

# CONNECTIONS

THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER  
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## Scenic Byways and Transportation Enhancements: Together at Last

By Hugh Morris, National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

With the upcoming Scenic Byways conference in Portland, Oregon starting on August 26th, NTEC thought we would take this opportunity to explore the ways in which the Transportation Enhancements program and the National Scenic Byways program can work together.

### What is the Scenic Byways Program?

The National Scenic Byways program was started under ISTEA as a way to highlight some of America's most important roadways. Under the program, roads may be designated as either an All-American Road or a National Scenic Byway because of their important archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, scenic, or recreational qualities. All-American Roads are considered to be destinations unto themselves. National Scenic Byways are considered to be exceptional roads that pass through areas that display unique characteristics.

Besides preserving and highlighting these roads and the areas they pass through, the program is also meant to promote tourism and economic development.

To date, 72 roads have been designated and \$157 million has been made available through the U.S. Department of Transportation. They are promoted collectively as America's Byways.

Though non-profit organizations are often involved in developing and managing a scenic byway corridor, nominations for designation as such must come from the state. Federal funds are available for the following types of projects on state and nationally designated byways:

- Planning, design, and development of state scenic byways plan;
- Development and implementation of a corridor management plan;
- Safety improvements to a state scenic byway, National Scenic Byway or All-American Road because of increased traffic due to designation;
- Safety improvements to a state scenic byway, National Scenic Byway or All-American Road because of increased traffic due to designation;
- Construction of byway facilities (bicycle and pedestrian paths, rest areas, turnouts and overlooks, highway shoulder improvements, passing lanes, and interpretive facilities);
- Improvements to enhance recreation area access from byways;
- Protecting historical, archaeological and cultural resources adjacent to byways;

*(Continue on page 6)*



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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A  
WALKABLE AMERICA: INTERNA-  
TIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY**

**OCTOBER 2, 2001**

- **PROMOTING BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, FITNESS, AND COMMUNITY LIVABILITY.**
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**PRESERVING THE SPIRIT OF  
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# Frontier Pathway Scenic and Historic Byway

By Hugh Morris, NTEC and Jack McCrory, Frontier Scenic Byway

**N**estled between the Sangre De Cristo Mountains and the Wet Mountains of Colorado, the 103 mile-long Frontier Pathway Scenic and Historic Byway not only connects travelers to a variety of natural and human places, but is also becoming a showcase of Transportation Enhancement investment.

One TE project, the Silver Cliff Museum, has received Enhancements funding for historic preservation efforts. In the hopper this year is a request for funding to acquire a barn owned by Charles Goodnight, a rancher during the mid 1800s.

## **Silver Cliff (Colorado) Museum Renovation Project**

The Silver Cliff Museum, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization is located in an 1870s firehouse listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Museum is located directly on the Frontier Pathway's byway corridor on State Highway 96. The Museum board, working with a variety of partners has established a \$110,000 renovation project to stabilize and restore the exterior portions of the building.

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has committed \$32,000 in Transportation Enhancement funds for the landscaping, signage, and parking improvement portions of the project. This commitment was made in part because the Museum is located on a national scenic byway corridor and is featured in the byway's interpretive materials. The TE funds were matched by \$8,000 in local cash and in-kind support. The balance of the project is being funded by the Colorado State Historical Society, the El Pomar Foundation, and the Wet Mountain Community Foundation. The project is expected to be completed in 2002.

## **The Historic Charles Goodnight Barn Acquisition Project**

Charles Goodnight was a famous early cattle driver and rancher based in Texas and Colorado. He is best known for establishing the Goodnight-Loving Trail and for inventing the "Chuck wagon." The only cultural element left from his ranching empire is the large limestone and hewn-log Goodnight Barn located on State Highway 96 just east of the City of Pueblo.

The Barn is currently threatened because of its location in the center of an active gravel mining operation. The Goodnight Barn has been identified in the byway's Corridor Management Plan as one of 18 byway assets located along the corridor that is in need of protection.

The acquisition project will purchase the barn itself as well as a buffering envelop of two acres. Working with the City and County of Pueblo, the Frontier Pathways byway has applied for \$198,000 in TE funding. An additional local match of \$48,000 is committed by the City and County and the byway.

