

## SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS

# ILLINOIS ALLIANCE OF BYWAYS

*Illinois Statewide Project*

ILLINOIS



Photo courtesy of Cindy Patterson



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## 2007 SCENIC BYWAY AWARD WINNER for SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Sustainability is more than a buzzword for the newly formed Illinois Alliance of Byways. The growing number of major corridors with National Scenic Byway designation convinced the State's byway leaders to form an alliance, anticipating that byways as a collective force would have a better chance of gaining needed support at the State and Federal levels than individual byway groups.



### **PARTNERS IN SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES**

After forming the Illinois Alliance of Byways in early 2006, the members issued a joint request for funding from the Illinois Bureau of Tourism that resulted in a \$40,000 budget allocation for each byway for FY 2007. The byways then immediately developed two joint projects that applied a portion of their funds: six-foot banners that share a common design theme but highlight individual byways and a rack card promoting all seven byways. Both of these promotion tools were rolled out at the Illinois State Fair in August 2006.

### **INNOVATION IN APPROACH**

The Illinois Alliance of Byways was a breakthrough approach for sustainability. The funds were the first ever received by the byways from the State. The Federal Highway Administration had issued all previous dollars. Expanding potential sources for funding enhances the members' viability. The Alliance has also brought together the Illinois Bureau of Tourism and the Illinois Department of Transportation to discuss a future partnership to support byways. Through these efforts, the Alliance hopes to implement projects that will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Illinois' byways.

### **MODEL OF COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP**

Bonnie Heimbach, Executive Director of the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office, said in her letter of support for this award, "Thankfully, our State's leadership understands the necessity for supporting these great byways and accepted the challenge made by the Illinois Alliance of Byways. This support is helping to ensure that they become and remain self-sustaining organizations, while they continue to increase economic development through tourism throughout the State."

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*Sharing Success and Honoring Excellence*