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# THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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**2021 1st Quarter Update Report & Next Steps**

**Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas  
Chairman, Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
April 21, 2021**

## **Overview**

Following is a brief overview of 2021 1st Quarter activity for the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership.

We believe it is important to let everyone know what the Road Ahead is doing. As you read this report, we hope you gain a better sense of what the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership is and what we are working to achieve.

We welcome and encourage feedback and questions regarding the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership in general, and this 2021 1st Quarter Update Report in particular. Please feel free to forward your thoughts, questions, ideas, and suggestions to: [rt66theroadahead@gmail.com](mailto:rt66theroadahead@gmail.com).

Finally, as you read this 2021 1st Quarter Update Report, we hope you are motivated to be even more involved in the work that awaits us on the road ahead.

Onward and upward...

Bill Thomas, Chairman  
Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership

**Report on Work Undertaken on the Goals of the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
During January, February, and March of 2021, along with Next Steps Planned for the Remainder of 2021**

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 Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership is:

*To revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national icon and international destination, 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. Presented below is an update on the status of each goal as of the end of the 2021 1sr Quarter, along with next steps for 2021. You'll note that the current update from the 1st Quarter 2021 is highlighted in BLUE text, while past updates are in black text.

**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.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p><b>Goal 1.1 – Establish one professionally – led, representative body with a Board of Directors focused on achieving our organization’s set of desired outcomes designed, ultimately to accomplish our mission.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/2021 Update Report: The Annual Meeting of the Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors will be held in late November, 2021, in Springfield, Missouri. Prior to then the Board of Directors will conduct regular quarterly meetings virtually, as will the organization’s Executive Committee.</b></p> <p>12/31/2020 Update Report: The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors was unable to meet face-to-face for its Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for November 2020 in Springfield.</p>	<p><b>Conduct an Executive meeting during May 2021 and a Board of Directors during June 2021, to discuss/monitor the organization’s goals and outcomes.</b></p>

