

# River Bluffs SCENIC BYWAY



RIVER BLUFFS  
SCENIC BYWAY



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## Winter 2012 Newsletter

### Point of Interest

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

#### Motor Mill Historic Site



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The River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board is thrilled to learn that renovations to one of the most prominent historic structures along the byway are underway, as work is proceeding to complete a new bridge at Motor Mill Historic Site. Constructed in 1869, the giant six-story limestone building unexpectedly rises up out of the Turkey River six miles down stream from Elkader. This complex, which at one time produced 1500 bushels of wheat per week, now stands as the tallest gristmill in the region and a reminder of our ancestors' ingenuity, craftsmanship and vision.

Plans to restore this historic structure and bridge have been a goal of the Clayton County Conservation Board and Mo-

*Continued on Page 2*

### Marquette Overlook & Boardwalk

The RBSB Board received exciting news on August 2, 2012 when they were notified that the City of Marquette was awarded a National Scenic Byway Grant in the amount of \$332,800 for the development of an observation deck and boardwalk on the east end of North Street in Marquette. The City, with the assistance of the Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) office in Postville and the support of the Iowa DNR and Army Corp of Engineers was able to secure the discretionary grant funding through the National Scenic Byway Program (NSBP) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

The grant will help renovate the original overlook that was built in 1974 when the old suspension bridge was removed and the new

Marquette-Joliet Bridge was constructed about two blocks away. Here, a 10' wide and 10' long wooden viewing platform stands in a wooded area that is above, adjacent to and north of Marquette's City Hall and downtown business district. NSBP funds will allow the City of Marquette to construct a new 20' wide and 40' long visitors shelter at the site of the overlook that will feature a rooftop, balcony and handrail. Available funds will also be used to build a boardwalk extending out into the Mississippi River at the base of the bluff on which the newly constructed overlook will be constructed. The 30' wide by 90' long boardwalk will feature a guardrail with multiple viewing stations and interpretive panels.

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## Motor Coach Mystery Day Tour

The River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board was happy to partner with FreedomClub of Elkader, Monona and Postville to host the first annual motor coach mystery day tour of the byway on August 15, 2012.

Participants began the day with a visit to Motor Mill as Larry Stone talked about the geology and natural features from Elkader to the historic site. Once on location, members from the Motor Mill Foundation were present to provide guided tours of the historic structure.

The tours next destination was the Gilbertson Nature Center where Robin Bostrom gave a presentation in route about the barn quilts in Fayette County, the Turkey River Recreational Corridor, and the West Union Streetscape reconstruction project that is currently underway. After arriving at the Gilbertson Nature Center, Rod Marlatt and Dawn Amundson gave a tour of the Nature Center and the Dummermuth Museum.

On the way to Eagles Landing Winery, participants listened to Rod talk about the history of the Gilbertson Center and how the antiques and artifacts were collected for the museum. As the group made their way through Gunder, Hans Walsh jumped aboard and narrated the history of Gunder and how the Irish Shanti became known for their famous "Gunder Burger." Once in Marquette, Mayor Norma Mason talked about the many ongoing projects in town including the new hotel, observation deck and Mississippi boardwalk. At Eagles Landing Winery, Roger and Connie Halvorson, along



with their son, Jay, gave a tour of the winery and provided samples of their award winning wines.

After the winery tour, the group ended the mystery day with a guided boat tour aboard the Maiden Voyage with Captain Robert Vavra giving an educational tour about the early life on the Mississippi River and also of the clamming

industry. During the river cruise, members enjoyed wood-fired pizza provided by Josie's River Queen Restaurant.

Proceeds raised from the event were donated to the Motor Mill Foundation, Gilbertson Nature Center, Maiden Voyage Tours and the River Bluffs Scenic Byway.

## Point of Interest

tor Mill Foundation over the past 10 years. In 2011, both organizations were thrilled to learn that \$432,427 was awarded from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to complete the north span of the Motor Mill Bridge that was destroyed in the 2008 flood. Shortly after, additional grant funding of \$463,000 from Iowa Resource Enhancement (REAP), \$20,000 from the Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation (UMGC) and \$33,000

from Iowa Great Places was secured to reconstruct the south span of the bridge that had been washed out in 1991.

Although the Motor Mill Foundation has launched a major capital fund campaign to solicit the remaining \$119,648 needed to complete the \$1.069 million Motor Mill bridge project, renovations to the bridge are nearing completion. The work included cleaning and tuck pointing mortar joints in the abutments and center pier and adding caps to the abutments and center pier to raise the bridge four feet. This will place the bridge above the high water mark by one foot. The two spans of the bridge were assembled on land and then raised into place using two cranes. The finish work included placing the wooden deck and placement of a guardrail. When complete, the bridge will mimic the old iron truss bridge that was built in 1895, yet be strong enough to handle 21st-century loads, vehicles and pedestrian traffic. The Conservation Board and Motor Mill Foundation estimate the



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construction of the truss bridge will be completed by the first week of December of 2012.

