural design, fine and pop art, literature, film, music, and more. It is through the Mother Road's portrayal in songs, books, movies, and television shows that Route 66 became known internationally. Celebrating this creativity is essential to ensuring a sustainable and vibrant future for Route 66, as numerous cases along the road demonstrate.



La Posada in Winslow, Arizona

Winslow, Arizona

La Posada opened its doors in 1930 in Winslow, Arizona. The resort was the last hotel developed by the Fred Harvey Company, famed for their Harvey Girl restaurants and lodgings along the Santa Fe Railway (headquartered in Winslow). As an early promoter of cultural tourism in the American Southwest, Harvey employed architect Mary Colter to design a series of lodges and visitor concession structures at the Grand Canyon, as well as many along the rail line. Colter blended Native American motifs and vernacular forms with contemporary and revival styles, at once celebrating new and old. This artful fusion of

modernity and tradition reaches its zenith at La Posada. Colter created a fantasy back story about a wealthy Spanish landowner whose family occupied the site for over a century, which inspired her imaginative design of the 72,000-square-foot hotel and 20-acre site as well as every detail, from the gardens to the restaurant china.

As a famous stopping point along the Santa Fe Railway and Route 66, La Posada enjoyed more than a quarter-century of unique hospitality. But the postwar rise of the automobile and construction of the Interstate Highway System meant a decline in rail and Route 66 travelers, and La Posada closed its doors in 1957. Its furnishings were auctioned off and much of the building was gutted and renovated as offices for the Santa Fe Railway. The complex faced possible demolition multiple times over the next four decades, and by the 1990s both La Posada and Winslow were in a state of decline. The hotel was a huge investment when it was built, and its demise brought down the town as well.

Allan Affeldt first visited La Posada in 1994, and by 1997 he and his wife, artist Tina Mion, had moved into the all but abandoned complex with the goal of preserving and reopening it. But securing loans and venture capital to revive a small town and a neglected icon was next to impossible. La Posada needed sustained investment, a community-centered approach, and a creative vision that embraced the future, not just a faded past. Rehabilitation and improvements have been phased over time, but throughout it all there has been a strong emphasis on creativity and public engagement. While there are 53 private guest rooms for rent, there are more than 150 rooms of public space, including ballrooms, lobbies, a venue for the University of Arizona Speaker Series, the Arizona Women's Heritage Trail exhibition, galleries of the work of Ms. Mion, the Route 66 Art Museum in the old train station (which houses



Harvey Girl docents and world's largest single loom Navajo Rug at the Route 66 Art Museum in Winslow, Arizona

the world's largest Navajo rug), acres of re-landscaped gardens, and more. Docents dressed as Harvey Girls lead tours, providing a glimpse of La Posada in both its past and present glory.

The resurrection of La Posada has served as a catalyst for revitalizing the town of Winslow. Other buildings have been restored, abandoned structures have been adaptively reused, the old department store is now an art studio, the historic theater reopened, the old Hubble Trading Post is now a visitors' center, all of downtown was rezoned as artist live/work spaces, and more. Streetscapes, sidewalks, and lighting have been rehabilitated, and a number of the buildings in Winslow that were abandoned 15 years ago are now occupied, owing largely to the momentum of La Posada, which has an average 80 percent occupancy rate and is fully booked nine months out of the year.

La Posada and Winslow have not sought to recreate the past, but rather have used their history to celebrate the creativity that flourishes along Route 66 in new and fine art, literature, and more. Continued investment, in the long-term, will help to ensure a sustainable future for both the resort and the town.



Pontiac, Illinois

One hundred miles south of Chicago on Route 66, the town of Pontiac has a large mural of the Route 66 shield, a favorite spot for photographs by the many visitors who come to town. But just a decade ago, tourism was virtually nonexistent in Pontiac. After Bob Russell was elected mayor, he worked to bring the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum to town, occupying an old firehouse on the verge of demolition. The mural of the Route 66 shield is on the rear façade of the building.





Pontiac-Oakland Museum & Resource Center
in Pontiac, Illinois

In 2008, a war museum opened on the floor above the Route 66 museum, with veterans volunteering their time at the facility, and the town saw more, though modest, visitor numbers. The biggest impact came after a group of muralists, inspired by Pontiac's wall art, came to town. Known as "wall dogs," they organized an intensive painting charrette in June 2009, when more than 150 artists created 18 murals in the course of four days. In preparation for this, the town invested significant time and resources into the repair of buildings so that they were ready for the muralists. As a result of this cooperative effort, the following year a mural museum opened in town (the Walldog Mural and Sign Art Museum) and now even more people started coming to town.

In 2011, world-renowned airbrush artist Tang Dongbai from Beijing, China, traveled to Pontiac, after reading about the murals on the internet. Some of his work was exhibited at the Walldog Museum, and he was so inspired by the creative energy in the town that he established the Dongbai International Airbrush Art School in Pontiac. There he trains students from the U.S. and abroad, and his work serves as a major tourism draw. The same year, the town worked with collector Tim Dye to open the Pontiac-Oakland Museum & Resource Center, which is dedicated to preserving and exhibiting Pontiac and Oakland automobiles and related artifacts.

In 2012, the Society of Gilders, an international not-for-profit dedicated to the craft of using gold leaf decorations in architecture and design, opened the Museum of Gilding Arts in a gallery within the Walldog Museum. The exhibit includes hundreds of artifacts from the Swift Collection, which tells the story of gold leaf manufacturing during the 1800s in the United States.

This creative energy and the development of attractions to draw tourists have had a profoundly positive effect on local businesses and economic development. Pontiac, which has a population of 11,828, now receives an estimated 50,000–75,000 domestic and international visitors annually. Shops are opening, restaurants are thriving, buildings are being preserved, and there are plans for a new motel and conference center.



Signage and wall art in Pontiac, Illinois



11th Street Arkansas River Bridge in Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tulsa, Oklahoma

The 11th Street Arkansas River Bridge (ca. 1916–17) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was rededicated in memory of Cyrus Avery, a local resident and the man familiarly known as the “Father of Route 66.” Avery was involved in the construction of the bridge as a County Commissioner from 1913 to 1916 and later served as a consulting specialist to the federal government in the creation of a U.S. highway system. A strong proponent of a route from Chicago to Los Angeles, Avery is credited with defining the Mother Road’s 24-mile path through Tulsa County and across the 11th Street Bridge, which was closed to traffic in 1980 and included on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

In the late 1990s, there were two attempts to enact capital packages using public investment to stimulate economic development in Tulsa, but they were voted down both times. Julie Miner, a recent transplant to Tulsa at the time and now Principal Economic Development Planner for Tulsa’s regional council of governments, recalled that Route 66 was a concern in the context of these proposals. Historic fabric and structures were being lost, even some listed on the National Register. There were some preservation successes, though, including Warehouse Market (ca. 1929), a lovely Art Deco building in downtown along old Route 66. Home Depot purchased the property in the 1990s with the intent to demolish and replace with a big box store. The preservation community mobilized to save the building and, eventually, Home Depot agreed to retain a portion of the original structure and to construct the standard box store behind.



Warehouse Market in Tulsa, Oklahoma



Neon sign in Tulsa, Oklahoma

In 2003, the new mayor, working with the county commissioners, decided to propose another capital improvement package to stimulate economic development, calling it Vision 2025. The leadership gathered input from citizens to garner grassroots support and solicited ideas for projects from the public. Then working for the city's Planning and Economic Development Department, Miner prepared a case for including Route 66 in the package and succeeded in getting a \$15 million line in the \$550 million capital package approved by voters. A portion of the money was used to rescue, relocate, and restore the Meadow Gold sign (ca. 1934).

To determine the use of the remaining Route 66 funds, an RFP was issued to develop a master plan of development for enhancements and promotion. The team was charged with conducting market research drawing upon lessons from other cities, undertaking a structural evaluation of the Cyrus Avery Bridge, and incorporating non-structural as well as structural elements in the plan. The marketing team conducted extensive research and discovered not simply a generation gap, but a generation "chasm," and determined that "If we do not build a bridge, our memories of Route 66 will die with us." They recommended focusing on the Cyrus

Avery Bridge as a sacred place, a timeless source of inspiration, an anchor of Tulsa's Route 66 history, and a means of attracting visitors, old and new.

The result is a plan that embraces ingenuity while also celebrating the past. With the bridge as a centerpiece, an asphalt overlay was added, along with lights and gates. At this time, the bridge is stable but not structurally capable of any type of use. Vision 2025 funds were used to construct an adjoining plaza with eight flags installed, representing each of the states through which Route 66 passes. Using Oklahoma Centennial funds, an eight-and-a-half-ton bronze sculpture was commissioned and installed



"East Meets West" in Tulsa, Oklahoma

depicting “East Meets West” and featuring Cyrus Avery and his family. Vision 2025 funds supported the construction and installation of an oil derrick in Tulsa’s Red Fork area, which was where oil was discovered near Tulsa at the turn of the twentieth century. A traffic circle, along Route 66 and adjacent to the old Warehouse Market, was constructed using tax increment financing, and the city will soon commission a piece of sculptural art for the circle.

The Vision 2025 funding has spawned additional investment in the enhancement of the Route 66 corridor. The former Vickery Gas Station, privately owned, was restored through historic tax credits and an NPS grant, and is now the downtown location for Avis auto rentals. The owner of the Rancho Grande restaurant recently restored its historic neon sign, as have several other business owners along the route. The Blue Dome building, a historic gas station in the downtown, is a Tulsa icon on the original Route 66 and recently sold for \$1.5 million. The Campbell Hotel, formerly vacant and dilapidated, was recently restored as a boutique hotel on Route 66 and includes a restaurant and bar; it was restored entirely with private capital. The Circle Cinema, Tulsa’s only remaining historic movie theater, is also located on the original route. Owned by a private nonprofit, a Community Development Block Grant was used to acquire the property and the organization subsequently invested \$3 million to renovate the theater. It features documentaries, foreign films, live speakers, and children’s events.

In October 2013, the City of Tulsa issued an RFP seeking a private-sector developer for a city-owned site across from the Cyrus Avery Plaza and sculpture, to design and construct what is currently being called “The Route 66 Xperience.” The city will contribute \$6.5 million to the project. The design is still conceptual, but the hope is to create a contemporary experience that will have interactive displays and appeal to younger generations, and that the facility will provide a highly visible addition to Route 66 in Tulsa, and beyond, as a venue for tourism and education.



Former Vickery Gas Station in Tulsa, Oklahoma



Circle Cinema in Tulsa, Oklahoma



Route 66 near Mesita, New Mexico

Integrate the Open Road

While Route 66 encompasses a vast trove of historic buildings, sites, and communities, it is likewise the quintessential “open road.” The space between places equally defines the freedom and character of the road as an experience of movement. In the years following World War II, the economy was booming, and U.S. automobile production increased from 65,000 cars in 1945 to 3.9 million in 1948. There was a resurgent migration toward the Pacific as veterans took to the road to seek work in the industries that developed in the West during the war. American families drove Route 66 to “get their kicks” on the open highway as tourism also grew. In the 1960s, Route 66 became an icon of the Beat Generation as thousands of the nation’s disenfranchised youth traveled west “on the road.” That experience is one that integrates not only the cultural resources, but also the natural resources of the Mother Road.