**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.

STATE ASSOCIATIONS ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p><b>Goal 1.1 – Discuss and identify Rt. 66 needs/concerns and communicate them to the Road Ahead Board of Directors. Come up with potential solutions.</b></p>	<p><b>3/4/21 Update Report:</b></p> <p>Group in agreement overall that our goals continue to match our needs across the state associations.</p> <p>KS, CA, TX still struggling to get state Centennial Commission legislation moving or acted upon. MO unsure of current status. AZ moving forward with their own Commission since the state has been anemic in this regard and their cash flow situation is in a good place.</p> <p>State Associations committed to identifying ideas for Centennial "birthday presents". Some ideas proposed are restoration of dilapidated landmarks, identifying empty areas of the road that could benefit from support.</p> <p>10/7/19 Update Report: The State Associations Working Group discussed the status of individual state Centennial Commission legislation. AZ has a sponsor and planned introduction in next session. No issues foreseen with their plan. NM and CA not present on call. TX requested assistance from Board of Directors as they feel the issue is stalled in their legislature.</p>	<p>Engage state government in stagnant states for Centennial planning.</p> <p>Identify "birthday present" opportunities along the road.</p> <p>Navigate continuing evolution of travel restrictions in the COVID era.</p>
<p><b>Goal 1.2 – Discuss and identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work together on projects/activities/challenges to be solved.</b></p>	<p><b>3/4/21 Update Report:</b></p> <p>Proposed changing the meeting structure to a standing monthly meeting that people could join to help facilitate better participation and a more streamlined level of internal communication, which will improve external communication.</p> <p>Talked about some potential monies that the group may have to spend, generated ideas such as wooden nickels</p>	<p>Identify monies and design some kind of universal pamphlet or rack card that is useful to all associations.</p>
<p><b>Goal 1.3 – Assist the Board of Directors in communicating its work with the greater Rt. 66 community.</b></p>	<p><b>3/4/21 Update Report:</b></p> <p>No discussion of this topic</p>	<p>Ensure all associations have a good messaging method for press releases and other information so that all states are adequately informed about ongoing initiatives.</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	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 2.1 - Ensure each Route 66 State establishes a state-level Route 66 100th Anniversary Commission</p>	<p>3/31/2021 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>At meeting, discuss how each state with established commission went about setting it up. Share legislative language from existing state statutes.</p>
<p>Goal 2.2 - Work to identify contacts in each state that can be connected with to help influence National Route 66 Centennial Commission appointments.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April. Spoke with Lt. Governor of Oklahoma. He feels confident he can help us cultivate this list.</p>	<p>Identify key personnel in each governor's office that the Rt. 66 Road Ahead group can reach out to in an effort to help influence national appointments.</p>
<p>Goal 2.3 - Discuss ways to expand Oklahoma's AAA Route 66 Road Fest to all Rt. 66 states.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Discuss concept, share contact information.</p>
<p>Goal. 2.5 - Work to develop Rt. 66 Charging Stations infrastructure.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Identify possible infrastructure money available and how to secure it for charging stations.</p>
<p>Goal 2.6 - Develop group marketing initiatives for 2026: Passport, Audio Guide, Marketing Tool Kits for industry members, etc.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Discuss ideas for shared collateral. Possible funding/budget.</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	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 3.1 – Collaboratively share best practices and ideas between such groups as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs).</p>	<p>3/31/2021 Update Report: RAP Historic Resources Specialist (HRS) continued to participate in Section 106 consultations for State Department of Transportation projects in Illinois, Missouri, and Oklahoma.</p>	<p>RAP HRS will continue participating in current Section 106 consultations and accept new invitations.</p>
<p>Goal 3.2 – Share info about the meaning &amp; benefits of preservation &amp; the tools, techniques, &amp; incentives for preservation outcomes.</p>	<p>3/31/2021 Update Report: The Working Group had planned to submit a draft “Quick Reference Guide” to the RAP Executive Director in June 2020. There has been no change in status due to the impact of the Coronavirus. The Working Group will review the draft Quick Reference Guide again and address any needed revisions.</p>	<p>Submit revised draft to the RAP Executive Director in Summer 2021.</p>
<p>Goal 3.3 – Share information with the Board of Directors about Section 106 and the preservation of historic properties.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: The link to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication: <a href="#">Protecting Historic Properties: A Citizen’s Guide to Section 106 Review</a> is located on the Section 106 Fact Sheet (December 2, 2018), Resources page, in the Road Ahead Website. The Working Group has requested posting the link directly on the Resource page, in order to make it more easily accessible.</p>	<p>Post the link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the Road Ahead Resources page.</p>
<p>Goal 3.4 – Utilize social media to share information on preservation resources and the Section 106 process, currently available on the Road Ahead Partnership website.</p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Develop a framework for posting specific preservation challenges and situations common to Route 66 stakeholders. No change in status for posting link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page.</p>	<p>Post the link on the Resources page; target date to be determined.</p>
<p>Goal 3.5 – <i>Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</i></p>	<p>3/31/2020 Update Report: A Request for Letters of Intent was released on March 29, 2021, seeking consultant services for the instructional design of the online toolkit.</p>	<p>Consultant proposals are due by April 29, 2021 and a proposal will be selected by June 2021.</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	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p><b>Goal 4.1 – Increase the probability municipal, civic, legislative and other leaders achieve successful economic development in their city/area/region by purposefully and actively leveraging Route 66.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/2020 Update Report:</b> Dr. Listokin and his graduate school assistant began work on the Route 66 Case Study Project in early October 2019. Their initial focus was on creating a common data template for use in organizing extant economic data gathered for the 15 different communities included in the project. The aim of this task was to be able to show critical data at a glance and put it in perspective against state averages. The second stage of the project will involve telephone interviews and site visits with the 15 communities. The Road Ahead assisted the project by pulling together names/email addresses/phone numbers for designated points of contact in each of the 15 Case Study communities.</p> <p><b>Due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Case Study project is on hold, pending a lifting of stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions.</b></p> <p>10/7/19 Update Report – The Road Ahead Board of Directors, at its 2019 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter meeting, approved entering into an Agreement with Dr. David Listokin, author of the 2012 Rutgers University <i>Route 66 Economic Impact Study</i>, to carry out a Case Study Project. The project will produce case studies that illustrate the policies, strategies, and tools used by Route 66 communities of varying sizes that have successfully leveraged Route 66 for economic development. The ultimate aim of the Case Study Project is to motivate local leaders to recognize the economic development potential of Route 66 and then take steps – based upon the examples presented in the case studies – to leverage it themselves.</p>	<p><b>Resume Case Study research work as soon as possible.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 4.2 – Identify and Recruit a New Chair for the Economic Development Working Group.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/2020 Update Report:</b> Casey Wichmann, Executive Director of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Program, has been appointed the new Chair of the Road Ahead’s Economic Development Working Group. She is in the process of reconstituting the group and setting new goals. A report on new goals will be provided in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Update Report.</p>	<p><b>Finalize reconstituted membership positions in the Economic Development Working Group. Identify new set of Working Group goals.</b></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	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 5.1 – Establish a national Research/Education Working Group to support professional and amateur educators and researchers in their efforts to inspire and renew public understanding of Route 66.</p>	<p>3/31/21Update Report: This Working Group has been reformed with new, active members.</p>	<p>Scheduling a meeting for June 2021.</p>
<p>Goal 5.2 – Assist educational institutions at all levels in presenting Route 66 research to students, travelers, tourists, and the general public.</p>	<p>3/31/21Update Report: This is now an active group, led by Dr. David Dunaway and co-Chair Dr. Stephen Mandrogoc. Besides the Educator tool kits prepared earlier and being revised, the group has begun trying to identify a Research Route 66 institution that wants to serve as a National Center for Route 66; several members are exploring their institution’s perspective. We have also begun exploring grants from the NEH and the Mellon Foundation to develop a national curriculum for Route 66. In addition, Dunaway and Mandrogoc are finishing a broad historical essay of 10,000 words on the history of Route 66 for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia, which will be open to all.</p>	<p>finish historical article; find additional syllabi for teaching; contact foundations and NEH for grant information; find an institution that commits to being the National Center for Route 66.</p>

