



VISTAS

news from the
national scenic byways program
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SCENIC BYWAY GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE NEARS

States are being encouraged to submit proposals as soon as possible for scenic byway projects to be funded from \$7 million in discretionary grant money just made available.

Less than two months remain until the deadline for grant applications for projects authorized under Scenic Byways Program provisions of the Surface Transportation Extension Act 1997, a short-term bill signed into law by President Clinton on December 1.

Applications and all supporting materials must be received at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) division offices no later than **February 9, 1998**.

However, states are being requested not to wait for the deadline, but submit as soon as possible in order to facilitate review and evaluation by the FHWA.

The \$7 million represents funding only for the first half of the fiscal year. Applicants for scenic byways grants are being cautioned that if additional funds are later made available for FY1998, the FHWA will apply those funds to grant requests which were made on or before February 9 and not approved at that time because of limited funds. The FHWA does not intend to make another grant solicitation for 1998.

Hard copies of the grant application and filing instructions, plus copies on disk in Word Perfect, are available from the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse by calling 1-800-4BYWAYS and choosing option 2.

Electronic copies are available on line at the National Scenic Byways website: <http://www.byways.org>.

Summaries of previously awarded grants from fiscal years 1992 through 1997, listed by state and year, are also available from the Clearinghouse upon request. Assistance with applications from the FHWA can be obtained through the toll free number by choosing option 3.

Roads designated as State scenic byways before February 9, 1998 through legislation or another official declaration are eligible as long as their designation is for scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological or natural qualities.

Activities considered most appropriate for funding are those associated with: planning, design and development of State scenic byways programs; projects related to specific roads designated as state scenic byways; or development of corridor management plans or tourist related scenic byways information.

To apply, a state need not have a formal scenic byways program. However, it must have an identified scenic byways agency such as a board, commission, bureau or department.

CREOLE NATURE TRAIL HONORED

Sponsors of Louisiana's Creole Nature Trail, which is among the first 14 National Scenic Byways, have been chosen to receive the Regional and State Organization of the Year Award by the Southeast Tourism Society. The award was accepted at a black tie banquet September 6 in Point Clear, AL

by Monte Hurley, chairman of the Creole Nature Trail National Scenic Byway District. The chairman said he "knew right from the start the Creole Nature Trail was destined for great things."

Along the 180-mile route are Civil War and archaeological dig sites and four National Wildlife Refuges. Before its selection as a National Scenic Byway, it was named one of five byway pilot programs by the National Park Service, and was counted among the top 50 birding spots in North America by *Wildbird* magazine.

Among the 12 awardees at the society's 14th annual conference was the Southwest Louisiana/ Lake Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau, a supporting organization of the Creole Nature Trail. It was honored as CVB of the year for convention bureaus with annual budgets under \$1 million.

BYWAYS ON SHOW AT NASHVILLE TOUR OPERATORS MEETING

The National Scenic Byways program display attracted hundreds of visitors during the huge, week-long American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace meeting in Nashville, TN.

More than 50 tour operators button-holed program staff to request more details about specific National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. Contact information from their inquiries will be passed along to the marketing representatives for each byway.

The ABA's 20th conference December 6-12 drew more than 2,000 motorcoach charter and tour planners, industry suppliers, and travel and tourism representatives from the U. S.

and Canada.

The ABA is the trade organization representing the intercity bus industry. Its published figures show that an over-night stay of a fully loaded motor-coach translates into \$5,000-\$7,000 revenue for a town or city. The ABA's annual meeting, which aims to promote group travel in North America, is estimated to bring \$2 million or more in trade for the host city.

FHWA MARKETING SCHEDULE

The National Scenic Byways Program will be featured or represented at:

JANUARY - Visit USA Seminar, Zurich, Switzerland.

- Transportation Research Board annual meeting, Washington, DC.
- Recreation Roundtable Partners Outdoors conference, Orlando, FL.

FEBRUARY - Auto Travel Management Conference (AAA), Newport Beach, CA.

APRIL - *LIFE* magazine feature story.

NOMINATIONS TOP 1996 TOTALS

Nearly 40 prospective candidates for National Scenic Byway or All-American Road, representing all regions of the country, have been received in the latest round of nominations.

Local community groups as well as state and federal land management agencies, working through each state's scenic byway coordinator, nominate candidates based on their special intrinsic qualities -- scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological or natural. Nominations closed on December 15, 1997.

The new group of outstanding roads is expected to be announced in the spring of 1998.

Selection is made by the U.S.

Secretary of Transportation based on recommendations from a panel of six or more experts reflecting a cross-section of the scenic byways community of interests -- including experts on intrinsic qualities, tourism and economic development.

The new All-American Roads and National Scenic Byways will join the first round byways -- six All-American Roads and 14 National Scenic Byways -- which were designated in September, 1996 by the Secretary of Transportation.

WASHINGTON HOSTS RESEARCH BOARD'S 77TH ANNUAL MEETING

Members of the scenic byways community are expected to be among 8,000 transportation administrators, engineers, consultants, researchers and others professionals at the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) 77th annual meeting January 11-15, 1998.

Spread among three hotels in downtown Washington, DC, the meeting is considered one of the largest forums in the world for information exchange among transportation professionals.

A fully-staffed display featuring the first 20 National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads will be among exhibits set up in the meeting Exhibit Hall. A scenic byways CD Rom presentation and brochures highlighting each of the roads chosen in the first round designations form the centerpiece of the display.

During the five-day meeting some 1,600 presentations of research findings and current practice, plus more informal poster sessions and TRB committee meetings are scheduled.

Specialty workshops being offered include the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program Research Presentation Day sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration on January 13.

Among 11 separate all-day sessions of the 31st annual Workshop on Human Factors in Transportation are sessions on left turns and older drivers, cell phones and coffee, and aggressive driving. The final TRB program is on line at <http://www.nas.edu/trb/meeting>.

NEW KIOSK AND DISPLAY MANUAL

An easy-to-read, illustrated booklet which should help byways and other citizen groups with road beautification projects has been published by the Seaway Trail, Inc.

Aimed at sponsors of tourist information signage along the 454-mile Seaway Trail, it contains generic guidelines for choosing sign location, display type, appropriate landscape design and plant and site development materials. Included are sections on maintenance requirements and installation procedures together with detailed drawings and worksheets to help prepare cost estimates.

Single copies of *Landscape Design Manual for Seaway Trail Tourism Information Kiosks and Display Units* are available, while supplies last, from New York's Seaway Trail office at 1-800-SEAWAYT. The manual was funded through a Federal ISTE A Scenic Byways grant.

**Vistas originates at the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse
1440 New York Ave., Ste. 202,
Washington DC 20005
(800) 4BYWAYS
<http://www.byways.org>**

Editor - Céi Richardson