Protect Open Space

As the *Economic Impact Study* notes, “Route 66 was etched from older migration trails, and thus disrupts the natural landscape minimally as compared to the Interstate system.” Seven distinct geological regions influence the character of the Mother Road: the Central Lowlands, the Interior Highlands, the Great Plains, the Chihuahuan Desert-Mexican Highland, the Colorado Plateau, the Mojave-Sonoran Desert, and the South Pacific Border.

From the prairies of Illinois across the southwest desert to the California coast, the Mother Road carves a path through a vast and varied landscape. In the *Economic Impact Study*, “landscape” was, in fact, noted as the third most important characteristic of Route 66 by the more than 4,000 travelers surveyed, after “historic sites/monuments,” and “notable places/landmarks.”

Bill Cone, Production Designer for Pixar Animation Studios, spoke eloquently about how the changing terrain and big sky equally characterize the Route 66 experience, not just its his-

toric structures and towns. The colors and shapes of the desert, in particular, were a source of significant inspiration in the making of the Disney Pixar movie *Cars* and Disney's Cars Land. It is not just the places of Route 66, but the way in which the road itself forms an iconic vantage point-cum-corridor through a majestic American landscape.

Thus, preserving and promoting the Route 66 experience means also protecting open space and traditional land uses. There are, in fact, many parks along and near the Mother Road at the local, state, and national level, as well as private attractions of natural resources. In Arizona, for example, there are five parks and monuments located on or within 20 miles of the route: Petrified Forest National Park, Walnut Canyon National Monument, Sunset Crater National Monument, Homolovi State Park, and Riordan Mansion State Historic Park. As Glenn Schlottman of the Arizona Office of Tourism reported, visitation to these sites exceeded 989,000 visitors in 2012, underscoring the mutually supportive and interdependent dynamic between environmental and cultural tourism.



Route 66-inspired landscape at Disney's Cars Land in Anaheim, California



Route 66 State Park

Reclaiming Open Space and Celebrating History

The park has a rich and unique history. Just one year before the official designation of Route 66, the St. Louis Star-Times newspaper purchased 400 acres of farm land in the Meramec River bottom near Eureka, Missouri. The land was divided into lots measuring 20 feet by 100 feet. To promote newspaper sales, the company offered lots for \$67.50 to customers purchasing a six-month subscription to the paper. Thus was the origin of a resort community called Times Beach.

Eventually the community became a small town with more permanent housing. However, in the early 1980s it was discovered that waste oil that had been spread on the streets to reduce dust in the 1970s was contaminated with high levels of dioxin. The homes were purchased and a massive superfund clean-up followed. Once the clean-up was complete, the land was turned over to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks. The park was dedicated in July 1997 and opened to the public on September 11, 1999.

Today the park is once again used for recreation. Amenities include access to the Meramec River, a picnic area and shelters, a playground, and multi-use trails for hiking, bicycling, and equestrian use. The park visitor center is a former Route 66 roadhouse built in 1935. The exhibit hall interprets Route 66 nationally and also showcases the route in Missouri, with a variety of displays and memorabilia. Nearly 3,000 visitors (24 percent of overall visitor center guests) have signed the visitor center log book. In the current season, 60 percent of the visitors were from the United States, with the highest representation from Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Only two states were not represented: South Dakota and New Hampshire. The remaining 40 percent of visitors were from abroad.

The parks help to ensure long-term stewardship of the Mother Road's defining landscape. However, Aaron Mahr, Superintendent of the National Park Service National Trails Office, Santa Fe and Salt Lake City, cautioned that vigilance is needed. American landscapes, especially in the West, are facing significant challenges. Oil and gas exploration, wind and solar farms, cell towers, and similar developments are negatively impacting the wide open experience. In particular, California and Arizona are prime solar energy corridors, and there are concerns about how best to locate these industries. Jim Conkle of the California Route 66 Preservation Foundation noted the work that Senator Dianne Feinstein has done to protect the open spaces of the Mojave Desert by promoting solar and wind farms in already developed areas. While alternative energy production is critical for sustainability, there is a need to strike a balance among the range of values—environmental, social, and economic—associated with these open spaces.

Preserve the Road

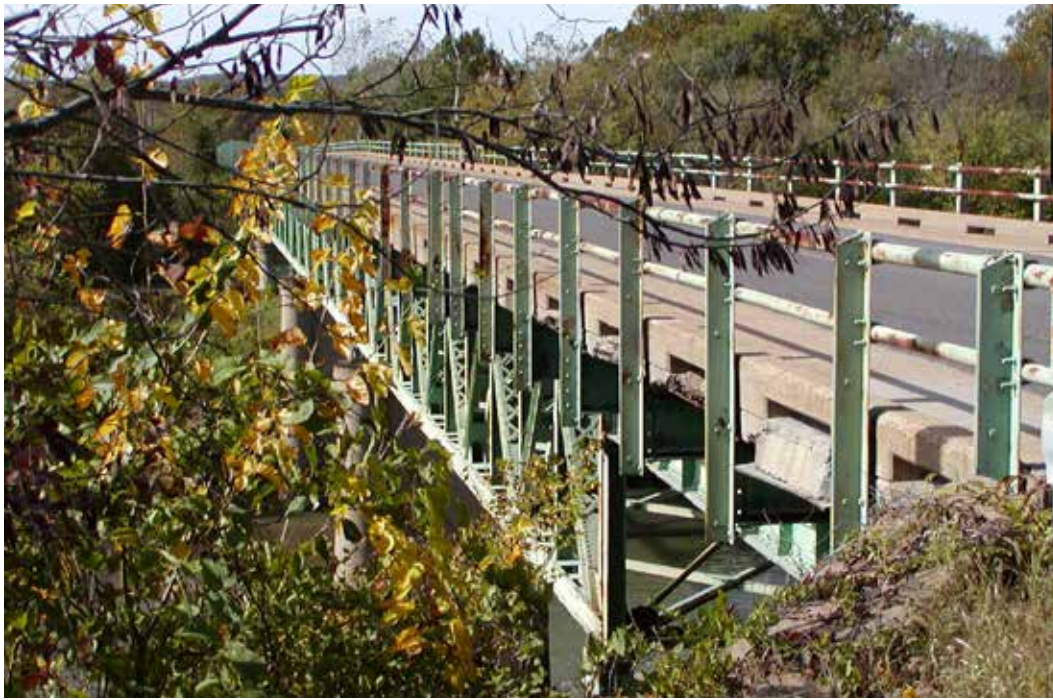
Across eight states, more than 300 communities, and over 2,400 miles, Route 66 is the vital connector of extraordinary terrain, open skies, and historic places. In considering the importance and preservation of these natural and cultural resources, the road itself—the pavement, the bridges, the signage—are often forgotten. With the decommissioning of Route 66 as a federal highway in the 1980s, stewardship of the road-beds and structures fell to the states and municipalities. David Zimmerman of the Arizona Department of Transportation noted that the integrity of the road is integral to the route's future, as it is the conduit to all places and experiences. If the road itself is not preserved, the Route 66 experience is inaccessible.

Kaisa Barthuli echoed this concern by providing an overview of the plight of Route 66 bridges. Many are in disrepair or closed due to unsafe conditions, and there are few resources available for their rehabilitation. Don Fink of the Route 66 State Park in Missouri underscored this point with the case of the Meramec River Bridge. The park's main challenge in recent years has been the closure of the Route 66 Meramec River Bridge that connects the visitor center and the park. The bridge, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is owned by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and was closed in October 2009 due to safety concerns. MoDOT's plan has been to dispose of the bridge either by transferring ownership to another entity or by demolition of the structure.

There have been great efforts to save the bridge since its closure. John Regenbogen, Executive Director of Scenic Missouri, has led a coalition of approximately 20 organizations to save the bridge. There is a campaign to save the bridge website, meramecriverrt66bridge.greatriv.com, and the Landmark Association of St. Louis is the designated fiscal agent for the



Route 66 south of Miami, Oklahoma (left) and the Rainbow Bridge in Cherokee County, Kansas



Meramec River Bridge in St. Louis County, Missouri

bridge. Two grants have been acquired, a \$3,500 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation matched by Great Rivers Greenway to help develop a master plan for the bridge, and a \$15,000 grant from the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program matched by both Great Rivers Greenway and Great Rivers Associates to help fund a historic structures report to evaluate preservation options and rehabilitation costs. MoDOT's initial plan was to demolish the bridge in 2011 if a new owner was not secured by then, but that deadline was postponed and full demolition of the bridge was temporarily avoided by removing the deck in December 2012 to prevent collapse. However, the overall cost of rehabilitating the bridge is in the millions, and states beyond Missouri are facing similar challenges.

Jim Ross, a Route 66 historian and preservationist, emphasized the critical situation faced by the bridges along Route 66. He has been documenting the bridges in an effort to motivate others—individuals, associations, governments—to explore alternatives to demolition. He noted that the 1930s concrete arch bridge in Waynesville, Missouri, is scheduled for removal and at least three bridges in Oklahoma have been lost. National Register eligibility is one means of triggering an impact assessment when demolishing or replacing a historic Route 66 bridge, as such roadwork often includes federal dollars and would require Section 106 review.

John Regenbogen advised that there is strength in connections, whether through networks of not-for-profits, multi-county or regional links, or multiuse opportunities, such as the “bike-ped” (bicycles and pedestrians) communities. Cross-purpose trails, such as the Ozark Trail from St. Louis to Arkansas, provide important models for re-envisioning Route 66 as a multi-modal transportation artery. Kaisa Barthuli echoed this sentiment and emphasized the opportunities to stimulate thinking beyond traditional preservation avenues, whether through trails, corporate sponsorship of bridges or road segments, and more.

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access

The decommissioning of Route 66 as a federal highway not only had a negative effect on road-bed and bridge maintenance, it also severely impacted wayfinding. Route 66 is largely no longer identified on maps or GPS systems as a singular road. Some sections have been incorporated into new roads, and because alternative alignments were developed during its federal



Conceptual wayfinding design for Albuquerque, New Mexico

highway history, there are often multiple “routes.” The responsibility for signage is now divided among eight states and countless communities, making the navigation of Route 66 a challenge.

Many communities have successfully addressed wayfinding within their borders. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, 62 points of Mother Road interest were identified, called the “string of pearls,” and wayfinding signs were installed along both the Interstate and along Route 66 as it winds through Tulsa. As part of the “ABQ the Plan” initiative in Albuquerque, New Mexico, key points of Route 66 interest throughout the city were likewise identified and wayfinding sig-

nage will be mounted. In Pontiac, Illinois, directional signage is provided for vehicles, along with adequate parking for both coach buses and cars, to ensure ease of access. For pedestrians in town, footprints are painted on the sidewalks to direct visitors to attractions; blue footprints lead to the museums and red to the murals.

Despite these community successes, wayfinding beyond the two major gateway cities, Chicago and Los Angeles, and across large swaths of the eight states can still be challenging, and signage alone will not solve access problems. River Pilot of River Pilot Tours has developed Route 66 guides for handheld GPS devices, which is an important step in facilitating independent travel along the Mother Road.

