

# **Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative 2015 Annual Report & Next Steps**

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## Overview

2015 has been a pivotal year for The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative.

- It was a year during which... *the crucial step of finalizing a mission statement for The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative was accomplished.*
- It was a year when... *a broad and diverse base of stakeholders from across Route 66 confirmed their support for a set of ideas regarding ways to foster a greater sense of collaboration amongst us all.*
- And it was a year that saw... *concrete steps taken to establish a new organization specifically dedicated to helping achieve a greater sense of collaboration across Route 66.*

With these accomplishments in mind, we are pleased to present this 2015 Annual Report of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative. The report includes:

- An update on goals achieved by The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative in 2015
- Next steps The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative will undertake in 2016

To achieve the sense of collaboration we desire, the stakeholders involved in, and impacted by, the mission and goals we are striving to accomplish must be kept informed. Towards that end, the 2015 Annual Report provides specific updates on what has been done this year per each of our organization's stated goals, as well as the plans for the work that will be done on our goals in 2016. As you read this report, we hope you gain a sense of what The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative is and what it is working to achieve. We welcome and encourage feedback and questions regarding The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative in general, and this Annual Report in particular. Please feel free to forward your thoughts, questions, ideas, and suggestions to: [rt66theroadahead@gmail.com](mailto:rt66theroadahead@gmail.com).

The 2015 Annual Report reflects the work and dedication of many individuals and organizations. Sincere thanks go out to everyone who has helped The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative reach its present position, especially:

- The Route 66 stakeholders who took part in the Collaboration Workshops held this past July
- The members of the Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative Steering Committee
- Our partners at the National Park Service, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the World Monuments Fund

As you read this Annual Report we hope you are motivated to become even more involved in the work that awaits us on the road ahead.

Onward and upward...

## **Report on Work Undertaken on the Goals of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative During 2015 and the Next Steps Planned for 2016**

The goals of our organization are designed to achieve a set of desired outcomes, which in turn, are based on our mission. The mission of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative is:

*“To revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national icon, for the benefit of all Route 66 communities, travelers, and businesses/attractions, through collaborative partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research/education, and economic development.”*

Following is a list of the outcomes we are working to achieve, along with the goals designed to help us achieve those outcomes. An update on the status of each goal, along with next steps, is presented below.

**Outcome 1 – Increased Collaboration:** We want to improve communication and participation among and between sectors (tourism, preservation, associations, transportation, economic and community development) to leverage their work for the benefit of the entire road.

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 1.1</b> – Establish one professionally – led, representative body with a board initially appointed by the Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative Steering Committee, to deliver on strategic outcomes/goals, convene meetings, act as a central resource, and represent the whole road.</p>	<p>A structure for our new organization has been created. It consists of a Board of Directors, comprised of a representative from each of the eight state Route 66 associations, the chairs of the five Working Groups created to achieve our outcomes/goals, A Chairman of the Board, and an Executive Director. The Working Groups include: Promotion WG, Preservation WG, State Rt. 66 Association Advocacy WG, Economic Development WG, and a Research &amp; Education WG. The structure also includes an Executive Committee comprised of the Chairs of the five Working Groups, the Chairman of the Board, and the Executive Director. The full Board of Directors will focus primarily on policy and governance matters, while the Executive Committee is charged with the ongoing administration of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative. A draft set of Articles of Incorporation have also been written, with the following individuals appointed by the Steering Committee as initial officers/directors of the new organization: Mr. Bill Thomas (Chairman) Community Volunteer, Atlanta, Illinois; Mr. John Conoboy (Vice Chairman) National Historic Trail Manager, National Park Service-Retired; Mr. Jim Hinckley (Secretary/Treasurer) Owner/Author “Jim Hinckley’s America”; Mr. Dan Lennon (Director) Director of the Missouri Division of Tourism; Mr. David Knudson (Director) Executive Director of the National Historic Route 66 Federation; and Mr. Bill Kelly (Director) Executive Director of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Program.</p>	<p>Finalize, then file, the Articles of Incorporation.</p> <p>Finalize a set of By-Laws.</p> <p>Prepare/submit an application for 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status with the Federal government.</p> <p>Secure official not-for-profit status from the IRS.</p>
<p><b>Goal 1.2</b> – Leverage the resources of organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), the World Monuments Fund (WMF), the National Main Street Center, and other organizations to assist with the achievement of the organization’s strategic outcomes.</p>	<p>Assistance in mapping out plans/ideas for achieving National Historic Trail designation for Route 66 was received in 2015 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). In addition, Part 1 of the application process to receive National Treasure status for Route 66 was filed with the NTHP. Moving forward, the plan is to leverage the resources of the NTHP that will be made available should Route 66 achieve National Treasure status, specifically to assist with the longer-term goal of gaining National Historic Trail designation from the Federal government.</p> <p>Note: The Steering Committee of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative identified the pursuit of National Historic Trail designation for Route 66 as a priority for 2016 and beyond. Towards that end the Steering Committee established a Task Force to work on this priority. Additional information regarding plans to leverage the resources of the National Trust for Historic Preservation is presented below in the National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report.</p>	<p>Submit Part 2 of the National Treasure application to the NTHP.</p> <p>Solicit support from the World Monuments Fund &amp; other organizations in putting together draft bylaws for our organization.</p> <p>Actively involve representatives from the National Main Street Center in the appropriate Working Groups of our new organization.</p>