While final CDOT approval hasn't been given, the project is rated first in the region. Dovetailing with the acquisition project, the byway has secured \$25,000 in byway funds for a planning study to scope out pullout and interpretive signage needs and schematics for the barn once it is acquired in 2003.

The Goodnight Barn is a featured point of interest in the byway's interpretive materials (brochure, historical booklet, audiotape, and videotape). See [http://www.byways.org/travel/byway.html?CX\\_STATE=CO&CX\\_Byway=2108](http://www.byways.org/travel/byway.html?CX_STATE=CO&CX_Byway=2108).

# ENHANCEMENTS

## Working to Restore the Scenic View

By Bethaney Bacher, National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

Imagine the great open spaces of the west, the miles of flat land with mountains or canyons on the horizon. Maybe you are traveling towards the Rocky Mountains, or south to the Grand Canyon. The views are breath taking; you see a blend of red, orange and brown rock set against a blue sky. While you are stopped at an overlook to take some pictures you discover a problem. You can't take a clear photo without including the billboard advertising the nearest fast food restaurant. Scenic landscapes, like the one just described, can be restored to their natural beauty with the help of Transportation Enhancements funds, which can be used for the control and removal of outdoor advertising.

Scenic America, “the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of America’s communities and countryside,” knows that communities can and have removed nonconforming billboards from their roadways. According to Scenic America, 750 communities nationwide prohibit the creation of new billboards. Over 100 communities in Texas and 200 in Florida have banned the construction of new billboards.

Five states do not allow new billboards; four of those—Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, and Vermont—are billboard free! No community or state has reported economic hardships as a result of tough billboard controls. In fact, Vermont reported a 50 percent increase in tourism within the first two years after they banned all billboards.

The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC) is aware of 45 billboard survey projects or removal projects nationwide. Approximately 26 states have used TE funds for the control or removal of illegal and nonconforming billboards. One example is the Gold Belt Scenic Byway Sign Resolution on US 50 near Canon City, Colorado. The CO DOT worked in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management, local government officials, and local businesses to remove 24 non-conforming signs that marred views of the Rocky Mountains. The community and visitors are both benefiting from the removal project. Businesses have not reported any lost profits; travelers agree that the Gold Belt Scenic Byway is a more enjoyable and appealing since the removal project was completed.

What can a community do to protect their scenic landscapes? Scenic America suggests that there should be regulations to prohibit the erection of new billboards. This normally begins with a temporary moratorium on new billboard construction followed by a permanent moratorium in the planning and zoning regulations. The next step is to prepare a comprehensive inventory to determine billboard location and density; GIS/GPS is one way to map the location of billboards. This information is then used to determine the areas that would most benefit from sign removal. Contact your state TE Coordinator for project eligibility and assistance.



Photo: Scenic America, Meg Maguire

Once a community establishes a moratorium of such projects to prevent the problem from getting worse, local leaders can begin to find ways in which to remove existing billboards. Amortization may be one option. Tom Pelikan, Director of Policy at Scenic America, explains amortization as “a process by which nonconforming billboards may be removed without the expenditure of taxpayer dollars. Amortization is a grace period, usually five to eight years, during which the billboard may remain standing, allowing the billboard operator to recoup his or her investment and make a profit.” The billboard must be removed at the end of the grace period. Another option could involve buying the billboard from the owner and paying for its removal with Federal funds like TE awards. Communities across the country are finding ways to limit or prohibit the amount of outdoor advertising. They have found that the removal of such advertising has restored value, preserved picture-perfect views, and improved their community livability. So, next time you stop at that overlook, you just might be able to take a picture without the billboard.

For more information on billboard removal, please contact Scenic America at 202-543-6200 or visit them on the Web at [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org). Contact NTEC for the name of your state TE Coordinator or for more information regarding the Gold Belt Scenic Byway featured in a *Guide to Transportation Enhancements*. Both are available on the Web at [www.enhancements.org](http://www.enhancements.org) or by calling NTEC at 1-888-388-6832.