However, tourism infrastructure is insufficient in many of the more rural areas of the route (for example bus tours cannot be accommodated at many small iconic Route 66 motels). Those wishing to drive the route may face hefty rental car fees for picking up and dropping off at different locations. Many younger travelers, especially those 25 years and under, are unable to even rent a car or motorcycle. Aaron Chaffee of Hostelling International USA noted that hop on/hop off van services have had some success in Canada and the West Coast, and the peer-to-peer sharing marketplace, including Airbnb, Couchsurfing, and bike shares, is gaining momentum. Traci Ward of Visit California advised that the surge in sharing is beginning to reach the rental car market through such companies as Zipcar, and progressive corporations may be willing to expand in this arena, presenting new opportunities for Route 66 road travel.

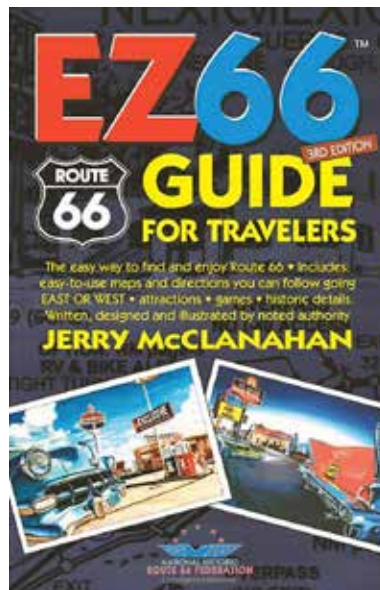
If the Route 66 experience is truly one that varies amid urban and rural communities, cultural and natural resources, and open skies and vast terrain, then ensuring that the road provides an effective connector and means of access is critical.

Cross-Promote and Market

The decommissioning of Route 66 as a federal highway in 1985 also meant the dissolution of the U.S. Highway 66 Association, which had served as an important promotional organization and included hundreds of members—restaurants, hotels, and more—from across the route’s 2,400 mile stretch. While each of the eight states had established its own Route 66 association by 1990, there was no longer a national organization for cross-marketing and promotion.

The not-for-profit National Historic Route 66 Federation was established in 1994 in response to the need to focus on the preservation of the entire route regardless of state borders. As noted by David Knudson, founder and executive director, the federation’s website “was the second major Route 66 site to appear... that was 19 years ago. As such, we quickly became the gateway for those interested in the Mother Road. Our objective was to educate and assist those interested in the route for a wide range of reasons—much of them being travelers from all over the world.” The organization produces and sells a wide range of materials, including the *EZ66 GUIDE For Travelers*, the *Route 66 Dining & Lodging Guide*, the *Personal66 Tour* booklet, and *24 Places You Must See*. Its Adopt-A-Hundred Program utilizes over 20 volunteer members who take responsibility for 100-mile stretches of the route. Every other year, members travel their sections and review the restaurants and hotels along them for inclusion in the *Route 66 Dining & Lodging Guide*.

However, a primary aim of the National Historic Route 66 Federation is to advocate for preservation, and much of its efforts have focused on promoting the establishment of the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, organizing summits and festivals, and cultivating the early concept of an economic impact study for the road. David Knudson acknowledges that there is still a significant need to promote the road in its entirety and has maintained for years that a coalition of chambers of commerce, government agencies, and businesses along the route is needed for effective collective marketing. The recently established Route 66 Alliance is another organization that hopes to promote the national road.



Working Across Communities

As Glenn Schlottman of the Arizona Office of Tourism commented, “Route 66 continues to inspire the imagination of people all around the world, and offer an authentic American experience. It also continues to feed the economies of cities and towns along the route and contribute to the states that it runs through. In Arizona we understand that Route 66 is a destination for domestic and international visitors, and it requires collaboration between the numerous attractions, communities, and states along the route. We should work together for the preservation of Route 66, while we find ways to revitalize community main streets, and build partnerships to promote the road to an ever-evolving group of travelers.”

The Arizona Route 66 Passport serves as a model for this type of cross-promotion. First printed in 2010 and again in 2012, the passport highlights Arizona cities, towns, and attractions along Route 66. Travelers can pick up a passport at visitor centers along the route and receive stamps by stopping at each place listed. They can then redeem a prize for collecting all the stamps and submitting the enclosed survey.

The creation of the passport is best summed up by Sharlene Fouser of the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona: “The idea for the project came out of a Route 66 All-Community Meeting attended by people from all walks of life with a wide array of agendas. The goal was to come up with a marketing tool that would not only create a one-of-a-kind travel experience



for people from all over the world, but would include each of the eclectic communities across Arizona's stretch of Route 66 whether or not they could afford to contribute financially. There wasn't a dime on the table when the project was born, but we needed to get it done to prove to our leaders that each community would benefit from a marketing tool that celebrated the entire route and not just one community."

The Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona was recognized with a Governor's Tourism Award in 2011 for its work on the highly effective passport project. Current goals are to build on the passport's success and engage the other Route 66 communities to create a passport for each state. It could be similar in style so that travelers could collect all of them in a combined folio

that highlights the Route 66 travel experience.

Ellie Alexander, Director of Tourism for Pontiac, Illinois, noted that there is a local marketing cooperative with a regional tourism office that allows cross-promotion with other Route 66 communities. This collaboration resulted in the Red Carpet Corridor, a stretch of 90 miles and 13 towns along Route 66 in Illinois and celebrated with an annual festival. Through their alignment with the Illinois Office of Tourism, the Route 66 communities benefit from state-level marketing and familiarization tours of Route 66 in Illinois for media and tour operators. Alexander emphasized that trade shows like the ABA Marketplace, Bank Travel, Heartland Travel Showcase, and the U.S. Travel Association's IPW are also very important for promotion and collective marketing. As explained on the USTA website, the IPW includes "more than 1,000 U.S. travel organizations from every region of the USA... and close to 1,200 international and domestic buyers from more than 70 countries conduct business negotiations that result in the generation of more than \$4.7 billion in future Visit USA travel."

Jamie Sweeting of Sustainable Travel International underscored the importance of working with the travel industry. While there indeed has been a rise in independent travel planning in recent years due to the increase in online tools and information, over 10 million people in the U.S. still booked a cruise through a travel agent last year. People have not stopped using travel agents and tour operators in America. Working with tour operators to put together itineraries will go a long way toward fostering collective action and collaboration along the route.

Working Across States

While the need to promote Route 66 in its entirety is widely acknowledged, working across state boundaries can prove challenging. With separate government agencies managing tourism and marketing within their respective states and no formal vehicle for collaboration on Mother Road promotion, efforts are not effectively streamlined. However, examples of successful cross-state collaborations that could serve as models for Route 66 were highlighted by participants of The Road Ahead strategic roundtable, focusing on multi-state road and byway promotion and collective marketing for lodgings.

The Great River Road runs for 3,000 miles along the Mississippi River through ten states and 109 counties and parishes. As a vital conduit for bringing tourism dollars into the region, it has many parallels to Route 66 and serves as an effective model. The road is overseen by the ten-state Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC), which was established in 1938 by order of Congress to preserve, promote, and enhance the Mississippi River Parkway for communities and travelers. The MRPC includes a board of government agency and organizational representatives of all ten states who work cooperatively on issues of marketing; culture and heritage; transportation; and environment, recreation, and agriculture through subcommittees. Katie Steele Danner, Director of the Missouri Division of Tourism and MRPC board member, noted the longstanding tradition of collaboration and collective marketing that MRPC provides, which is critical to its success.

Since the 1990s, individual states have been securing National Scenic Byway (NSB) designation by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration for their segments of the Great River Road. MRPC worked with the last four states to support their NSB efforts, and in 2010 all segments had been designated, creating the longest National Scenic Byway in the country. The ten Mississippi River states have received more than \$25 million in grants from the NSB Program for the Great River Road.

Traci Ward, Director of Consumer Marketing for Visit California, described a coalition to collectively promote Historic Route 1 along the California coast and emphasized that scenic drives provide an excellent conduit for aggregating marketing across destinations. The potential is ripe for Route 66. This was echoed by Amir Eylon, Vice President for Partnership Development, North America, for Brand USA. As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA partners with the U.S. travel industry to maximize the economic and social benefits of tourism. Through their Discover America program, Brand USA is highlighting iconic American road trips, including Route 66, Route 1, and more. In partnership with National Geographic, Andrew Evans, the "digital nomad," is spending five months in 2014 exploring road trips, including two weeks traveling Route 66—stopping in communities, working with state tourism offices, and documenting the experiences through National Geographic social media and to over one million followers on Twitter.

Collective promotion of hotels, motels, and other accommodations presents additional opportunities for enhancing the potential of Route 66. Amy Webb, Field Director for the National Trust, made a strong case for the opportunities for cooperation among the historic hotels and motels of the Mother Road (see inset).

Aaron Chaffee, Vice President for Hostel Development, Hostelling International USA, spoke of the way in which hostels benefit from working collaboratively. Hostelling International runs its own hostels and also serves as a parent organization for smaller hostels run by affiliates through its licensing program. The hostel concept is all about providing affordability, access to a culture, and a sense of place through shared lodging environments. Their inbound domestic and international demographic of 18- to 35-year-olds are generally on extended trips and are interested in experiencing genuine Americana. The hostel association provides a network of lodgings throughout their journeys. Hostelling International operates hostels in the two "bookend" cities of Route 66: one in Chicago, Illinois, two blocks from the original start of the route, and one in Santa Monica, California, one block away from its ceremonial end at the Santa Monica Pier. There are 105,000 overnights per year in Chicago and 85,000 overnights per year in Santa Monica. Dan Rice, owner of the Santa Monica-based 66-to-Cali shop, noted that the Santa Monica Pier receives 60 million visitors a year. This could provide exciting opportunities for promoting Route 66, enticing travelers onto the road, and providing a collective platform for marketing and reaching new—and younger—audiences.



Santa Monica Pier in California, the ceremonial end of Route 66

Enhancing the Tourism Potential of Route 66: Accommodating Travelers and Historic Motels

Amy Jordan Webb, National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation listed “Route 66 Motels” on the annual list of 11 Most Endangered Places in 2007, citing threats from deterioration and new development. While some of the estimated 500 hotels along Route 66 have been restored, many others are vacant or deteriorating. Still others have been repurposed and are no longer operating as motels. In expanding urban areas, vintage motels are also impacted by the development pressures that accompany sprawl. As a follow-up to the 2007 Eleven Most Endangered designation, the National Trust worked with the National Park Service’s Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program to develop an action plan to provide strategic assistance to vintage motels on Route 66. The National Trust provided a number of small grants for preservation projects along Route 66, including a seed grant to help launch the 2012 Economic Impact Study. Efforts are afoot to nominate Route 66 for inclusion in the National Trust’s National Treasures portfolio.

The *Route 66 Economic Impact Study* confirmed that vintage motels are an important part of an authentic Route 66 experience. The report states that Route 66 travelers “are attracted by the special historic and related character of the Mother Road (e.g., historic sites/monuments, vintage restaurants and motels, small towns, and national parks).” Although vintage motels are clearly a critical historic feature of Route 66, many of the same threats facing vintage motels identified in the 2007 Eleven Most Endangered listing still threaten Route 66 motels today.