<p><b>Goal 1.3</b> – Build a budget and 3 year financial plan designed to initially underwrite the new Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative organization.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative identified Goal 1.3 as a priority for 2016. To this end, the Steering Committee established a specific Financial Sustainment Task Force to focus on this goal. A Financial Sustainment Task Force Report is presented below.</p>	<p>See the report on the Financial Sustainment Task Force for Next Steps regarding Goal 3.3.</p>
<p>Also during 2015, a State Route 66 Associations Advocacy Working Group was established to help achieve the outcome of “Increased Collaboration” noted above.</p>	<p>Membership in the State Route 66 Associations Advocacy Working Group includes one representative each from the several Route 66 State Associations (Note: These representatives have not yet been identified, as this will be one of the first tasks of this Working Group.) Kaisa Barthuli, Program Manager, National Park Service Rt. 66 Corridor Preservation Program convened the first teleconference meeting, pending selection of a chair for this WG. An initial teleconference meeting of this Working Group was held on 7/2/15 to provide background information on The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative, discuss the upcoming Collaboration Workshops, discuss the formation/purpose of this Working Group, and consider the future state of National Park Service involvement on Route 66. A second teleconference meeting of this Working Group will be scheduled to get feedback on the final organizational structure approved by the Steering Committee.</p>	<p>The State Route 66 Associations Advocacy Working Group will continue to meet via teleconference during 2016 to further its work, including identifying specific goals for itself, and steps it will take to recruit and actively involve representatives from each of the several State Route 66 Associations in this Working Group.</p>

**Outcome 2 – Effective Promotion:** We want to promote the road and increase the number of visitors, both domestic and international, coming to Route 66, with the specific aim of increasing their length of stay and the amount of money they spend along Route 66.

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 2.1</b> – Establish a Promotion Working Group to collaboratively market, both domestically and internationally, all of Route 66 and to obtain matching funds through such sources as Brand USA.</p>	<p>An initial Promotion Working Group was established, with Bill Kelly, Executive Director of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Program, designated as its Chair. Original members included Katie Steel Danner, with the Missouri Tourism Division and Jen Hoetzle, Illinois Office of Tourism. Both Katie and Jen have since moved to new positions, with their successors Dan Lennon in Missouri and Cory Jobe in Illinois taking their places on the Promotion Working Group. An introductory teleconference of this working group was held on October 19, 2015.</p>	<p>The Promotion Working Group will reconvene in 2016 to map out its specific plans for the year, including steps to recruit and involve additional Route stakeholders from across the country in this Working Group.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2.2</b> – Develop a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy to promote the road that leverages social media, and provides a cohesive website and a clearinghouse for information.</p>	<p>No progress to report yet on this goal.</p>	<p>Specific steps/tasks associated with achieving this goal need to be identified and carried out in 2016, along with the specific means and metrics to measure achievement of this goal.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2.3</b> – Educate the public, tour operators, communities, entrepreneurs, governments, and the next generation about the history, cultural importance, economic value, attractions, and business opportunities along Route 66.</p>	<p>No progress to report yet on this goal.</p>	<p>Specific steps/tasks associated with achieving this goal need to be identified and carried out in 2016, along with the specific means and metrics to measure achievement of this goal.</p>

**Outcome 3 – Purposeful Preservation:** We want to purposefully preserve the historic resources (i.e. buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, and landscapes), traditions, and experiences that give Route 66 its idiosyncratic character.

