

DRIFTLESS AREA 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 Driftless Area Scenic Byway. Each newsletter will give you insight into a unique opportunity one can experience along the byway.

Wexford Church



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The Immaculate Conception Church at Wexford is reportedly the oldest Catholic Church site between Dubuque, Iowa and St. Paul, Minnesota. Located 9 miles south of Lansing just off the Great River Road, this little stone church is perfectly perched above a charismatic Allamakee County valley. A creek runs along nearby, the sun cascades over the woodland, the road hugs the landscape and it isn't hard to see why Irish settlers chose this special site to start their community.

New Signage

Have you noticed the new Driftless Area Scenic Byway signs? Installed in August of 2011, the long-awaited new signage has been a welcome addition to the 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 Driftless Area 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 Driftless Area Byway Board developed the logo's concept. It was decided the logo used to identify the Driftless Area Scenic Byway would portray an image of the spectacular fall foliage that is on display every October throughout Allamakee County. Once the "fall foliage" 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 Driftless Area 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.



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© 2011 Randy Uhl



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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.



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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 installation types. Once the proposed signage locations were approved, the installation of 90 main route signs and 62 auxiliary signs (mostly directional arrows) were placed along the Driftless Area 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 photos, learn about upcoming projects, and share your stories made along the byway. Find us at “Driftless Area Scenic Byway Experience.”

Board of Directors

Mission Statement

The Byway Board of Directors will work to understand, develop, promote, enhance and protect the byway through multi-jurisdictional planning, collaboration, and implementation of the byway corridor management plan and through expanded outreach, education, marketing and enhancement of the byway corridor to and for stakeholders and visitors.



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- Laura Olson Chair
- Bruce Palmberg Vice Chair
- Lissa Blake Secretary/Treasurer
- Brian Ridenour Board Member
- Jim Janett Board Member

Events Along the Byway

January/February

Weekly Effigy Mounds Winter Film Festival Sat-MonHarpers Ferry
 25 Bald Eagle Appreciation Day - 9am-3pm Effigy Mounds

March

Weekly Effigy Mounds Winter Film Festival Sat-MonHarpers Ferry
 13 St. Patrick's Day Parade 1:00pmWaukon
 17 St. Patrick's Dinner at Milty's Lansing

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 Driftless Area 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 Driftless Area 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 Driftless Area Scenic Byway.

Overall, the project has and will continue to help the byway board better understand what distinguishes the Driftless Area 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...

The church's simple, elegant interior is full of calm, especially when the late afternoon beams of sunlight stream through the intricate stained glass.

Make sure to notice the framed port record on the back wall which lists all the Ticonderoga ship passengers who sailed from Liverpool, England to New Orleans in the winter of 1850. It is many of these listed individuals who deemed this valley their final destination. They constructed a small log church in 1851 under the direction of their pastor Father Thomas Hore. The church you see standing today, completed in 1870, was the third church built at this location.



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There is still an active congregation at Wexford, made of approximately 90-100 parishioners. Contact the pastor at the church office 563-538-4171 to request a guided tour. The mass schedule and weekly bulletin can be found at http://icwexford.org/ic_wexford.php.

This article is contributed by Jessica Rilling of Northeast Iowa Tourism.

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.northeastiowarcd.org for additional information.

Contact Information

Jared Nielsen
 Scenic Byway Project Coordinator
 Northeast Iowa RC&D
 PO Box 916
 101 E. Greene St.
 Postville, IA 52162
 Phone: (563) 864-7112
 Email: jared@northeastiowarcd.org