



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

RT. 66 INCLUDED IN NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION'S ANNUAL LIST OF AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

The National Trust for Historic Preservation included Route 66 in its 2018 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, an annual list that spotlights important examples of our nation's architectural and cultural heritage at risk of destruction or irreparable damage. Almost 300 places have been on the list over its 31-year history, and in that time, fewer than five percent of listed sites have been lost.

"Route 66 has fueled America's imagination, popular culture, and passion for the open road for nearly a century," said Stephanie Meeks, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "It deserves a place not just in our rearview mirror, but on our roadmap of unique travel experiences for generations to come. For over 30 years, our 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list has called attention to threatened one-of-a-kind treasures throughout the nation and galvanized Americans to help local communities save them. As it has over the past three decades, we hope this list inspires people to speak out for the cherished places in their own communities that define our nation's past."

Route 66 provided a vital transportation corridor connecting the Midwest with southern California. Commissioned from 1926-1985, it was the shortest, best-weather highway across the nation. A cross section of urban areas, panoramic scenery, tribal lands, and small rural towns, Route 66 travels more than 2,400 miles through 300 communities that more than 5.5 million Americans call home.

The hundreds of communities along Route 66 contain historic places, idiosyncratic character, and cultural relevance. The independent businesses, roadside architecture, and kitschy roadside attractions that originally flourished along Route 66 have gradually diminished as travelers bypassed Route 66 for the Interstate, and continues to be threatened. Interstate highways began replacing Route 66 in the 1950s, with communities and business districts along the road subsequently experiencing the decay and decline of their once thriving economies.

While Congress has taken important steps to designate Route 66 a permanent National Historic Trail, legislation remains to be passed by the U.S. Senate and signed by the president. Otherwise, a vital preservation opportunity may be lost. This permanent federal designation will place Route 66 among other nationally significant land or water routes that reflect America's history. It will bring national recognition and economic development to historic sites along the historic highway.

"Over the past two decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in Route 66, making it one of the most popular heritage tourism attractions in our country and the world," noted Bill Thomas, Chairman of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership. "Many historically important properties and alignments of the Mother Road, however, are in danger of being lost. The recognition from Route 66 being placed on the Trust's 11 Most Endangered list will help focus attention on the work needed to preserve these significant pieces of American history."

Members of the public are invited to learn more about what they can do to support Route 66 and the other historic places on this year's 11 Most Endangered list at www.SavingPlaces.org/11Most and www.route66roadahead.org.

Established in 2015, with the support of the National Park Service and the World Monuments' Fund, The Road Ahead Partnership's mission is to revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national and international icon through partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research and education, and economic development.

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