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 3.1</b> – Establish a Preservation Working Group to collaboratively share best practices and ideas between such groups as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) and Departments of Transportation, focused on the preservation of Route 66 related bridges, buildings, structures, districts, sites, objects, and landscapes.</p>	<p>A Preservation Working Group was established in 2015. Its members include: Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer – Oklahoma, who is Chair of this group; David Zimmerman, Historic Preservation Specialist with the Arizona Dept. of Transportation; David Bricker, Deputy District Director with the California Department of Transportation; Amy Webb, Field Director with the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and John Conoboy, National Historic Trail Manager, National Park Service-Retired. A teleconference meeting of this group was held on May 5, 2015, during which the group updated/revised its set of initial goals, reviewed the process/timeline for seeking National Treasure status for Route 66, and discussed its audience and the development of a mailing list – making specific assignments to working group members in terms of collecting and compiling names to include.</p>	<p>The Preservation Working Group will continue to meet via teleconference during 2016 to further its work on this goal, including steps to recruit and involve additional Route stakeholders from across the country in this Working Group.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3.2</b> – Pursue federal legislation for designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee of The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative identified the process for securing National Historic Trail designation for Route 66 as a priority for 2016 and beyond.</p>	<p>See the National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report presented below for next steps regarding Goal 3.2.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3.3</b> – Share information with Route 66 stakeholders about the meaning and benefits of preservation and the tools, techniques, and incentives for appropriate preservation outcomes.</p>	<p>During its 5/5/15 teleconference meeting this Working Group discussed its audience and the development of a mailing list – making specific assignments to working group members in terms of collecting and compiling names to include.</p>	<p>The Preservation Working Group will continue to meet via teleconference during 2016 to further its work on this goal.</p>

**Outcome 4 – Increased Economic Vitality: We want to act as a catalyst for community and economic development by helping sustain and strengthen existing Route 66 businesses and attractions, and by helping new ones develop.**

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 4.1</b> – Establish an Economic Development Working Group to collaboratively share best practices/examples of successful community revitalization and to build effective strategies for leveraging tourism for economic development purposes.</p>	<p>An Economic Development Working Group was established in 2015. Its members include: Jim Hinckley, Owner/Author “Jim Hinckley’s America”; David Knudson, Executive Director of the National Historic Route 66 Federation; Bob Russell, Mayor – City of Pontiac, Illinois; Rich Williams, Director – New Mexico Main Street Program; and Kevin Mueller, Owner/Operator of the Blue Swallow Motel.</p>	<p>The Economic Development Working Group will reconvene in 2016 to map out its specific plans for the year, including steps to recruit and involve additional Route stakeholders from across the country in this Working Group.</p>
<p><b>Goal 4.2</b> – Identify and promote case studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of leveraging Route 66 tourism for economic development purposes, in order to draw in support and increase the involvement of Route 66 stakeholders.</p>	<p>No progress to report yet on this goal.</p>	<p>See the National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report below for next steps regarding Goal 3.2.</p>
<p><b>Goal 4.3</b> – Share information with Route 66 stakeholders about the meaning and benefits of preservation and the tools, techniques, and incentives for appropriate preservation outcomes.</p>	<p>During its 5/5/15 teleconference meeting this Working Group discussed its audience and the development of a mailing list – making specific assignments to working group members in terms of collecting and compiling names to include.</p>	<p>The Preservation Working Group will continue to meet via teleconference during 2016 to further its work on this goal.</p>



**Outcome 5 – Quality Research and Education:** We want to ensure that the history and stories associated with Route 66 are both accurate and accessible to the public, to researchers, and to educational institutions in order to enhance and encourage greater connection to, and understanding of, the Mother Road.

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 5.1</b> – Establish a national Research/Education Working Group to collaboratively support professional and amateur educators and researchers in their efforts to inspire and renew public understanding of Route 66.</p>	<p>A Research and Education Working Group was established in 2015. Its members include: Dr. David Dunaway, University of New Mexico, who is the group’s Chair and Dan Rice, Executive Director of the Route 66 Alliance.</p>	<p>The Research and Education Working Group will reconvene in 2016 to map out its specific plans for the year, including steps to recruit and involve additional Route stakeholders from across the country in this Working Group.</p>
<p><b>Goal 5.2</b> – Assist educational institutions at all levels in presenting Route 66 research to students, travelers, tourists, and the general public.</p>	<p>No progress to report yet on this goal.</p>	<p>Specific steps/tasks associated with achieving this goal need to be identified and carried out in 2016, along with the specific means and metrics to measure achievement of this goal.</p>
<p><b>Goal 5.3</b> – Support the research and preparation of comprehensive and accurate Route 66 information and its distribution in multiple forms, including: netcasting, broadcasting, print, social media, and curriculum.</p>	<p>No progress to report yet on this goal.</p>	<p>Specific steps/tasks associated with achieving this goal need to be identified and carried out in 2016, along with the specific means and metrics to measure achievement of this goal.</p>

