



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

~ FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ~

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership held its third Annual Board of Directors Meeting February 22-23, 2019, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Highlights of the meeting included an update on efforts to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail, the 2019 budget, a new partnership policy, reports from working groups and task forces, and the election of the 2019 Board Officers.

John Conoboy, Chairman of the Road Ahead's National Historic Trail Task Force, and Amy Webb, representative from the National Trust for Historic Preservation reported that much progress was made in 2018 and hopes were high that HR801, the Federal legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail, would be passed last year. The government shutdown in mid-December, however, resulted in the legislation not moving forward. The bill has been reintroduced in the new Congress, with a goal of having it passed by Congress and signed by the President before the end of 2019.

The Board approved a budget for the 2019 fiscal year. In addition to approving basic administrative costs, the Board discussed and approved funding for several expenses related to achieving specific strategic goals established by the Road Ahead including:

Economic Development Working Group - \$5,000 was approved to develop case studies illustrating successful efforts by communities across Route 66 to leverage Route 66 for economic development purposes. Funding of up to \$10,000 was also approved to conduct additional research in conjunction with work done by Rutgers University to update its 2012 Route 66 Economic Impact Study.

Route 66 State Associations Advocacy Working Group – \$6,000 was allocated to improve the Road Ahead's ability to inform and educate Route 66 stakeholders and Roadies regarding what the organization is and what it is doing. Communication efforts will focus on the dissemination of press releases, Facebook posts, email blasts, news articles, etc. through communication channels used by state-based Route 66 Associations, including their newsletters, magazines, websites, Facebook pages, etc.

Green Book Task Force [GBTf] – \$1,000 was allocated to cover potential research and/or travel costs for the GBTF as it initiates its work to address needs/challenges associated with Route 66-based Green Book sites.

Preservation Working Group – The Board approved up to \$2,000 to cover potential travel costs for its newly appointed Historic Resources Specialist [HRS] Anne Haaker, retired deputy State Historic Preservation Officer from Illinois. Her focus will be the development, coordination, and implementation of the Road Ahead's review of federal, state and local construction projects that may affect Route 66 historic resources, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Promotion Working Group - \$9,900 was approved by the Board to address one of the most frequently reported challenges faced by Route 66 travelers, i.e. navigating the Route. This funding is being used to design and develop a Route 66 navigation app in conjunction with the Arts Technology Program at Illinois State University.

Vintage Motel Task Force [VMTF] – Up to \$5,000 was allocated to underwrite the work of the VMTF, including costs associated with providing benefits to owner/operators who sign up to become members of "The Route 66 Motel Collection" being created by the VMTF.

International Advisory Group –\$1,000 in funding was approved to support implementation of an online survey designed to identify challenges, needs, and wants of international visitors traveling Route 66. The survey was piloted last summer at the European Route 66 Festival.

Executive Committee – The Board approved setting aside \$14,500 into a reserve fund. The reserve will be called upon as needed, pending the organization’s ability to raise additional public and/or corporate sponsorship funding.

The Board adopted Policy 2019-01 that deals with establishing partnerships between the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and other not-for-profit organizations. Looking ahead, the Board will also draft a policy for establishing potential partnerships with for-profit entities. Chairman Bill Thomas will work with Board member Dr. David Dunaway, to draft the proposed policy.

Throughout the meeting, the Chairs of the Road Ahead’s several Working Groups, Task Forces, and Advisory Groups, presented updates to the Board. Those reports are presented in the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting and – once posted – can be read online in the Resources section of the Road Ahead’s website (www.route66roadahead.com).

Research 66 representatives Maria Felchlin, Sean Evans, and Audra Bellmore presented options to formalize a working relationship between the Road Ahead and Research 66. The Road Ahead Board endorsed the idea and directed Chairman Thomas to draft a Memorandum of Understanding to bring to the Board for discussion/action. Research 66 is a group of 10 archival institutions along Route 66, that focus on making research materials accessible to the general public and Route 66 stakeholders for the purpose of education, preservation, and management of the historic Route 66 corridor.

The Board also passed two resolutions of appreciation and welcomed three new members. Dora Meroney, who had served as the representative from Texas, and Brad Nickson, representative from Oklahoma, were recognized for their service as they ended their time on the Board. Each had served on the Board since the founding of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership in 2015. Sharon Foster, representative from California, Gary Dagget, representative from Texas, and Rhys Martin, representative from Oklahoma, were introduced and welcomed as new Board members.

Board members enjoyed the opportunity to become better acquainted during their time in Albuquerque, as they dined together and participated in a field trip of vintage motels and neon along Central Avenue [Route 66]. The field trip was led by Ed Boles, an historic preservation architect, who is also a member of the Road Ahead’s Vintage Motel Task Force.

Officers of the Board for 2019 were elected: Bill Thomas, Chairman [Illinois], David Bricker, Vice Chairman [California], Renee Charles, Secretary [Kansas], and Bill Kelly, Treasurer [Illinois]. Officer terms are for one year.

When completed, minutes of the 2019 Annual Board Meeting, a copy of the Treasurer’s Report, and the approved 2019 Budget will be posted on the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership’s website, accessible at: www.route66roadahead.com.

Members of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors in attendance at the Annual Meeting included:

- David Bricker – Chair of the Preservation Working Group
- Melissa Beasley – New Mexico Route 66 Association
- Renee Charles – Kansas Historic Route 66 Association/ Route 66 Association of Kansas
- Sharon Foster – California Rt. 66 Association
- Gary Dagget – Texas Old Route 66 Association
- Sharlene Fouser – Arizona Route. 66 Scenic Byway Program

- Bill Kelly – Chair of the Promotion Working Group
- Ruth Keenoy [sitting in for Tommy Pike] – Route 66 Association of Missouri
- Steve Mandrgoc – Interim Chair of the Research & Education Working Group
- Rhys Martin – Oklahoma Route 66 Association
- Bill Thomas – Chairman of Board, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership

Also attending and/or presenting at the Annual Board of Directors Meeting were:

- John Conoboy – Chairman of the National Historic Trails Task Force
- Aaron Mahr – National Park Service
- John Cannella – National Park Service
- Kaisa Barthuli – National Park Service
- Amy Grant – National Trust for Historic Places
- Debbie Pogue – Vintage Motel Task Force

Board Members/Advisory Group Representatives not able to attend the Annual Meeting include:

- John Miller – Illinois Route 66 Association
- Jeff Fulgenzi – Chairman Economic Development Working Group
- David Dunaway – Chairman Research & Education Work Group
- Emerson R. Vallo – Chairman Tribal Advisory Group

At the conclusion of the Annual Board of Directors Meeting, members of the Board hosted the Second Annual Route 66 Stakeholders Reception and Update Event, to which any and all members of the public interested in Route 66 were invited. Approximately 25 stakeholders attended and engaged Road Ahead Board members in a discussion of their interests and questions. The Board of Directors looks forward to holding the Third Annual Stakeholders Reception and Update meeting following its 2020 Annual Board of Directors Meeting. The location of that meeting will be determined and announced at a later date.

Established in 2015, 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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