If you would like to be one of the first to cross the newly constructed bridge, raffle tickets are on sale now to cross the bridge during its official ribbon cutting scheduled for December 8, 2012 at 11:00 am. Tickets are \$50 each and can be purchased by contacting the Motor Mill Foundation of Clayton County at 563-245-1516.



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# Marquette Overlook & Boardwalk

In addition to both projects providing ample viewing opportunities, the overlook and boardwalk will educate and provoke interest in the areas resources by providing information about the scenic byways, Mississippi River Valley, Driftless Area, commerce of the river and watchable wildlife. This will provide a convenient and beneficial location to serve the public traveling into Clayton County from Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as the local residents.

Applications for grant funds was encouraged by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) from states, cities, tribal governments and local planning organizations. Nearly 1,500 requests poured in from every state, totaling approximately \$2.5 billion in grant requests through 12 different funding programs. Grant funding was made available through enactment of the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II. "Investments in transportation projects like these create jobs right away in communities across the country, and lay a foundation for future economic growth," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "Thanks to these grants, states, cities and local communities can move forward with the transportation projects Americans need to reach their destinations more safely, quickly and efficiently."

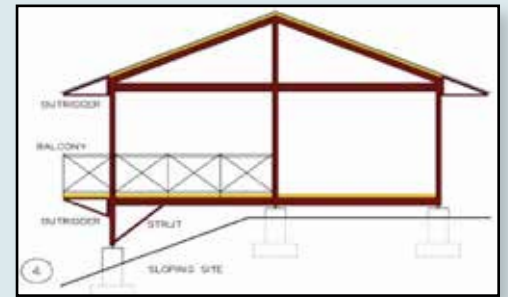
Within the National Scenic Byways Pro-



gram through which the grant funding for the overlook and boardwalk was received, there were 261 grant applications in the amount of \$111,843,630, with only 125 of those being awarded in the total amount of \$37,054,987. "The demand for these funds demonstrates a clear need for increased infrastructure investment," said Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez. "The President asked us to rebuild America - we have work to be done and Americans ready to do the work."

The National Scenic Byways Program recognizes roads having outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational and archaeological qualities. NSBP funding supports projects that

manage and protect these roads and improve visitor facilities. A state-by-state list of the Fiscal Year 2012 grants is available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary/2012grantdata.cfm>.



See photos, stay informed about upcoming projects and share your personal stories along the byway. Fund us at "River Bluffs Scenic Byway Experience."

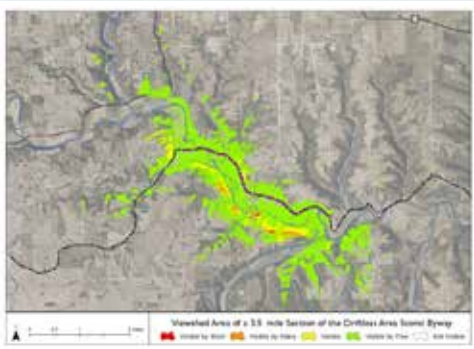
## LiDAR Project

Have you ever heard of LiDAR? LiDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging. This new technology uses lasers to scan the surface of the earth from an aircraft. The length of time it takes light from the laser to reach Earth's surface and be returned is measured in distance and results in an extremely accurate elevation

map. Throughout 2006 and 2007 LiDAR data was collected for the entire state of Iowa.

LiDAR is useful for planning efforts in a variety of fields including transportation, risk assessment, education and research. The Iowa's Byways program will be utilizing LiDAR to determine what can be seen from each byway. Northeast Iowa RC&D will be using LiDAR and other data to develop "viewshed" maps for each byway, which will essentially display what can be seen from any given point along the roadway.

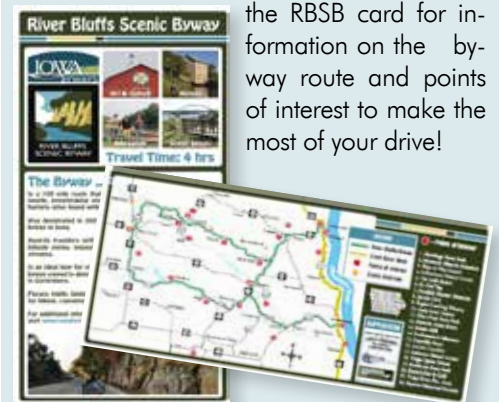
The overall goal of this project is to help each byway board gain an understanding of exactly what lies within sight of their byway. This in turn will help them make wise planning decisions that will protect and preserve the scenic qualities of their byway. Iowa DNR manages the LiDAR data for the state and more information can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/MappingGIS/LiDAR.aspx>.