## Financial Sustainment Task Force Report

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 1</b> – As noted above, in 2015 the Steering Committee established a Financial Sustainment Task Force charged with devising and implementing plans to ensure The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative is financially able to carry out its work.</p>	<p>Bill Kelly, Executive Director of the Illinois Rt. 66 Scenic Byway Program and Bill Thomas, Chair of the Steering Committee have been appointed to the Financial Sustainment Task Force. They met on 12/11/15 to begin mapping out elements of a plan to secure corporate sponsorships and for building a 3-year budget for our new organization.</p> <p>The key item in such a plan will be soliciting/securing corporate sponsorships. In order to be successful in this endeavor, our organization will need to have something of concrete value to offer potential corporate sponsors in addition to the inherent value of the Route 66 name. Towards that end, it was suggested that a specific, branded name/logo/tag line be created for our new organization that can then be leveraged for use by potential corporate sponsors.</p>	<p>Devise and implement a logo/tag line contest open to the public.</p> <p>Prepare a 3-year budget for the new organization.</p> <p>Create an initial plan for soliciting corporate sponsorships, with the goal of securing 1-3 by or before the end of 2016.</p> <p>Secure funding sufficient to hire an Executive Director for The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative organization by or before the end of 2017.</p>

## National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 1</b> – Establish an International Advisory Group to help ensure active collaboration with as many Route 66 stakeholders as possible.</p>	<p>As part of the overall desire for the new Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative organization to actively involve all stakeholders, it was decided to include two Advisory Groups as part of the overall structure of the new organization we are creating. The groups established include an International Advisory Group.</p> <p>The purpose of each Advisory Group is to advise the Board of Directors/Executive Committee on matters pertaining to how International Route 66 Associations, American Tribal organizations, and the Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative can work together in the promotion, preservation, and economic development of Route 66, as well as on research and education related matters.</p> <p>The International Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from each of the several international Route 66 Association groups. The American Indian Tribal Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from the American Indian Alaska Native Travel Association (AIANTA) and other tribal groups involved in leveraging Route 66 for cultural, historic, and economic development purposes.</p>	<p>During 2016, The Steering Committee will work with International Route 66 Association groups to identify representatives to join this Advisory Group.</p> <p>During 2016, the International Advisory Group will determine the set of goals it will work on to achieve the purpose of this group.</p>

## Report on Establishment of Advisory Groups - International Advisory Group

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 1</b> – Establish an International Advisory Group to help ensure active collaboration with as many Route 66 stakeholders as possible.</p>	<p>As part of the overall desire for the new Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative organization to actively involve all stakeholders, it was decided to include two Advisory Groups as part of the overall structure of the new organization we are creating. The groups established include an International Advisory Group and an American Indian Tribal Advisory Group.</p> <p>The purpose of each Advisory Group is to advise the Board of Directors/Executive Committee on matters pertaining to how International Route 66 Associations, American Tribal organizations, and the Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative can work together in the promotion, preservation, and economic development of Route 66, as well as on research and education related matters.</p> <p>The International Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from each of the several international Route 66 Association groups. The American Indian Tribal Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from the American Indian Alaska Native Travel Association (AIANTA) and other tribal groups involved in leveraging Route 66 for cultural, historic, and economic development purposes.</p>	<p>During 2016, The Steering Committee will work with International Route 66 Association groups to identify representatives to join this Advisory Group.</p> <p>During 2016, the International Advisory Group will determine the set of goals it will work on to achieve the purpose of this group.</p>

## Report on Establishment of Advisory Groups - American Indian Tribal Advisory Group

GOAL	2015 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2016
<p><b>Goal 1</b> – Establish an American Indian Tribal Advisory Group to help ensure active collaboration with as many Route 66 stakeholders as possible.</p>	<p>As part of the overall desire for the new Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative organization to actively involve all stakeholders, it was decided to include two Advisory Groups as part of the overall structure of the new organization we are creating. The groups established include an International Advisory Group and an American Indian Tribal Advisory Group.</p> <p>The purpose of each Advisory Group is to advise the Board of Directors/Executive Committee on matters pertaining to how International Route 66 Associations, American Tribal organizations, and the Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative can work together in the promotion, preservation, and economic development of Route 66, as well as on research and education related matters.</p> <p>The American Indian Tribal Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from the American Indian Alaska Native Travel Association (AIANTA) and other tribal groups involved in leveraging Route 66 for cultural, historic, and economic development purposes.</p>	<p>During 2016, The Steering Committee will work with the American Indian Alaska Native Travel Association and other tribal groups involved in leveraging Route 66 to identify representatives who will join this Advisory Group.</p> <p>During 2016, the American Indian Tribal Advisory Group will determine the set of goals it would like work on to achieve the purpose of this group.</p>

### Conclusion

2016 will be even more pivotal for The Route 66: The Road Ahead Initiative than this past year.

To employ an over-worked (but nonetheless appropriate...) analogy, this coming year will see the rubber hit the road in terms of our organization achieving concrete results in a collaborative fashion for the betterment of all of Route 66. Doing so will require hard work, frequent and effective communication, and a purposeful focus on our organization's mission and goals.

Our journey together has begun – and it's time to rely on our windshield, looking at what lies in front of us, not peering at the past in our rearview mirror. It will be a long journey, but traveling it together will bring us to the destination we seek on the road ahead.

Onward and upward...