Part of the National Trust’s work has included tracking or sponsoring research to learn more about cultural and heritage travelers over the past few decades, which can help inform marketing efforts for Route 66. The 2013 edition of *The Cultural and Heritage Traveler* (Mandala Research LLC) reinforces many of the findings from previous national studies. Notably, 76 percent of U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling. This translates to a total of 129.6 million cultural heritage travelers nationwide, generating \$171 billion in annual cultural heritage tourism expenditures. Cultural and heritage travelers at the national, regional, and local level have consistently shown that they are high-value travelers, staying longer and spending more than other kinds of travelers, on average, \$1,319 per trip as compared to \$820 for all U.S. travelers. Studies of cultural and heritage travelers by the U.S. Travel Association also indicate that they are more likely to travel by car, fitting in well with the profile of Route 66 travelers. They also like to shop, with 44 percent including shopping as part of their travel plans as compared to 33 percent of all other travelers and are also more likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast, offering opportunities for Route 66 lodging properties.

Wigwam Village Motel in Holbrooke, Arizona



The Mandala Research study found that, when asked about their lodging preferences, almost half (49 percent) of cultural and heritage travelers said they would pay more for lodging that reflects the culture or heritage of the destination they are visiting. Furthermore, interest in historic lodging properties is on the rise. The percentage of cultural heritage travelers who stayed in a historic hotel increased from 8 percent to 13 percent between 2009 and 2013. Hotel websites are the second most common website used by cultural heritage travelers after Expedia. More than a quarter visit websites via QR codes using their smartphones, and they are three times as likely to use mobile devices to get lodging recommendations.

Recognizing that cultural heritage travelers are interested in staying in historic lodging properties, and knowing that many historic hotels are independently owned, the National Trust created a national association called Historic Hotels of America in 1989 with 32 members. Today, the National Trust's Historic Hotels of America has been acquired by the Preferred Hotels & Resorts brand and features 240 member historic hotels in 46 states, ranging in size from 15 to 500 rooms. Eleven of these hotels are within 30 minutes of Route 66, and eight are within an hour's drive of Route 66. Member hotels must be at least 50 years old and must be listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or recognized locally as having historic significance. The program was modeled after the Historic Hotels of the Rockies, a membership association of hotels in the Rocky Mountain Time Zone built between 1862 and 1939. In addition to these national and regional associations, there are other examples of smaller collaborative marketing efforts within a single community. For example, seven bed and breakfasts in Duluth, Minnesota, have teamed

up to create Historic Inns of Duluth with a shared website that includes a booking engine that allows travelers to see the availability at all member inns for their desired travel dates on one easily navigable webpage.

There is no doubt that vintage motels are an integral and irreplaceable part of an authentic Route 66 travel experience. For most travelers who stay in hotels or motels, lodging is one of the largest (if not the largest) travel expense they will incur. In many cities and states across the country, lodging taxes provide the financial backbone for tourism organizations at the local, county, and state level. While the individual marketing reach of a single small vintage motel may be limited, collectively there are tremendous opportunities for vintage motels on Route 66 to have a strong marketing voice. There are a number of different ways that Route 66 motels could work together to encourage more vintage motels to offer high-quality authentic experiences and provide collaborative marketing opportunities to stretch limited marketing budgets. Working with state, county, or city tourism offices offer opportunities to partner with other tourism attractions on cost-effective promotional efforts, though these opportunities would not promote the entirety of Route 66 (and Route 66 would be promoted along with a host of other attractions within each tourism organization's service area). Additional options could range from adding a category for vintage hotels to an existing travel organization, such as AAA or a hotel appraiser such as HVS, to creating a new association similar to the historic hotel associations mentioned above specifically for Route 66 motels. Other options would be to create a new association to protect and promote vintage motels nationwide or to develop a Route 66 attraction coalition that would be open to motels, restaurants, shops, and other attractions. A key challenge in evaluating these different options will be to seek out opportunities that create a large enough membership to support a meaningful promotional effort while, at the same time, not being so broad or diverse that promotional efforts do not focus on messages or audiences that have the greatest potential for Route 66.

While many of the same challenges that faced Route 66 motels in 2007 are still issues now, there are new opportunities with the growing interest in historic lodging properties, including an increasing appreciation for vintage motels from the 1920s through the 1960s. Vintage motels are seen by travelers as an essential element of an authentic travel experience, and if authentic vintage lodging properties are replaced by homogenous chain or franchise motels, critical components of the Route 66 experience will be lost forever. While the vintage motels along Route 66 face daunting challenges, there are also tremendous opportunities for motels and motel owners to play a key role in preserving and enhancing an authentic Route 66 experience for eager heritage travelers.



Munger Moss Motel in Lebanon, Missouri

Reach New Audiences

The lure of Route 66 is truly international, with the Mother Road representing the freedom of the open road and the American dream. In some respects, those from abroad can more readily appreciate its mystique. As Lino Squarza of the Route 66 Association of Italy observed, “We Europeans have come to know and to love America after World War II through your movies, music, lifestyle, and much more... Many of you were born and raised along Route 66 or have friends and relatives who live there, and therefore your perception is often personal and sentimental, but for us it is different. It is a dream, an adventure, a journey on the road into another world. The Mother Road is not part of our lives, but of our imagination.”

Swa Frantzen of Belgium developed the first Route 66 website, www.Historic66.com, in 1994. There are Route 66 associations and tour operators in Canada, Italy, Norway, France, Australia, the Netherlands, Hungary, and beyond. One of the Mother Road’s most ardent supporters is Zdenek Jurasek of the Czech Republic. He cycled the route in the 1990s, making daily reports to a Czech radio station and writing articles about the trip. He published the first Route 66 guide in Czech, founded the Czech Route 66 Association, established the website www.r66.cz and the Route 66 internet radio station www.radio66.eu (both providing information about the road and traveling to the U.S.), has conducted tours since 2008, organizes



Zdenek Jurasek of the Czech Republic stops at the Cadillac Ranch near Amarillo, Texas

an annual convention, and developed a Route 66-themed vacation rental home in the countryside of Slovakia. To further promote Route 66 to the Czech and Slovak publics, in 2010 Jurasek produced the feature film *Route 66 Mainstreet USA*, which received a very positive response from audiences and sold over 3,000 copies on DVD. This success has led to a second movie project, filming in 2014, which involves a joint expedition of Czech and Slovak motorists and takes a closer look at hidden places along the route. The next big venture on Jurasek’s horizon will be the first Route 66 museum in Europe.

Such passion is one of Route 66’s greatest assets, and harnessing it into effective messaging and marketing outreach will be critical to

the future of the road. But, as other road travel surveys have indicated, there are many untapped audiences; a broader range of travelers must be targeted.

Bridge the Generation Gap

As noted previously, the median age of Route 66 travelers is over 50. Many speakers and participants at The Road Ahead event echoed the need to attract a younger demographic to the Mother Road if its touristic potential is to be fully realized.

Aaron Chaffee of Hostelling International USA, which caters to 18- to 35-year-olds, emphasized that younger travelers focus on authentic experiences and steer away from “organized” travel. At the same time one should not assume that they will figure it out on their own, particularly given the breadth of options the Mother Road offers. 93 percent are looking for recommendations on what they should do when they are visiting and 70 percent comment on and share experiences through social media. Communication and marketing about Route 66 need to take into account the ways in which these free and independent travelers obtain and share information.

Dan Rice, owner of 66-to-Cali on the Santa Monica Pier and Executive Director Designate of the Route 66 Alliance, cautioned that distinctions need to be made when considering a younger audience. The Baby Boomers (born 1946–64) are currently the predominant demographic group traveling the road. Rice posited that they reached adulthood before Route 66 was decommissioned and witnessed the tail end of its heyday, creating nostalgia for all that it represents. This generation began retiring in 2005 with the majority tipping point anticipated around 2023, less than ten years from now. When the Baby Boom generation ages out of travel, what demographic will take its place?

The next generation, known as Generation X (born 1965–84), has had considerably less exposure to the stories and significance of Route 66. Most Xers were too young to drive the route before its decommissioning, and they were too late for the Beat Generation's reverence of the iconic thoroughfare. When they begin retiring in the next decade, it is unclear whether Xers will replace the Baby Boomers as tourists along the road, which underscores the need to focus now on promoting Route 66 and conveying its stories, rather than relying on nostalgia.

Millennials, also known as Generation Y (born 1985–2004), present a more promising demographic. With the release of the Disney Pixar Movie *Cars* in 2006, the younger end of this generation has had a powerful introduction to the significance and plight of the Mother Road. Reinforcing those connections as a means of promoting travel on the road will be critical to the long-term vibrancy of Route 66. But it will also be important to target Generation Xers as a crucial bridge. Many Xers have learned about the Mother Road through their children's experience of *Cars*, but they are not yet traveling the road. They have less disposable income than Baby Boomers and take less vacation time, making the Mother Road a challenging travel option. Drawing in Xers and younger generations will require new language and avenues of communication, consistent messaging and branding, and preservation of the authenticity of the Route 66 experience, both people and places.

While the Illinois Office of Tourism's (IOT) successful "Faces of Route 66" campaign drove website inquiries up 22 percent, it was not their only campaign that promoted the Mother Road. In an effort to reach out to the Millennial generation without losing the older audience, Deputy Director Jen Hoelzle spoke about Mini Abe, IOT's pint-sized ambassador and promoter of travel to Illinois, who was introduced in 2013, the same year as the Academy Award-nominated film *Abraham Lincoln*. As Tim Nudd of *Adweek* reported in October 2013, "You have to hand it to the Illinois Office of Tourism... They're not being overly precious with the image of Abraham Lincoln. The Land of Lincoln rolled out a new tourism spot this fall starring 'Mini Abe,' a tiny plastic version of the 16th president who is seen grunting, groaning and shrieking his way around the state—enjoying everything it has to offer, from riverboats and county fairs to the Willis Tower and Route 66." The Millennial response to Mini Abe has been dramatic, with enjoyillinois.com inquiries up 57 percent. A "share your stuff" brag site allows individuals to post photos and videos, adding to dwell rates.



Illinois Office of Tourism's Mini Abe campaign

Enhance Diversity

As reported in the *Economic Impact Study*, the demographics of those living along the route are diverse. The population along the Mother Road is 25 percent Hispanic overall (twice the national average), with higher concentrations in New Mexico, California, and Texas. Fifteen times the national average of American Indians live along the route in the Southwest. However,



Nat King Cole

only 3.5 percent of respondents to the traveler survey identified as Hispanic and 3.2 percent as Native American. The survey was only issued in English, thus potentially underreporting the percentage of Hispanic travelers, but the results nonetheless demonstrate that Route 66 visitors are overwhelmingly white.