## Promotional Handout

Winter is nearly upon us which means the landscape will soon be blanketed with snow. Why not enjoy the winter weather by taking a drive on the River Bluffs Scenic Byway? There is plenty of beautiful scenery, unique history and hidden treasures to be discovered throughout the area. Stop by the Clayton County Economic Development, Fayette County Economic Development or Northeast Iowa RC&D office to pick up a copy of

the RBSB card for information on the byway route and points of interest to make the most of your drive!



# Byways of Iowa Website

The RBSB Board was excited to be informed that the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) officially launched its new Iowa Byways website on October 1, 2012. The launch came as a result of IDOT's desire to have an online presence capable of marketing the appealing and collective touring experiences found along each designated route. The IDOT and RBSB Board hope that the site will help to boost local tourism within Fayette and Clayton County by providing visitors with an attractive view of what the RBSB and the surrounding communities have to offer.

Visitors to the website can learn about Iowa's 11 byways, be informed about things to do and create custom travel agendas by utilizing the sites trip planner. Detailed descriptions, photos, history and contact information for each route are provided as well. The site also features a kid's activity page and scenic byway-related publications for viewing and download.

For those looking to research and view diverse interests, the "things to do" section allows users to search events, attractions and travel services by different categories. Users

can direct their search to target arts & culture, dining, events & festivals, historic sites, natural areas, recreation, shopping and lodging. With the site offering these attractive, easy to use travel-planning tools, visitors will be able to conveniently research, plan, enjoy and share the exceptional experiences available along all of Iowa's scenic touring routes.



If you would like to be added to the River Bluffs Scenic Byway website free of charge, please send a description and photo of your business or attraction to [jared@northeastiowarcd.org](mailto:jared@northeastiowarcd.org).

We also encourage all of you to include a link on your website to [www.iowabyways.org](http://www.iowabyways.org). Search engine ranking improves as the number of links to a website increases, and that includes the ranking for each individual page on the website. The result is that increased visibility for the Iowa Byways site translates to increased visibility for local Chambers as well as for regional tourism promotion efforts.

# Calendar of Events

## December 2012

1	Elkader's Holiday Celebration	Elkader	563-245-2857
1	A Berry Merry Christmas	Strawberry Point	563-933-4417
1	Annual Holiday Festival & Lighted Parade	Monona	563-880-9033
6	Holiday Walk at Osborne Welcome Center	Osborne	563-245-1516
6-8	Festival of Trees	McGregor	563-873-8912
7	Canadian Pacific Holiday Train	Guttenberg	563-252-1161
8	Homes for Christmas Tour	Clermont	563-380-1950
9	Christmas Play at Elkader Opera House	Elkader	563-873-2378
15	Kelly's Christmas at Elkader Opera House	Elkader	563-245-2098
15-16	Homes for the Holidays at Eagles Landing	Marquette	563-873-2509
23	Live Christmas Nativity Scene	Volga City	563-767-3114

## January 2013

1-3/25	Winter Film Festival	Effigy Mounds	563-873-3491
26-27	Fiber Arts FabricArts Weekend	McGregor	563-880-0093

## February 2013

9	Sny Magill Fisheree	McGregor	800-896-0910
16	Bed & Breakfast Progressive Dinner	McGregor	563-873-2186
16-17	Cabin Fever Wknd at Eagles Landing	Marquetteq	563-873-2509
23	Bald Eagle Appreciation Day	Effigy Mounds	563-873-3491

## March 2013

1-3	McGregor Gun Show	McGregor	563-880-4588
9	Chamber's Ladies Day Out	Elkader	563-245-2857
16	Girl's Get Away	McGregor	563-873-2509
17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Elkader	563-245-2857

# Byway Staff

The River Bluffs Scenic Byway is a non-profit organization of diverse stakeholders that work voluntarily and collaboratively to protect and promote the qualities, features, recreation and scenic beauty of the byway. Coordinated by staff at Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development, the RBSB Board of Directors meets at least quarterly to conduct board business and to discuss, consider and/or recommend actions that support and promote the following vision:

*The byway corridor will enhance the experience of visitors, the quality of life for residents, and the economic vitality of the byway community by preserving and improving the corridor's resources and offering extraordinary experiences.*

## Questions?

Contact RBSB Coordinator Jared Nielsen at Northeast Iowa RC&D  
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