National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report

GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1 – Establish a National Historic Trail Designation Task Force to secure Federal designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail.</p>	<p>3/31/2021 Update Report: Progress was not made in the last Congress to successfully pass legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail. With the start of a new Congress in 2021, staff in the office of Congressman Darin LaHood [R-IL] has been working with Democratic staff from the House Natural Resources Committee to resolve differences regarding language in the Trail bill. Democrats would like energy and eminent domain language removed. Republicans wish to keep this text in the bill. The Road Ahead has communicated its desire to have the language removed in order to move the bill forward via what is now a Democrat controlled committee.</p>	<p>Ensure all possible steps are taken for the bill to pass the House and Senate during 2021.</p>

Financial Sustainment Task Force Report		
GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
Goal 1 – Implement a Strategic Financial Sustainment Plan for the Road Ahead	3/31/2021 Update Report: During its 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Board of Directors teleconference meeting, the Board gave its approval to extend its agreement with The Sweeney Group, the professional fundraising organization with which it has been working since last year. Per this extension, the Sweeney Group will work with the Road Ahead’s Financial Sustainment Task Force over the next 10 months to implement the strategic fundraising campaign it has prepared.	Prepare 2 <sup>nd</sup> QTR Financial Sustainment Update Report and distribute in June 2021.
Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative	3/31/2021 Update Report: The EW Initiative was launched in December 2020 and, to date, has raised over \$12,000. Based on this initial result, the first round of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program was announced during 1 <sup>st</sup> QTR. The program is making \$10,000 available for direct grants to women-owned and/or operated businesses and attractions along Route 66. Applications are due 4/30/21. Grant awards will be announced May 14, 2021. As additional funds are raised via the EW Initiative, subsequent rounds of the Micro-Grant Program will be announced.	Review EW Micro-Grant applications and make initial set of grant awards.  Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.
Goal 3 – Secure Financial Sustainment for the Road Ahead by Planning the Work of the Route 66 Centennial Commission	3/31/2021 Update Report: The official Route 66 Centennial Commission was created via legislation signed by former President Trump on 12/23/21. The Road Ahead is taking the lead in planning the Commission’s work – as doing so is viewed as the tactic by which the organization will improve its financial sustainability. Per the strategic plan devised by The Sweeney Group, efforts are underway to secure major corporate and foundation sponsorships/partnerships. Steps to appoint members are outlined in the legislation enacted to establish the Commission. Before taking action in this regard, the Road Ahead is awaiting guidance to be printed in the Federal Register.	Work with the individuals/offices noted in the Commission legislation to work with them regarding appointments to the Commission.

Rt. 66 Vintage Motel Task Force Report		
GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
Goal 1 – Establish a Vintage Motel Task Force to identify the needs and challenges of owners - operators of Rt. 66 motels.	3/31/2020 Update Report: The beta site of the Route 66 Motel Collection website has been significantly upgraded. The professional photographer engaged by the Road Ahead to complete a cross-country trip to produce high-quality images has completed his work and an initial set of his images has been added to the beta website. In addition, background information, history, and descriptive text have been added to the site.	Complete and launch the Route 66 Motel Collection website by or before the end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> QTR.

## Conclusion

Directors of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Board passed a resolution during the 3/27/2020 teleconference meeting. It simply stated, “Be It Resolved: This too shall pass – Onward and upward.” The resolution reflects the determination of the Road Ahead to keep moving forward with the work it is doing to achieve its goals and accomplish its desired outcomes – in spite of temporary slow-downs caused by impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership will continue to focus on national, “whole-road” issues throughout the remainder of 2021. Primary attention will be on securing National Historic Trail status, planning for the newly enacted national Route 66 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission, and each of the other goals identified above.

We have successfully established our new organization – and we have *planned our work*. Now comes the challenging task of *working our plan*. This is not easy and 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... Bill Thomas, Chairman - Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership