

RIVER BLUFFS SCENIC BYWAY



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SCENIC BYWAY



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Winter 2011 Newsletter

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Point of Interest

There are over 100 sights and locations of interest along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway. Each newsletter will give you insight into a unique opportunity one can experience along the byway.

The Village Blacksmith Shop



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The River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board of Directors is excited to learn that extensive renovations to the historic Burkard Riegel Blacksmith Shop in Clermont are almost complete. Constructed in 1858, Clermont's Village Blacksmith Shop was owned and operated by local legend Burkard Reigel from 1931-1967. During his heyday, Reigel was known for his exceptional work shoeing horses in addition to his artistic ability of molding and constructing wrought iron railings and decorative posts for porches and patios.

New Signage

Have you noticed the new River Bluffs Scenic Byway signs? Installed in July of 2011, the long-awaited new signage has been a welcome addition to the second most scenic state byway in Iowa.

The new signage is the result of five years of planning and public input. Working collaboratively with Northeast Iowa RC&D and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), the River Bluffs Byway Board received funding through a grant from the National Scenic Byway Program to develop and install the new signage along the heavily traveled route. The grant awarded funding for nine other Iowa byways to receive similar upgrades to their signage as well.

During the first phase of the project, the IDOT contracted Wayshowing Planner, David L. Dahlquist to design a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system for the Iowa Byways Program. Given the task of developing a graphic identity for the Iowa Byways Program and each of Iowa's 10 designated byways, David worked with each byway board to develop differing logo designs.

By receiving input from locals who attended byway stakeholder meetings, the River Bluffs Byway Board developed the logo's concept. It was decided the logo used to identify the River Bluffs Scenic Byway would portray an image of the commonly found limestone bluffs and meandering rivers that are on display throughout Clayton and Fayette Counties. Once the concept was chosen, David L. Dahlquist developed the artwork.

"The new signs are a very important part of a new wayshowing program to increase safety and help byway users more efficiently navigate the state's byways," said Troy Siefert, Iowa Byways Program Coordinator for the Iowa Department of Transportation. "The project has also demonstrated how successfully public/private partnerships can work together towards a common goal, in this case, working to create a vision for greatly improved wayshowing on byways throughout Iowa, funding that vision, creating great sign de-



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Professional Photo Database

Limestone Bluffs out of Maquoketa recently completed the administering of the “Creation of a Professional Photo Database,” for each of Iowa’s Byways. The goal of this project was to capture unique, high quality photographs of people, places and events along all of Iowa’s Byways.

Members of the River Bluffs Byway Board were particularly interested in obtaining a wide variety of photographs that looked to depict the byways scenic views as well as recreational activities, natural resources and community opportunities. To ensure all of the elements along the byway were photographed, the Byway Board hired four professional photographers who all specialized in different types of photography.



© 2011 Clint Farlinger



© 2011 Randy Uhl



© 2011 Michael Marti



© 2011 Jessica Rilling

Michael Marti was hired to photograph landscapes and nature in addition taking panoramic photos of significant vistas. **Randy Uhl** was in charge of taking photos at festivals and events of interest to tourists. **Jessica Rilling** paid special attention to engaging experiences and sites of interest, including tourism venues such as food, wineries, downtowns, parks and establishments in each of the byway communities. **Clint Farlinger** looked to capture the

beauty of the changing nature along the byway by taking photos during each of the four seasons of the year.

The photos collected through this project will be invaluable to the promotion of the byway through our ability to use the photos for the website, brochures, booklets and other promotional materials.

New Signage Continued...

signs and producing and installing new signage. It’s a great example of what’s in the future for the Iowa Byways program and byways organizations such as Northeast Iowa RC&D are playing a critical role.”

After designing the signage, the second phase of the project involved working with Shive-Hattery and Voltmer, Inc. to identify signage locations and instillation types. Once the proposed signage locations were approved, the instillation of 122 main route signs and 74 auxiliary signs (mostly directional arrows) were placed along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway.

The new signage was installed at a time when improved safety, byway identity, and navigation were desired along the route. Travelers will soon be able to find additional information about Iowa’s byways at www.iowabyways.org.



See more photos, learn about upcoming projects, and share your stories made along the byway. Find us at “River Bluffs Scenic Byway Experience.”

Events Along the Byway

January

- 15 A “Grand” Piano Event at the Elkader Opera House - 2pm-4pm Elkader
- 28-29 Fiber Arts Festival - 9am-5pm..... McGregor

February

- 11 Sny Magill Ice Fisheree - 8am-3pm McGregor/Marquette
- 11 Bed & Breakfast Progressive Dinner - 4pm-7pm McGregor/Marquette
- 11 Pheasants Forever Banquet - 4pm-6pm Elkader
- 12 Jam Session at the Elkader Opera House - 2pm-4pm Elkader
- 25 Bald Eagle Appreciation Day - 9am-3pm Effigy Mounds

March

- 2-4 McGregor Gun Show McGregor
- 4 Mark Nizer 3D Juggler/Comedian Elkader
- 17 Jose Cole Circus Guttenberg
- 17 St. Patrick’s Day Parade - 5:15pm-6:15pm Elkader
- 17-18 Girls Get Away McGregor/Marquette

Northeast Iowa RC&D

Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) is a grass-roots directed, non-profit organization dedicated to accelerate the development, conservation, and wise use of human, financial, and natural resources in order to improve the standard of living and quality of life in Northeast Iowa. The organization serves as the project leader for the Driftless Area Scenic Byway. Visit www.northeast-iowarcd.org for additional information. Questions? Please contact Jared Nielsen at jared@northeast-iowarcd.org or 563-864-7112.

GIS Project

The Developing Iowa's Byways through GIS Technology project, also known as the "GIS" project, wrapped up at the end of September. This project, which began in October 2009, provided GPS units and technical support to volunteers, board members and each byway's coordinator as they inventoried important locations along Iowa's 11 byways.

Dedicated volunteers and board members inventoried over 240 locations along the River Bluffs Scenic Byway. Places GPSed included historic sites and reenactments, art, recreational opportunities, cultural sites and experiences, existing and proposed traveler amenities, archaeological sites as well as scenic and natural resources. Sites such as the Yellow River Forest, Wexford Church, House of Clocks and Sandy Point cemetery are just a few of the incredible diversity of places to visit and experience along the Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

So, how will all of the information be used? All of the GPS data gathered through this project are stored in a database, which will be used to manage and promote the River Bluffs Scenic Byway. Maps will be developed for marketing material, and the byway board of directors will use the data to gain a better understanding of where locations along the byway are in relation to one another. This expanded knowledge will help the board make wise decisions about future promotion and development of the River Bluffs Scenic Byway.

Overall, the project has and will continue to help the byway board better understand what distinguishes the River Bluffs Scenic Byway from other roadways in northeast Iowa and how to best promote and preserve its intrinsic qualities.



Above: Map created using GIS technology identifying historic sites along the byway

Point of Interest Continued...

To preserve this historic treasure, the Clermont Historical Society recently hired Northeast Iowa RC&D to assist with the planning, grant writing and fundraising needed for the blacksmith shop's renovation, which was donated to the community in the 1980s when the blacksmith locked the door and left everything as it was. Awarded funds allowed for historic trade carpenters, joiners and brickmasons to make restorations to many of the blacksmith shop's features in dire condition.



© 2011 Jared Nielsen

The work accomplished during the renovation process included: re-tuck pointing the front and south side of the buildings brickwork, shingling the roof, removing the old rotted window frames and replacing them with all new windows, installing new support beams to the structure and a newly constructed walkway that will provide visitors with an opportunity to view Reigel's original tools and workspace as he used it. Although these renovations were complete in November of 2011, the project will not be finished until spring of 2012 when the original tools used by Reigel himself will be returned to the workshop. At this time, on-site video screens will also be installed to tell the story of the shop's history. All of these restorations will provide byway travelers with an opportunity to experience the workplace of a prized 19th century blacksmith for years to come. The self-viewing blacksmith shop is open daily from Memorial Day through October 31st.



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