Jim Farber, who worked on the development of “Route 66: The Road and the Romance,” an exhibition that opened in 2014 at the Autry National Center of the American West in Los Angeles, noted that for many the memory of Route 66 is not always positive. Before the Civil Rights era, segregation existed along the Mother Road with many facilities designated “whites only.” Matthew Roth, a historian with the Automobile Club of California, explained that the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, published between 1937 and 1959, indicated that it was often a long way between safe stops for African American motorists. However, through other avenues, such as music, the associations have been positive. Roth explained that

during World War II, Bobby Troupe, writer of the classic Route 66 song, served at Montford Point, the recruiting base for the first African American marines. As recreation director, his music was influenced by the jazz and blues rhythms of the recruits. In 1946, *Get Your Kicks on Route 66* was recorded by Nat King Cole, one of the early crossover artists accepted by both black and white audiences.

The history of Route 66 is a tableau of varied racial and ethnic histories, many of which have not been fully told. Exploring those multiple narratives is key to drawing new audiences to the road and enhancing the diversity of travelers. Among the more than 25 tribal communities along the route, there is newfound interest in promoting the stories about the significant connections between Route 66 and Native American history. In 2014–2015, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association will engage with tribes along the road to develop a publication and destination website to educate travelers about American Indian experiences of Route 66.

Employ New Communication Tools

As Dan Rice of 66-to-Cali and the Route 66 Alliance remarked, in marketing one needs to be aware of the demographic and to identify the right delivery system, whether through print, television, radio, billboards, bus ads, online, or on mobile devices. The majority of Millennials get their information on devices, and 66 percent of cell phones are now smartphones. Whether seeking or sharing information about accommodations, transport, places to eat, or sites to visit, the next generation of Route 66 travelers will require a very different set of communication tools and technologies.

As many reiterated throughout *The Road Ahead*, the route lends itself ideally to various forms of apps and social media, but these platforms are sorely underutilized. There are outstanding opportunities to bring together tourism entities, small businesses, museums, and

others to market and promote the route more cohesively. Roger Holden of Relive the Route (RETRO) commented that internet and mobile platforms can also provide compelling data for making the case for investment in Route 66 to government agencies as well as private entities. A Google search of “Route 66” produces more than 69 million hits (as of November 2013); such statistics speak to the broad-based interest in and dynamic potential of the Mother Road. Everyone acknowledged the need to integrate new communication tools and technologies, but challenges still exist for how to bring together the many disparate entities across the eight states.

Craft a Core Message

A critical step in reaching new audiences as well as cross-marketing is the need to craft a core message.

Ed Wilson, Strategic Consultant for World Monuments Fund, underscored this as essential to mobilizing tourists as well as resources and investors. He illustrated the point with a comparison to the environmental conservation community and the famous image of a lone polar bear adrift on a small melting iceberg. What is Route 66’s polar bear? What singular message can help to inspire interest in and preservation of the Mother Road? Traci Ward of Visit California echoed this point and emphasized the need to sell a positive lifestyle and brand, not simply promote the many sites along the road. Indeed, Route 66 has a varied landscape, multiple histories, diverse communities, and an abundance of historic sites. A core message does not negate the quirkiness or idiosyncrasies of the Mother Road. Rather, it provides a common platform upon which the many organizations, people, and places of Route 66 can build and expand.

As Lino Squarza of the Route 66 Association of Italy observed, “I realize that a road so long that crosses eight states and a large part of your country involves many different interests and sensibilities, but from our point of view Route 66 is a single entity and not the sum of many different parts. This is a fundamental aspect for the promotion of its tourist image and history in foreign countries.”



Disney's Route 66-inspired Cars Land in Anaheim, California

Engage Communities

Throughout The Road Ahead strategic roundtable, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration and public engagement as key to successful revitalization efforts and economic development. Community cases substantiated these claims. From the grass-roots volunteerism of Pontiac and Atlanta, Illinois, to the voter-supported capital package in Tulsa, Oklahoma, engagement can happen at many scales and across various sectors. Part of the power of Route 66 is the platform it provides to bring diverse interests together for common purposes. This has allowed many along the Mother Road—including municipalities, state agencies, not-for-profits, business owners, and committed citizens—to transcend traditional boundaries and create new models for collaboration and stakeholder participation. Learning from and building on these successes is critical to re-envisioning a shared future for the road.

Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Sapulpa has long been referred to as the “Crossroads of America” due to its location at the intersection of two primary pre-Interstate highways: Route 66, which ran east-west from Chicago to Los Angeles, and Route 75, which ran north-south from Canada to the Gulf Coast at Galveston, Texas. Sapulpa remains an important crossroads as five major highways converge in the town today.

Despite its location at the hub of several transportation arteries, by 1990 Sapulpa was in a state of decline. With traffic concentrated on the Interstates and the development of malls and big-box chain stores, most of the retail businesses were moving away from downtown or closing altogether. To buck this trend, Sapulpa became a Main Street community.

Cindy McDonald, a Sapulpa native whose father’s drugstore is the oldest retail business in town, is the Executive Director of Sapulpa Main Street. McDonald notes that an early and significant challenge in revitalizing the historic downtown was the use of sheet metal façades, applied to older buildings as a “modernization” technique in the latter half of the twentieth century. The first removal effort was the result of a community-driven collaboration. The volunteers came; the donated equipment rolled in. People showed up with food, their grills, and lawn chairs. This dedicated band of residents is now known as the “façade squad,” and they have completed three removal projects. Building owners are able to sell the scrap metal and reinvest the proceeds into revitalization of the original façades.



“Façade squad” in Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Revitalization efforts have included the painting of murals, which was accomplished through donations and school fundraising campaigns, and have become a notable attraction for travelers along Route 66. In 2006, the Sapulpa Historical Society purchased the old Waite Phillips/Barnsdall gas and service station, restoring it as a museum. Quarterly downtown clean-ups are sponsored within the community; volunteers are referred to as the “funk fighters,” and the city has partnered with Show Inc. to employ adults with disabilities to assist with daily downtown maintenance.

Sapulpa is also host to the Route 66 Blowout on the first Saturday of June. Years ago the Oklahoma Route 66 Association began sponsoring a Route 66 “cruise” and encouraged each city along the route to host an event. Sapulpa instituted a classic car show, and in its first year had 35 cars and one food vendor. June 2014 was the 25th anniversary of the Blowout, which has grown to 350–400 cars and a crowd of 25,000–30,000 visitors. It is Sapulpa Main Street’s biggest fundraiser.

The energy and commitment within the community has also helped to attract corporate investment, resulting in two major downtown projects, Berryhill and the Wells Building, which combined created 66 senior housing units and four retail spaces. Downtown occupancy is now at 93 percent, and reinvestment has totaled over \$41 million, a testament to what can be accomplished when a community bands together.

Neon Heritage Preservation Committee

The Neon Heritage Preservation Committee (NHPC), part of the Route 66 Association of Missouri, involves a group of individuals dedicated to preserving the tradition of neon signage along the Mother Road. Jim Thole, a key member of the committee, recounted how, in 2007, a windstorm damaged the Donuts Drive-In sign in St. Louis and provided an opportunity to advance the cause. The restoration project was completed the next year, and was followed by the restoration of neon signs at the Sunset Motel in Villa Ridge (2009) and the Munger Moss Hotel in Lebanon (2010). Soon, an opportunity to work outside of Missouri emerged.

There have long been joint Missouri-Illinois Route 66 festivals at the Missouri end of the Chain of Rocks Bridge, which serves as a physical link between the two states, and members of the respective Route 66 state associations have served on each other’s boards. The 2010 annual Illinois motor tour started in Eureka, Missouri, and included a relighting reenactment of the Sunset Motel neon sign. The event was such a hit that discussions about doing a joint neon sign restoration quickly mobilized. The Luna Café was a natural choice for the NHPC; it was technically in Illinois, but just across the Mississippi River in the metro St. Louis area. The Illinois Route 66 Association supported it conceptually and with some financial aid to the owner, while the NHPC from Missouri led the project, which was completed in 2011. This was the first NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program cost-share grant application jointly sponsored by two Route 66 state associations, and was an important step in demonstrating the power of engaging multiple communities. Building on this success, the next project came in 2013 with the Vic Suhling sign at the new Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center.

The Missouri-Illinois success has now been noted by other states. Jim Thole underscored that engaging multiple communities, especially across state lines, provides a powerful platform for enhancing the connectivity of people and places along the Mother Road. Project collaboration leads to “long-term bonding that takes place when people achieve (or survive) something together.”



Neon sign in St. Louis, Missouri

Expand the Toolbox

Many of the success stories along Route 66 have come to fruition through the use of creative financing and development strategies. From Winslow, Arizona, to Sapulpa, Oklahoma, to Atlanta, Illinois, there are examples of how public-private partnerships, tax credits, Scenic Byway grants, and more have been leveraged to spur investment. Many of these tools, however, are being underutilized along the road as a whole.

Traditionally, the historic preservation field has relied heavily on command-and-control policies to protect heritage resources, meaning that by designating buildings as local land-

marks or listing them on the National Register, their destruction can be prevented (in the case of the latter, at least when federal funds are involved). But listing buildings does not alone revitalize historic communities. Just as creativity is needed to enhance experiences along and draw tourists to the road, innovative, market-driven development strategies are needed that benefit local communities and incentivize investors. But what works in larger, urban centers may not be effective for smaller, rural communities. An expanded toolbox is needed so that strategies can be tailored for specific contexts and projects.



Transportation Funding

As reported in the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study*, portions of the Mother Road in several states are designated under the U.S. Department of Transport-

ation's Byways program. Since the inception of the program in 1992, Route 66-related projects have received Byway grants totaling \$5.5 million. However, these projects make up only a small portion of the overall funding that has been allocated to other Byway projects in the same states. As a comparison, the Great River Road along the Mississippi River, which now has Scenic Byway designation in all of the ten states through which it runs, has received more than \$25 million in Byway grants in the same period. Route 66 is not fully capitalizing on the opportunities available through the American Byways program, in part because there is no overall organizational framework or committee that can coordinate efforts across the eight states.

Transportation Enhancement Activity (TEA) funding, such as ISTEA, TEA-21, and SAFETEA-LU, also represents an under-tapped resource for Route 66. As noted in the *Economic Impact Study*, “a good discussion is needed by the Route 66 community and state officials involved in TEA investments concerning whether the Route is getting its ‘fair share’ of TEA monies and which TEA categories (especially historic preservation) should be emphasized on the Mother Road. The potential dollars to be claimed are quite substantial. For example, increasing the TEA investment on Route 66 from \$133 million to \$200 million (the latter still a small share of the eight Route 66 state total \$2.559 billion TEA investment) and allocating say 10% of the approximate \$70 million (\$200 million–\$133 million) added TEA investment for historic preservation (up from the current 6.7% apportionment for this TEA category) would realize \$7 million for historic preservation on Route 66.”

Hal Fairbanks, Vice President of Acquisitions for HRI Properties, a real estate development company that specializes in adaptive reuse of historic structures, noted that the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program is another resource for preservation of Route 66 roadways and bridges. According to DOT's website, TIFIA “pro-

vides federal credit assistance in the form of direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit to finance surface transportation projects of national and regional significance... Eligible applicants include state and local governments, transit agencies, railroad companies, special authorities, special districts, and private entities. The TIFIA credit program is designed to fill market gaps and leverage substantial private co-investment by providing supplemental and subordinate capital.”

These transportation-related financing mechanisms represent significant funding opportunities. Tapping these resources in more effective ways will be critical to Mother Road revitalization and development efforts.

