



## THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

August 12, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **2026 – Route 66 100th Anniversary**

Route 66 was our nation's first all-paved U.S. Highway System connecting the Midwest to California. In the 1930s, it served as a "road to opportunity" for hundreds of thousands of Americans escaping the devastation of the Dust Bowl, and provided thousands of jobs putting unemployed workers who had lost their jobs during the Great Depression to work on road crews. During the Second World War, Route 66 transported troops, equipment and supplies to military bases across the country, and was used after the War by thousands of troops returning home to their families. By the 1950s, Route 66 had seen the rise of the tourism and became a symbol of American freedom and independence.

In just eight short years, Historic Route 66 will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Efforts to ensure the U.S. is ready to celebrate this milestone were advanced on July 16th, when the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR66, a bill to establish a Federal-level Rt. 66 100th Anniversary Commission. Congressman Rodney Davis [R-IL] introduced the legislation on January 3, 2017, at the request of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA), a senior member of the Natural Resources Committees, co-authored the legislation. HR66 now advances to the Senate. The Road Ahead Partnership has set a goal of Senate approval and a signature from the President by or before the end of this year. To track the progress of this legislation, access: <https://www.congress.gov> and type in HR66.

The Road Ahead is also urging each of the states through which Rt. 66 passes to adopt similar state-level commissions. Two of the eight have already done so.

Earlier this year, Missouri passed a bill, signed by then-Governor Eric Greitens, to form an 18-member commission to plan and sponsor a Rt. 66 centennial observance in the Show-Me state in 2026. In Illinois, Rep. Tim Butler [R-Springfield] sponsored a similar proposal that was approved by the Illinois General Assembly in June and signed into law by Governor Bruce Rauner on July 31, 2018.

The Road Ahead is now working with Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California to set up similar commissions.

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Established with the support of the National Park Service and the World Monuments Fund, The Route 66 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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