



VISTAS

news from the
national scenic byways program
Vol. I No. 1
November, 1997

BYWAYS FACT SHEET LAUNCHED

Welcome to *VISTAS*, an information sheet devoted to the National Scenic Byways Program and scenic byways issues.

VISTAS is published periodically for state scenic byways coordinators, federal agencies, tribal councils, FHWA field offices, state department of tourism offices, special interest groups and National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads groups.

Calendar items, suggestions, contributions, observations and address corrections are invited.

ISTEA REAUTHORIZATION UPDATE

The 1997 National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act (NEXTEA) as rolled out earlier this year by the Department of Transportation (DOT) contains the following scenic byway provisions.

- * The amount of discretionary grant money available to states for eligible projects would be \$15 million for each of six fiscal years beginning in 1998.
- * A new category of project -- developing and implementing scenic byway marketing plans -- has been added to the list of activities eligible for funding.
- * Funding priority would be given to three types of project: those on routes already designated National Scenic Byways (NSB) or All-American Roads (AAR); projects that would make routes eligible for nomination as a NSB or AAR; and projects associated with the

creation and development of state scenic byway programs.

- * State matching share provisions would be modified so Federal land management agencies can provide this share for projects on Federal or Indian lands.
- * The criteria for designation as National Scenic Byway and All-American Road, including the requirement that a road be a state scenic byway or Federal land management agency byway to be eligible for nomination, would be unchanged.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act 1991 (ISTEA) expired on September 30. In subsequent weeks, Congressional leaders concluded that they would not be able to complete action this year on a multi-year reauthorization bill.

As a stop gap, both houses approved a compromise six-month extension of ISTEA (S1519) on November 10. President Clinton was expected to sign the measure into law before the end of November.

The extension provides more than \$15 million in budget authority for highways, allowing states to spend \$9.7 billion in highway funding between now and May 1. The bill provides funding for DOT operations in the interim.

Among its provisions, the scenic byways program is provided \$7 million from October 1, 1997 through March 31, 1998. For the same period, the National Recreational Trails Program is allocated \$7.5 million together with the

following allocations for Federal Lands Highway: Indian Roads - \$95.5 million; Public Lands Highway - \$86 million; Park Roads - \$42 million.

The House had postponed until next spring work on a six-year ISTEA reauthorization bill (HR2400) amid disputes over a proposal to divert part of an anticipated budget surplus to highway spending.

Under that bill, discretionary grant money for scenic byways was set at \$30 million for each of six fiscal years with a national scenic byways center set up to provide technical communications and network support for national scenic byways users.

Progress on the Senate's six-year reauthorization bill (S1173) stalled because of formula issues and a battle over whether to attach campaign finance reform.

NOMINATIONS DEADLINE NEARS

The nomination deadline for the second round of National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads is now less than one month away -- December 15 of this year.

Nomination applications and filing instructions can still be obtained from the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse at 1-800-4BYWAYS. Assistance with applications from the FHWA is also available through this toll free number by choosing option 3.

Those preparing nominations are being advised that the map requirement on Page 4 of the filing

instructions (Line 5 of the Application) has been revised. Instead of a set of USGS 7.5 or 14- minute quadrangle sheets, the requirement can be met in the following way: a photocopyable 8.5"x11" map showing the byway distinctly together with any slides/photographs requested in Section G marked clearly on that map.

FOCUS ON BYWAYS ECONOMICS

Strategies for future research into the economic impact of National Scenic Byway and All-American Road designation were discussed at a focus group organized by the FHWA in Washington, DC during August.

Current research methodologies, potential indicators and models for research, and pilot project selection criteria were discussed. Common concerns included credibility and aspects of doing longer term research.

Participants included key professionals in economics and tourism such as market analysts, land use planners and economists from universities, federal agencies, marketing organizations and research consulting firms.

20 ROADS REPS MEET

Representatives of the first 20 National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads who met in Albuquerque, NM in May for the first time ever may have been surprised to learn how different each road is from the other. But they might have been encouraged by the common themes that emerged in the course of the meeting.

The need for more research into the economic impacts of scenic byway designation was a common concern. Participants also agreed on the need to find better ways to build strong, long-lasting volunteer organizations and

encourage community involvement.

FHWA MARKETING SCHEDULE

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

DECEMBER - American Bus Assn. Marketplace, Nashville, TN

JANUARY - Visit USA Seminar, Zurich, Switzerland.

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

BYWAYS ON THE WEB

National Scenic Byways are now on line. The website, located at <http://www.byways.org>, combines the resources of various organizations, programs and publications.

Website visitors can obtain current, detailed information about National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads and other scenic byways throughout the United States, and can obtain easy access to government and private resources related to scenic byways.

A slide show and a search facility for byway-related publications at the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse are among the website features. Contact information for state scenic byway coordinators and experts in areas such as corridor management, safety, the environment, community involvement and legislation is also available.

**Vistas originates at the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse
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Byways staff members and others can apply to be contributors by filling out an application at the contributors' corner at the website.

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY HANDBOOK

Flexibility in Highway Design, the companion guide to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) Green Book, is now available through the Federal Highway Administration by calling (202) 366-6825.

While the universally used Green Book (*A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*) contains basic geometric design criteria which establish a road's physical features, the companion Guide explores more creative and flexible approaches available to designers within the established parameters.

Its stated aim is to provoke innovative thinking and continue the process of breaking down barriers that have made it difficult for highway designers to be aware of local concerns and community values including concern for aesthetic, scenic, historic and cultural resources. Among contributors: AASHTO, the Bicycle Federation of America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Scenic America.

Like the Green Book, the Guide contains sections on functional classification, design controls, horizontal and vertical alignment, cross-section elements, bridges and intersections. Techniques discussed include ways of affecting the perceived width of roadways using relatively minor changes, use of visualization tools, and bridge rehabilitation as an alternative to reconstruction. The design exception process and tort liability are also discussed.