Tax Credits

Diana Letsinger, a CPA and partner at Novogradac and Company LLC, specializes in community development and affordable housing and outlined the ways in which various tax credits—new market, low-income housing, historic rehabilitation, and renewable energy—can support preservation and revitalization projects along Route 66. These credits help to incentivize development through syndication investment funds that leverage private capital for projects, many in communities in need of investment.

However, as reported in the *Route 66 Economic Impact Study*, application of tax credit incentives has been relatively light along the Mother Road. While the federal Historic Tax Credits (HTC), Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) “are financial behemoths in scale (both nationally and in the eight Route 66 states), we find only trace or infrequent utilization of these aids along Route 66... This gap is surprising given the Mother Road’s extensive physical scale, rich historic character, and need for investment assistance for preservation, affordable housing, and economic development.”

Hal Fairbanks explained how state-level tax credits can be piggybacked onto the federal HTC, leveraging additional resources. Five of the Route 66 states have state-level historic rehabilitation tax credit programs, including Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Texas will join that group in 2015, as legislation authorizing a state-level HTC was passed in the summer of 2013. These programs mirror the federal tax credits, though with varying caps and requirements. They provide an additional incentive for investors, particu-

Luna Lodge

Luna Lodge is a circa 1949 motel on Route 66 in Albuquerque, NM. After sitting vacant for several years, the property was redeveloped by the not-for-profit New Life Homes as a mixed-use development and housing for low-income families and persons with special needs. The design preserved the motel’s Pueblo-style architecture, converting the existing rooms into 14 apartments and adding 16 additional units, and received LEED Platinum Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The \$4.8 million project was financed largely by low-income housing tax credits, historic tax credits, and sustainable energy tax credits. The development has received several commendations, including a Tax Credit Excellence Award in the “Special Needs Housing” category from the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition, and the 2013 Historic Tax Credit award from the Novogradac Journal for the “Development that Overcame Significant Obstacles.”





Hotel Parq Central

The three-building Memorial Hospital opened in 1926 as a facility for the employees of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. With over 42,000 square feet and situated on a site of more than two acres, the complex is an iconic fixture along Central Avenue in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 2010, the vacant hospital saw new life as the Hotel Parq Central, a high-quality, limited-service boutique hotel. In addition to 73 guest rooms, the hotel includes conference rooms and a roof-top lounge with breathtaking views. The nearly \$20 million conversion project utilized \$13.8 million in New Market Tax Credits as well as \$2.6 million in Historic Tax Credits. The project also capitalized on a \$14 million Industrial Revenue Bond issued by the City of Albuquerque, which provides certain tax advantages, such as a 20-year abatement of property taxes.

larly the uncapped programs, and can often make or break a tax credit deal. But even with the boost these state-level programs provide, tax credits are underutilized along the road. As noted in the *Economic Impact Study*, “Few states have trumpeted the Mother Road as forcefully as Oklahoma. The state has participated in the federal HTC from the program’s origins in 1978 and has adopted its own HTC—a state action that often encourages heightened federal HTC activity. Despite all of this, to date there have been only five federal HTC-aided projects in Oklahoma along Route 66 in the last 30 years.”

Other Gap Financing Mechanisms

Hal Fairbanks of HRI further underscored the need to look beyond tax credits and better known federal funding tools to bridge gaps in project financing. At the federal level, HUD-insured loans and Fannie/Freddie Mae loan guarantees can be used for development that creates residential units in existing buildings. Federal- and state-level tax-exempt bonds and façade donations can also serve as funding tools. At the state and local level, the toolbox can expand even further, as incentives can be tailored to better suit projects and contexts. HUD 108 can be used for developing market-rate housing, and Community Development Block Grants, façade improvement programs, and commercial build-out grants (for example, for historic signs) can all provide financing for historic preservation efforts as well. Property and sales tax incentives provide yet another vehicle for generating resources for revitalization of buildings and neighborhoods. Improvement districts—including Special Improvement Districts, Public Improvement Districts, Business Improvement Districts, etc.—demarcate areas where property owners pay a supplemental assessment to spur economic growth through streetscape improvements, collective marketing, enhanced security, cultural amenities, and more. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) provides a vehicle through which those property owners who do not pay taxes but still benefit from public services—such as not-for-profits,

universities, hospitals, public agencies, etc.—make special payments to support local maintenance and improvement costs.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is often applied in new development, at the building or complex/district level, to finance public improvements in designated areas. The aim is to prompt private investment, which in turn will raise property values. The added tax revenues are then paid into a fund to underwrite public improvements ranging from land acquisition, to streetscape improvements, to historic preservation. TIF has been a major financing tool for Pontiac, Illinois. As Mayor Bob Russell noted, they established a TIF district in a blighted area of town, and new development there has generated about \$1.8 million per year.

Corporate Funding

Ed Wilson, Strategic Consultant for World Monuments Fund, provided a primer on philanthropic giving in the United States, focusing on corporate funding. The U.S. has an incredible tradition of philanthropy; in 2011, charitable giving reached nearly \$300 billion, with the largest percentage coming from individuals. However, corporate contributions—at 6 percent overall—are growing. Just over 50 U.S. corporations give to the arts and culture, so tapping this resource for Route 66 means connecting projects more broadly to education, economic and community development, and the environment.

Corporate support may take a variety of forms, the rarest being cash. Rather, companies look for a range and mixture of programs that, for example, tap their key geographic interests, constituents, or markets, provide opportunities for employees to get involved, and allow for their products or services to gain exposure. Companies have also become far more astute in their giving, articulating clear corporate social responsibility (CSR) priorities, seeking partner credibility, and ensuring that the programs in which they invest have scalability and replication, produce measurable results, and create shared value.

In order for the Route 66 community to draw corporate funds toward projects, it will be important to frame the issues into a collective story, to think about the whole as a sum of its parts. While the individual places, communities, and histories are important to illustrate the richness, diversity, and grassroots passion along the Mother Road, synthetic messaging is needed to draw large-scale focus and support. Singling out a set of four or five goals that align

Bell Trading Post

Once a jewelry factory on Route 66 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the nonprofit Family Housing Development Corp. converted this 22,000-square-foot building into offices and loft-style apartments, including affordable housing units. The original building was constructed in 1946, with additions made in the 1960s. While not listed on the National Register, the building is considered historic. A \$2.6 million project restored the Pueblo-

Spanish-style façade and preserved the existing windows and doors. The redevelopment was made possible through a city program that offered the property to developers below market value, and also benefitted from a \$1 million grant to the city from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfield Cleanup program for abatement of lead-contaminated soil, asbestos, and lead-based paint.



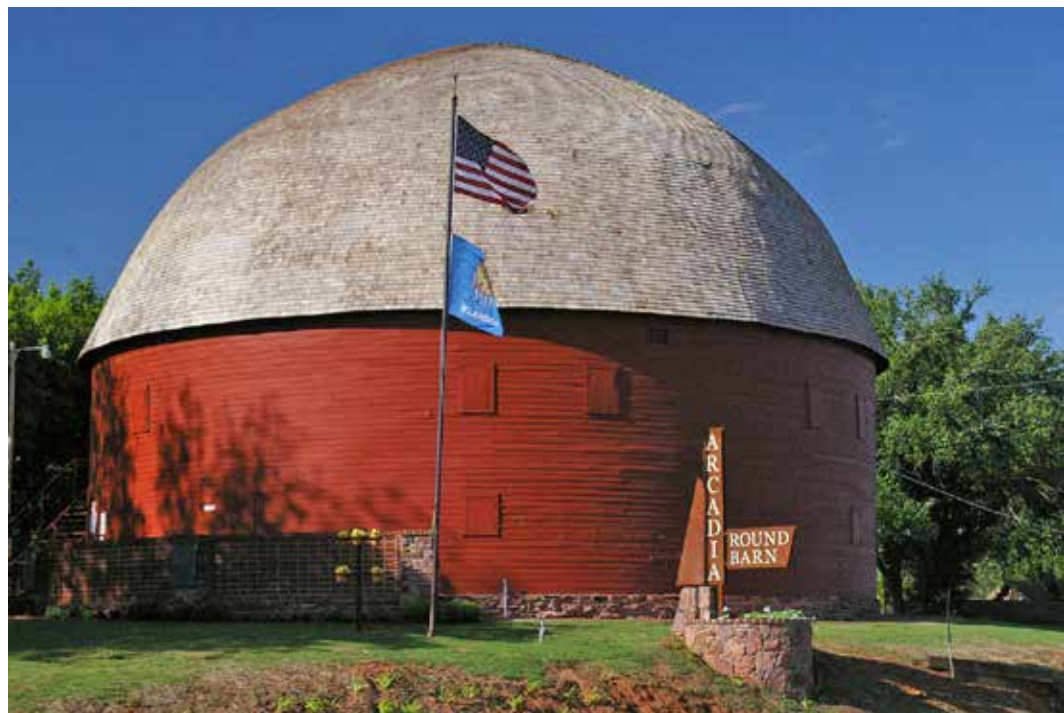
the preservation of Route 66 heritage with economic, social, and environmental concerns will help to create a common vision and cohesive brand. Ensuring that there is some sort of collaborative framework or committee that carries many voices from the road but that can speak for the collective will also be critical to any corporate approach. Expanding the toolbox into this type of corporate sector fundraising will very much rely on the ability of stakeholders along the route to work collaboratively.

Intangible Incentives

Architect and planner Ed Boles, retired from the City of Albuquerque Historic Preservation Office, commented that many of these resources and financing mechanisms—from tax credits to corporate giving—are important *tangible* incentives to include in the Route 66 toolbox.



However, equally important are the *intangible* incentives that serve to motivate and mobilize revitalization along the road. Whether because of a fear of loss, a sense of duty or pride, or the simple passion one might have for a place or memory, individuals and groups have been the glue to many positive initiatives along Route 66. Qualifying those contributions and understanding how they drive success are also important to include in the toolbox. As Boles noted, the intangible incentives category “is worth examining, including project initiators, incentives, and affinity groups whose collective resources and mutual interests have made projects work. I imagine a ‘cookbook’ in which the ingredients (tangible and intangible incentives) of successful preservation projects are listed with narratives about how each was assembled... Think of two exemplary projects in Oklahoma: the Round Barn in Arcadia, restored by a retired carpenter and crew, and Ed Galloway’s Totem Pole Park in Foyil. The latter was restored by the non-profit Kansas Grassroots Art Association, volunteering seasonally during a 15-year period in the 1980s and 1990s.” These in-kind contributions, driven by local engagement, are representative of the spirit of Route 66 and should be leveraged as key tools in development efforts.



Ed Galloway’s Totem Pole Park in Foyil, Oklahoma (top) and the Round Barn in Arcadia, Oklahoma

Maximize Local Benefits

Throughout The Road Ahead strategic roundtable, speakers and participants alike echoed the need to connect the heritage of Route 66 to broader activities, including economic development, housing, environmental protection, social programs, and education. Preservation should not be an end in and of itself, rather it should serve as a means to enhance quality of life for and benefits to local communities. From Atlanta, Illinois, to Sapulpa, Oklahoma, to Winslow, Arizona, the roundtable showcased important projects along the Mother Road that used preservation to revitalize communities. Positioning the sites and stories of Route 66 in that context will help to ensure that preservation serves people, not just places.