# TE Projects on the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway

By Mary Barrick, Director, National Scenic Byway Program in Minneapolis, MN

**T**ransportation Enhancements and Scenic Byways are successful in their own right, but imagine the results when the two programs are combined. For example, picture a 52-mile urban driving tour traveling through historic Minneapolis, Minn. that co-exists with over 45-miles of paved pedestrian trails. Now, imagine that this same system contains parks, 9 lakes, 3 streams, 2 waterfalls, and the Mississippi River. It exists! The Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (GRNSB), designated in 1998, is a Scenic Byway linking historic sites and a series of TE projects. It is accessible by car, bike, or foot, making it a recreational opportunity as well as a Scenic Byway. Byways and Enhancements funds can be used for conservation and preservation of historic sites, scenic overlooks, signage and other interpretive displays along scenic or historic highways. Like many Byway and TE projects, Grand Rounds demonstrates the potential to greatly increase tourism and economic benefits to the Minneapolis Park System, City and state.

The City of Minneapolis and its Parks and Recreation Board has successfully preserved its link to the past through its preservation of the Historic Mill District (where sawmills and flour mills were located), the Stone Arch Bridge, and a number of other projects. These projects also provide for the future as they include miles of bicycle and pedestrian paths used by commuters and outdoor enthusiasts, parks, and modern art displays. Many projects have been implemented with TE funds. In fact, NTEC is aware of at least 6 past TE projects and 5 current or future projects occurring in conjunction with the GRNSB. Four of the projects are described below.

The Longfellow House and Hospitality Center, located on the GRNSB, was awarded TE funds for historic preservation in 1995. The project saved the 1907 replica of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Massachusetts home. Robert F. Jones, a Minneapolis philanthropist, had the home built in honor of Longfellow who immortalized nearby Minnehaha Falls in "The Song of Hiawatha."



Portions of the poem are carved in stone at a new circular poetry walk overlooking the

falls. Enhancements and Byway funds were used to relocate the home and renovate it for use as the GRNSB interpretive center. Longfellow House is a popular stopping point visitors looking for information and guides to the byway. The facility also serves as a trailhead for the bicycle and pedestrian paths located in Minnehaha Park. The historic Longfellow House, which reopened this summer, con-



Dark line indicates the GRNSB around the Minneapolis area. (Map: Shive Hattery, Inc.)

tains meeting rooms, office space and will soon include exhibits.

The Stone Arch Bridge, part of the GRNSB, cuts across many Transportation Enhancement categories. The bridge not only joins 2 sides of the Mississippi; it unites the community with local history, access to scenic resources, and sustainable transportation. Restoration of the Stone Arch Bridge has provided visitors and residents breathtaking views of Saint Anthony Falls, the only natural waterfall on the Mississippi River. The former railroad bridge is now open to bicyclists, pedestrians, and a trolley line that connects the Convention Center, the University of Minnesota, and downtown Minneapolis. Stone Arch Bridge is the second oldest bridge crossing the Mississippi River, the only major stone arch bridge in the western U.S., and among the

## TE Across the Country

few stone bridges worldwide to feature a curved alignment. As such, it is in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District and is a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. The restoration project was completed in 1994 with the help of a \$2.2 million TE award.

The Stone Arch Bridge will also be featured in another TE project, the Mill Ruins Park Plank Roadway, set to begin this year. The project entails the construction of approximately 700 feet of wood-plank-style roadway from Portland Avenue. The roadway will follow the alignment of the original wood-paneled road that once covered the main waterpower canal in the Minneapolis mill district. A \$648,000 TE award will be used towards the accompanying pedestrian system, including a metal bridge spanning the inlet of the canal, lighting, furnishings, and landscaping. Future paths are being planned to enable walking near other canal features and throughout Mill Ruins Park.

The Grand Rounds Way-Finding Improvement Project has been selected to receive Transportation Enhancements funds in 2003. The project will fund the building of wooden information kiosks, benches, bollards, and landscape plantings. General information about the Grand Rounds Byway, the city's parks and recreation centers, as well as information pertaining to specific segments of the byway will be provided in orientation panels installed on the kiosks. The GRNSB will also construct signs indicating directions and distance to selected byway features and landmarks. The directional standards are new features to be installed along existing routes to facilitate way finding and determine user position by using landscape features.

Thanks to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, the people of Minneapolis, Minn. have over 50 miles of parks, parkways, and bicycle and pedestrian trails to be proud of. This system allows residents and visitors alike travel anywhere in the city: school, work, parks, or historic locations by foot, bike, trolley, or car. Thousands of people visit and use the GRNSB each year thus enhancing the local economy. Minneapolis has successfully used the programs to preserve the history of its early industrial past, protect the natural landscapes, and provide recreational opportunities while offering an alternative means of transportation for the

*(Continue on page 6)*



Trail users on the Stone Arch Bridge, Minneapolis. (Photo: Bob Patten)

### **RINGGOLD, GEORGIA**

The city of Ringgold, once part of the heavily traveled Georgia rail system, will be able to preserve its role in rail travel history thanks to an \$180,000 TE award for the rehabilitation and operation of the historic transportation building. The stone depot built for the Western and Atlantic Railroad, predates the Civil War. TE funds will be used to develop a master plan for the historic Ringgold Depot's renovation. The restored depot will remember the past while serving a role in the community's future. [Chattanooga Times/Chattanooga Free Press]

### **ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN**

The community of St. Joseph has extended a popular bicycle and pedestrian path that travels along the St. Joseph River, on its way to an arboretum, Silver Beach and Lions Park thanks to a \$378,000 TE award and a sizable donation from a local family. TE funds were used to add light fixtures and pave a 0.35-mile addition to the path, now known as the John and DeDe Howard Family Recreational Path. Residents enjoy a picturesque view of Lake Michigan while in-line skating, biking, walking or jogging along the path. [South Bend Tribune]

### **STATEWIDE NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Communities across New Hampshire have found that they can reduce sprawl and traffic congestion by building biking and walking paths. Three million in TE funds will be used to build paths in 17 communities this summer. Among the projects are: a rail-trail in Jaffery, a 1.7-mile trail removing bicyclists and pedestrians from a highly congested road in Bristol and a bike path following the "Old Wagon Track" connecting the towns of Durham and Madbury. Also, Gorham will construct a multi-use path through town that connects existing trails and the airport. In addition, the DOT will be producing a map that shows the best bike routes in the state. [New Hampshire Sunday News]

### **LITTLE SILVER, NEW JERSEY**

The 111-year-old Little Silver train station is scheduled for renovations this year thanks to two TE awards totaling \$430,000. Also of note, \$50,000 of the local match is coming from the borough's parking permit program. The funds will be used to restore the train station's interior, including removing the paint to reveal historic wood work, laying new flooring that resembles the original, relocating the ticket counter to the front of the building, and restoring the exterior wood and stone work. A concession stand is also included in the renovation plans. Once completed, the nationally listed historic train station will reopen to service commuters and tourists. [Asbury Park Press]

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## TE Funds on the Grand Rounds...

*(Continued from page 5)*



Cedar Lake Trail, GRNSB

community. Historic regions across the country could benefit further by looking into Byways and Transportation Enhancements projects like the successful Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.

For more information, contact the author at: [mary.l.barrick@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:mary.l.barrick@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) and visit the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway at

[www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/home.htm](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/grandrounds/home.htm)

WITH THIS ISSUE of *Connections* we say goodbye to Megan Betts Russell who skillfully guided the Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse for the past two years. We thank her for her efforts and wish her well!

**Connections** is a quarterly publication of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. Submission of articles as well as letters and other comments are welcome.

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## Scenic Byways and Transportation Enhancements

*(Continued from page 1)*

- Developing and providing tourism information to the public about byways;
- Developing and implementing scenic byways marketing plans.

The program encourages partnerships between the state and conservation, recreation, transportation, and tourism interests.

The National Scenic Byways Resource Center, established by TEA-21, is available to assist with planning, promoting, preserving, and managing nationally designated scenic byways. For more information on the National Scenic Byways Program, visit [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org) or call 1-800-4BYWAYS.

### How Can Transportation Enhancements Projects Fit With Byways?

Clearly the goals of the Transportation Enhancements program fit well with the National Scenic Byways program. In fact, it appears that one could imagine using many Transportation Enhancements activities in conjunction with a

Scenic Byways project. The rest of this issue provides examples of how some Scenic Byways projects have incorporated Transportation Enhancements projects along the route of several byways.

FHWA's *Final Guidance on Transportation Enhancements* contains a brief discussion about the similarities and differences between the TE and Byways programs on page 63.

To access the document, go to: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te\\_final.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te_final.htm).