New Mexico Main Street Program

For more than a quarter century, New Mexico Main Street has been serving traditional and historic business districts, plazas, and centers in an effort to revitalize local areas of commerce through place-based economics. Using the National Trust's Main Street Four Point Approach (organization, economic positioning, design, promotion), the state program provides technical assistance, services, and resources to local affiliates in more than 46 programs statewide. Three additional community development programs are also housed under the New Mexico Main Street umbrella:

- The Arts and Cultural District program, which focuses on growing the cultural economy within a walkable district.
- The Frontier Communities Initiative, for communities under 7,500 in population and focusing on a catalytic economic development project.
- The New Mexico Historic Movie Houses Initiative, working to keep New Mexico's movie houses open through assisting with the transition from film to digital media.

Rich Williams, Director of the New Mexico Main Street Program, emphasized that the program does not fund business development; in fact an anti-donation clause in the New Mexico Constitution makes it illegal to give taxpayer money directly from government to business. Rather, the program supports community groups that are volunteer-driven. People are interested in the survival of downtowns for quality of life more than for economic reasons, and there is a need to engage elected officials to help draw resources from both the private and public sectors.

These small main streets struggle with many of the same challenges that Route 66, America's Main Street, faces: population shifts, economic survival, infrastructure needs, and more. What the Main Street approach champions is a bottom-up process that empowers local communities to draw on their strengths and determine their own priorities for preservation and supporting small business. But all projects need partners, and there is still a substantial need



Main Street and a neon sign in Albuquerque, New Mexico

to build much stronger collaborations. Piecing together funding resources to make projects move forward takes passion, community commitment, and common goals.

In the past three years, the New Mexico Main Street programs along Route 66 have generated important benefits, including 722 net new jobs, 520 building renovations (with the assistance of architects providing conceptual design work but driven by volunteers), and \$45 million in private sector reinvestment (a huge amount for a poor state like New Mexico). Even greater success can be realized through inter-agency and public-private partnerships that help to maintain Route 66 as a living highway that creates clear benefits for those who live along it as well as those who visit.

ABQ the Plan

ABQ the Plan is Albuquerque's long-term strategy for investing in the city and planning for a future with new opportunities for the community. Current projects within the plan range from downtown and rail yard improvements, interchange reconstruction, bus rapid transit, renovations of the convention center, improvements to Rio Grande Valley State Park, and a significant Route 66 component. As noted by Linda Rumpf, the City of Albuquerque's Project Manager for ABQ the Plan, "Route 66 is a vibrant and rich experience for all generations; its attraction builds upon the memories of the past, [and] contributes to the present life of locals with an ever-evolving appeal that expands into the future." Based on this vision, a working group of government agencies and representatives of neighborhoods, special interest groups, and Central Avenue businesses have helped to shape the plan, policies, and projects, which focus on several key Route 66 destinations, including historic motels, museums, Albuquerque BioPark, New Mexico Expo fairgrounds, historic districts (Nob Hill, Downtown, Old Town), and the University of New Mexico. Their goals are as follows:



Kelly's Brew Pub, a former auto dealership in the Nob Hill neighborhood of Albuquerque, New Mexico

- **Historic Legacy:** Celebrate Route 66 for its past, present, and future experiences.
- **Infrastructure and Transportation:** Ensure public infrastructure responds to current and future development needs. Develop and support an attractive, comfortable, efficient, and easily accessible multi-modal transportation system.
- **Public Space:** Support real places for real people.
- **Business and Development:** Support opportunities that are catalytic for a strong and diverse business economy.
- **Promotion and Tourism:** Recognize and support the potential Route 66 has to create a thriving local and tourist economy.



Bus rapid transit simulation in Albuquerque, New Mexico

In order to effectively celebrate Route 66 and preserve its historic resources, the work of the plan must be integrally connected to other city enhancements that ensure access, improve quality of life, and support business. Central Avenue, which is the historic Route 66 in Albuquerque, was built for the car. Local surveys reported that people want bike and pedestrian facilities, more public space, support for business and development, and tourism promotion. Such efforts must happen on a physical level through improved streetscapes, wayfinding signage, etc., as well as on a procedural level through streamlined approval processes, fee waivers, and more. The Central Avenue Neon Design Overlay Zone (CANDOZ) is a model for incentivizing businesses to install or refurbish neon signs, using new neon or neon look-alike signs by providing fee waivers and design assistance. Promotion and branding are also critical to efforts. To ensure that success, the 15-mile stretch through Albuquerque has been divided into 11 nodes to afford the focus needed to institute change effectively. Ultimately, the aim is to promote sustainability, affordable housing, increased density, and economic development.



El Vado Auto Court Motel Sign Maintenance in Albuquerque, New Mexico

A Message from Bob Russell, Mayor of Pontiac, Illinois

As the mayor of a community that is located on the route, I have been heavily involved in the promotion of Route 66. It is obvious to me that the only way that our community, and all the communities along the road, will be able to continue to support the route is to look at it as an economic development opportunity. Even though the City of Pontiac has had great success in this endeavor, there is continuing resistance from taxpayers, and understandably so in this economy. It is very difficult for our residents to understand how tourism can benefit our city when they live on streets that are in need of repair. Our passion alone will not be enough to make this a successful endeavor. Our state and federal governments are poised to continue cutting the funds that we receive from them to provide the necessary day to day services that our residents expect. In light of this, it has forced us in Pontiac to take our fate into our own hands. The only available option for us has been the promotion of tourism that Route 66 has afforded.

In an economic era when many of the communities in Illinois are boarding up their storefronts, our city has achieved almost 100% occupancy in our downtown business district. The Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum in Pontiac has created opportunities for other museums to locate to the city, which in turn has convinced restaurant and retail store owners, along with bed and breakfast operators, to move their operations here. I have had to explain to residents for several years now that you do not attract retail stores until you have the foot traffic. Now we have the foot traffic and that indeed has attracted new retail stores, restaurants, and bed and breakfasts. All of the Route 66 development must create additional sales tax and provide for more jobs. Without these two components, we will not be successful in the continued promotion and preservation of Route 66.

The one benefit that we had not anticipated is the investment of wealthy entrepreneurs who visit our city from other countries. The majority of the Route 66 visitors from European and Asian countries are fairly well off financially, and they still view the U.S. as one of the best opportunities for investing their money. As such, we are promoting the availability of land the city owns along our interstate and state highways as good locations for them to invest their money to start new businesses.

We have been promoting this idea for the last 25 years with some success, but now have a renewed interest from our Route 66 visitors. The goal of this endeavor is the same as our retail development, and that is to create jobs and tax revenue.

The only promise I made to our residents when they asked me to serve as their mayor was that while I am in office, there will be no increase in our real estate taxes. The development of Route 66 tourism will enable me to keep that promise through the end of my term.

The other somewhat hidden components that the Route 66 redevelopment has provided for the City of Pontiac is quality of life and community pride. The opening of new restaurants and shops in our downtown has provided our residents with wonderful places for them to get together with old friends to have a great meal and to just sit and chat with one another and then take a leisurely stroll around from shop to shop. It is always fun for me to see our local

residents showing their friends or family around our city and seeing the pride that they have in doing so. Without the development of the Route 66 tourism, I have no doubt that our city would look tired and worn, as so many other communities do.

To make tourism work is not an easy task. The first obstacle for many communities is to get the elected officials to buy into the idea. The majority of them want to be able to see tangible results in a very short period of time. This is nearly impossible to provide, first, because it takes many years to develop, and second, because it is very difficult to quantify. For the City of Pontiac to make this work, the elected officials, our





Livingston County Courthouse in Pontiac, Illinois

volunteers, our City Administrator, our Department Head, and all of our employees have all had to go that “extra mile.” All of our museum buildings are owned or leased by the city and we are in partnership with all the museum operators. We get a percentage of their income to offset our expenses. There have been thousands of volunteer hours provided by all of the above groups to get the museums ready and to keep them staffed. Some of the elected officials volunteer one to two days a week at the museums and some of our residents volunteer at least two to three days a week in helping to curate the museums. I have personally worn out a couple pairs of shoes over the last few years by spending so much time greeting all of our visitors and giving personal tours to various groups. If a municipality wants to be successful in developing tourism, they must put together a very dedicated team that is willing to work tirelessly to get it off the ground.

Is it all worth it? The answer is yes. The results for our city have been more than I, or anyone involved, could have ever imagined. The word that I keep hearing used in describing our community is “energy.” Many of our visitors tell me that there seems to be a lot of energy here, and there is. The people who love their community will put in as much energy as it takes to make their community a better place to live. I believe that we have just seen the beginning of the development of Route 66 tourism as an economic development tool. So many people from so many countries are just learning about it, and I am continually being told by our visitors that everyone from their country wants to make the trip.

We now have the opportunity as communities to grasp it by working together to promote it. I believe the strategic roundtable that World Monuments Fund sponsored was the best opportunity we have had to make this happen. Let’s do it!

Next Steps

The issues summarized in this report are vast and varied, much like the Mother Road itself. With each of the eight states focusing on their respective segments, forging a cohesive strategy for moving forward proves challenging. As Kaisa Barthuli of the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program noted, there has been strong grassroots-level interest in the road and active engagement by the individual state associations. There have also been important strides made in looking at the Mother Road from a macro perspective in recent years. The inclusion of Route 66 on the 2008 World Monuments Watch and the pursuant *Economic Impact Study* have compelled a more global approach to revitalization efforts, and The Road Ahead strategic roundtable served as an important platform for promoting collective action.

Since 1999, the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program has served as an important leader and catalyst in bringing together Route 66 constituents toward common aims. However, unless reauthorized, the program's legislation is scheduled to sunset in 2019. Though World Monuments Fund is supporting positive change through the impact study research and as an outside convener and facilitator, its role is also not permanent. With the diverse interests and groups along the road, collective action will require ongoing stewardship that neither the NPS nor WMF can provide in the long-term. To effectively capitalize on the potential of Route 66 as a tourism and economic development opportunity, a framework for collaboration is needed to weave together the varied entities along the road and provide a conduit for addressing the key issues outlined in this report, from cross-border cooperation, to partnership and funding cultivation, to marketing. This is a vital first step in ensuring a dynamic future for the Mother Road.

With the need to forge a collaborative working structure such a high priority, a core group of participants convened on the day after The Road Ahead roundtable concluded to consider this issue. The group included representatives from the state, national, and international Route 66 organizations, Scenic Byway organizations, state tourism offices, state-wide preservation agencies, departments of transportation, state historic preservation offices, private business owners, universities, archivists, and other affinity groups. World Monuments Fund facilitated the meeting with the assistance of the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. The aims of the meeting were to:

- Identify priorities for collaboration.
- Assess the existing strengths and needs related to collaboration.
- Outline the potential opportunities and challenges for collaboration.
- Explore a process for advancing a cooperative framework.
- Identify next steps for promoting and supporting action.

The session included facilitated brainstorming and break-out discussions, and utilized a SWOC (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges) analysis methodology.

First and foremost, Route 66 has tremendous assets in its people, places, and experiences. From its small-town appeal to its funky motels and majestic landscapes, the Mother Road incorporates a passion, character, and authenticity that are unmatched in the American experience. Its longstanding representation in the arts and culture—in music, literature, television, and film—is a vibrant platform for continued promotion and storytelling.

The *Economic Impact Study* has produced a trove of data quantifying the benefits that preservation and revitalization of the road can provide to populations across a 2,400-mile stretch of the country. Community success stories qualify these impacts and provide a robust and varied portrait of public engagement and economic development. There is strength in numbers: eight states and many different entities and affinity groups are dedicated to various aspects



Route 66: The Road Ahead follow-up meeting in Anaheim, California

of protecting and promoting Route 66, at the local and state level, but also the national and international levels through the NPS and WMF. All of this provides a strong foundation on which to build cooperative efforts.

Yet some strengths can also prove challenging. While the size and diversity of Route 66 are an advantage in terms of the breadth of experiences, they likewise complicate collective action. With so many stakeholders and vested interests, coordinating efforts into strategic and mutually beneficial planning can be difficult. The construction of the Interstate Highway System and the decommissioning of Route 66 eroded a very strong foundation of cooperation across the Mother Road in the U.S. Highway 66 Association. State associations and agencies took up the slack two decades ago, but do not have a mandate or sufficient capacities to work across state borders and promote a national mission. Some fundamental needs require well-coordinated collective action, especially national-level designation, a cohesive marketing strategy, tourism infrastructure, improved navigation for travelers, and targeted outreach to younger and more diverse communities.

Route 66 persists as a well-recognized brand here in the U.S. and especially abroad. As Steve Olenski reported in a *Forbes* piece about The Road Ahead, Route 66 “is America’s most celebrated automobile highway and a famous symbol of twentieth-century American culture and history.” Branding for the twenty-first century is a tremendous opportunity that can support revitalization efforts. But the ability to synthesize that brand into core messaging and a common vision is inhibited by the lack of collaboration and leadership.

The opportunities, nonetheless, greatly outweigh the challenges. Energy along and political interest in the Mother Road are high, and Route 66 popularity is gaining momentum. There is a vast amount of collective knowledge among the Route 66 associations and community groups. Tourism collaborations are already developing at the local and regional levels. Communication technology presents a range of tools for reaching a broader audience. Sponsorship and corporate partnership possibilities are numerous. But a framework for cooperation at a collective or national level is very much needed, and there was early consensus amongst the group that this is a priority.

Successful models can serve as references for collaborative frameworks, including the historic U.S. Highway 66 Association, National Trails, and the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, and one or more existing organizations could potentially serve as a conduit for such collective action. However, the meeting focused on the process of collaboration rather than the structure, and participants generated the following one-page road map for how to build a shared vision from the bottom up, and ensure a structure and process for continued stakeholder participation:

Vision

- Craft a core message and identify a primary objective
- Recognize the multiple narratives of the road
- Look at the whole as a sum of parts
- Bring in an outside perspective
- Work toward economic development and community benefits

Strategy

- **Product Authenticity**
 - Protect the historic assets (through designation or other means)
 - Make/re-make experiences
 - Incorporate the landscape
 - Celebrate creativity—combining new and old
 - Ensure wayfinding
- **Engage/Re-Engage Stakeholders**
 - Reach new audiences (more diverse and younger)
 - Capitalize on existing connections (esp. through affinity groups)
 - Engage local communities
 - Create teaching tools
 - Educate the public
- **Emphasize Collaboration**
 - Ensure inclusive representation
 - Build on data
 - Work across borders and through multiple industries (especially tourism and the arts)
- **Resources**
 - Maximize local benefits
 - Ensure tourism infrastructure

Process

- Top down and bottom up, to ensure both inclusion and leadership
- Expand the toolbox (especially financial)
- Cross-promote and market
- Brand consistently
- Ensure a coherent entity
- Incorporate a lobbying function
- Get an outside perspective
- Use the Route 66 centennial as an incentive/platform for cooperation
- Communicate, coordinate, collaborate

Communication and Marketing

- Integrate new technologies and communication tools
- Cross-promote and market
- Brand consistently
- Facilitate wayfinding
- Make travel info more accessible
- Capitalize on the centennial

In conclusion, the group agreed that the NPS Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and World Monuments Fund, as a third party facilitator, would take the lead in developing a steering committee-cum-working group that will advance the ideas generated during The Road Ahead and establish a cooperative framework. The process will be transparent and inclusive, and will ensure representation of the many stakeholders along Route 66, such as tourism, business, transportation, preservation, and economic development.

There are many varied and vested interests along the road, and collaboration will be challenging. Jon Fey of the Berwyn Rt66 Museum likened the situation to the 13 original colonies facing the challenge of banding together as a union. Bill Kelly of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway extended the analogy by recalling what Ben Franklin said to John Hancock upon signing the Declaration of Independence: “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.” The needs along the road and the data on Route 66 tourism and its economic benefits compel collective action; the moment is ripe.



Route 66 blowout in Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Appendix A: Roundtable Program

Wednesday, November 20

8:00 – 9:00am **Breakfast**

9:00 – 10:00am **Opening and Welcome**

Erica Avrami, Research and Education Director, World Monuments Fund
Aaron Mahr, Superintendent, National Park Service National Trails Office, Santa Fe and Salt Lake City
Kaisa Barthuli, Program Manager, National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program
John Lasseter, Chief Creative Officer, Walt Disney & Pixar Animation Studios and Principle Creative Advisor, Walt Disney Imagineering (video)
Michael Wallis, Route 66 Historian and Author (*unable to attend*)

10:00am – 12:00pm **Making the Case: Economic Impacts of Preservation and Heritage Tourism along Route 66**

David Knudson, Executive Director, National Historic Route 66 Federation (moderator)
Don Fink, Manager, Route 66 State Park & Natural Resource Manager, Missouri State Parks
David Listokin, Professor, Center for Urban Policy Research of Rutgers University
Glenn Schlottman, Community Relations Manager, Arizona Office of Tourism
Bill Thomas, City of Atlanta, Illinois
Rich Williams, Director, New Mexico Main Street Program

1:15 – 3:45pm **Community Investment: Success Stories from the Road**

Anne Haaker, Illinois Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (moderator)
Allan Affeldt, Owner, La Posada Hotel and former Mayor, Winslow, Arizona
Cindy McDonald, Executive Director, Sapulpa Main Street, Oklahoma
Julie Bott Miner, Principal Economic Development Planner, Tulsa Regional Council of Governments
Kevin Mueller, Owner, Blue Swallow Motel, Tucumcari, New Mexico
Linda Rumpf, Project Manager for ABQ the Plan, City of Albuquerque, New Mexico
Bob Russell, Mayor, Pontiac, Illinois
Jim Thole, Neon Heritage Preservation Committee, Route 66 Association of Missouri
Dawn Welch, Owner, Rock Cafe, Stroud, Oklahoma

4:00 – 5:00pm **Incentivizing Preservation: Resources and Leveraging Tools**

Edgar Boles, Architect-Planner, Albuquerque, New Mexico (moderator)
Hal Fairbanks, Vice President of Acquisitions, HRI Properties
Diana Letsinger, CPA and Partner, Novogradac & Co. LLP
Edward Wilson, Strategic Consultant, World Monuments Fund

6:30 – 9:00pm **Dinner Speaker**

Bill Cone, Production Designer, Pixar Animation Studios

Thursday, November 21

- 7:00 – 9:00am **Breakfast and Cars Land Tour—Flo's V8 Café**
Bill Cone, Production Designer, Pixar Animation Studios
Michael Wallis, Route 66 Historian and Author (*unable to attend*)
- 9:30am – 12:30pm **The Road More Traveled: Enhancing the Tourism Potential of Route 66**
William Kelly, Executive Director, Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway (moderator)
Ellie Alexander, Director of Tourism, City of Pontiac, Illinois
Jen Hoelzle, Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism
Stephen Johnson, EagleRider Motorcycle Tours, Hawthorne, California
Zdenek Jurasek, President, Czech Route 66 Association
David Knudson, Executive Director, National Historic Route 66 Federation
David Listokin, Professor, Center for Urban Policy Research of Rutgers University
Dan Rice, Executive Director Designate, Route 66 Alliance and Owner, 66-to-Cali, Inc., Santa Monica, CA
Amy Webb, Field Director, National Trust Denver Field Office
- 1:30 – 2:30pm **New Avenues: Emerging Opportunities for Partnership**
Kaisa Barthuli, Program Manager, National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program
- 2:30 – 4:00pm **Expanded Horizons: The Tourism Industry Perspective**
Erica Avrami, Research and Education Director, World Monuments Fund (moderator)
Aaron Chaffee, Vice President of Hostel Development, Hostelling International USA
Amir Eylon, Vice President, Partnership Development, North America, Brand USA
Matthew Roth, Archivist, Automobile Club of California
Jamie Sweeting, Chairman, Sustainable Tourism International
Traci Ward, Director of Consumer Marketing, Visit California
- 4:15 – 5:00pm **Conclusions**
- 6:30 – 9:00pm **Dinner Speaker**
Amir Eylon, Vice President, Partnership Development, North America, Brand USA

Friday, November 22

A small group of representatives from key Route 66 organizations participated in a planning session about the opportunities raised by the strategic roundtable.

Appendix B: List of Participants

ALLAN AFFELDT

La Posada Hotel
Winslow, AZ

ELLIE ALEXANDER

Pontiac Tourism
Pontiac, IL

VICKIE ASHCRAFT

New Mexico Route 66
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Albuquerque, NM

STEVE AVERY

Route 66 Alliance

ERICA AVRAMI

World Monuments Fund
New York, NY

ZDENEK BADIN

Radio 66
Czech Republic

KAISA BARTHULI

Route 66 Corridor Preservation
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Santa Fe, NM

MARTY BLITSTEIN

(unable to attend)

Route 66 Association of Illinois
Chicago, IL

ED BOLES

Architect-Planner
Albuquerque, NM

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Barstow Tourism Board/CHR66A
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California Route 66 Preservation
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JOHN CONOBOY

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Flagstaff, AZ

MAREN DOUGHERTY

Autry National Center
Los Angeles, CA

DAVID DUNAWAY

University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM

GLEN DUNCAN

California Route 66 Association
Pasadena, CA

SEAN EVANS

Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, AZ

AMIR EYLON

Brand USA
Washington, DC

HAL FAIRBANKS

HRI Properties
New Orleans, LA

JIM FARBER

“Route 66: The Road and the
Romance”
Autry National Center
Los Angeles, CA

MARVA FELCHLIN

Autry National Center
Los Angeles, CA

JON FEY

Berwyn Rt66 Museum
Berwyn, IL

DON FINK

Route 66 State Park
Eureka, MO

SHARON FOSTER

California Route 66 Museum
Victorville, CA

SHARLENE FOUSER

(unable to attend)

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Flagstaff, AZ

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Route 66 Alliance
Washington, DC

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66icons
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Jim Hinckley's America
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Future Studio
Highland Park, CA

STEPHEN JOHNSON
Eagle Rider
Hawthorne, CA

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Czech Route 66 Association
Prague, Czech Republic

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National Trails Intermountain
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