



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

2017 2nd Quarter Update Report & Next Steps

**Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas
Chairman, Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership
July 15, 2017**

Overview

In the first half of 2017, the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership was busy. We held our first two Board of Directors meetings - officially beginning our work as an organization. We tracked the progress of two pieces of federal legislation important to the Mother Road's future: HR801, designed to designate Rt. 66 a National Historic Trail and HR66, which will establish a 100th Anniversary Commission to celebrate the centennial of Rt. 66 in 2026. Our Working Groups were also active over the past six months. The Preservation Working Group completed the majority of its original goals and is now in the process of identifying new ones. The Rt. 66 State Associations Working Group shared common problems and solutions, and initiated discussions designed to consider how best to coordinate the scheduling and location of national Rt. 66 festivals. The Promotion Working Group designed & launched a new website for our organization and continued to communicate with Rt. 66 stakeholders via our FaceBook page. The Economic Development Working Group focused its efforts on identifying case studies of development success stories and best practices, and the Education & Research Working Group continued its efforts to compile Rt. 66 syllabi and think through the creation of education toolkits for both younger and older students.

This 2017 2nd Quarter Update Report presents details regarding the work mentioned above, along with updates from our organization's Financial Sustainment Task Force, our Advisory Groups, and our National Historic Trail Task Force.

As you review this report, remember that the primary purpose of The Road Ahead Partnership is to create a collaborative organization that represents and speaks with one voice for all Rt. 66 organizations and stakeholders. During the first six months of 2017, our organization focused on achieving this purpose via the goals our Working Groups, Task Forces, and Advisory Groups have set for themselves.

We believe it is important to let everyone know what the Road Ahead is doing. Towards that end, this 2017 2nd Quarter Update Report provides specific updates on what has been done thus far this year per our organization's mission and each of its stated goals.

As you read this report, we hope you gain a better sense of the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership 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 2017 2nd Quarter Update Report in particular. Please feel free to forward your thoughts, questions, ideas, and suggestions to:

rt66theroadahead@gmail.com.

Finally, as you read this 2017 2nd Quarter Update Report, we hope you are motivated to become 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 April, May, and June of 2017, along with Next Steps Planned for the Remainder of 2017**

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 2nd Quarter of 2017, along with next steps for the rest of this year.

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	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 1.1 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: The Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership Board of Directors held its 2017 2nd Quarter meeting on June 27, via teleconference. All Board members, except one, participated in the meeting, along with the Chairs of the organization’s five Working Groups. Among other items, the Board adopted four policies, including ones dealing with public communications, processes/criteria for scheduling/locating the organization’s Annual Board Meeting, a preservation advocacy policy, and a policy for scheduling/locating an Annual Public Stakeholder’s Meeting. Minutes of the 6/27/17 Board of Directors meeting, along with copies of the policies adopted at that meeting, are available online at www.route66roadahead.org. Prior to the 6/27/17 Board meeting, the organization’s Executive Committee met for its first meeting. Members of the Executive Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Bricker - Chair of the Preservation Working Group • David Dunaway - Chair of the Research & Education Working Group • Jeff Fulgenzi - Chair of the Economic Development Working Group • Bill Kelly - Chair of the Promotion Working Group • Dora Meroney – Chair of the Rt. 66 State Associations Advocacy Working Group • Bill Thomas - Chairman of the Board of Directors 	<p>Initiate regular quarterly meetings of the Board and the Executive Committee – 3rd QTR meetings to be held in September.</p> <p>Schedule & Locate site of 2018 Annual Board of Directors Meeting and Annual Public Stakeholders Meeting.</p>

GOAL	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 1.2 – Establish a State Route 66 Associations Advocacy Working Group to help achieve the outcome of “Increased Collaboration” noted above.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: During the 2nd Quarter, the State Route 66 Associations Advocacy Working Group met via conference call on May 2, 2017. The primary topics discussed during this meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps the several Associations can take to support HR801 [National Historic Trail legislation] and HR66 [100th Anniversary Commission legislation]. In addition, the Associations will work to help establish 100th Anniversary Commissions in each of their respective states. Illinois has already introduced such legislation and offered to share the language included in its bill, for use as a template by other states. • Discussion of how best to coordinate the scheduling and location of national Rt. 66 festivals. It was decided to invite individuals involved in past International Festivals to join the members of this Working Group in a common discussion of this issue. 	<p>Help establish centennial commissions in the Rt. 66 states.</p> <p>Initiate a collaborative discussion of how best to schedule/site International Rt. 66 Festivals. Conduct a meeting of this</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	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 2.1 – Establish a Promotion Working Group to collaboratively market, both domestically and internationally, all of Route 66.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: The Promotion Working continued efforts during 2nd quarter to keep people informed regarding the progress of HR801 [National Historic Trail legislation] and HR66 [100th Anniversary Commission legislation]. In particular it encouraged the idea of establishing state-level 100th Anniversary Commissions in each of the states through which Rt. 66 runs. In Illinois, it also began the process of identifying local government bodies to pilot the idea of establishing their own Route 66 Centennial Commissions. Outreach was made to officials in Will County, Madison County, and the City of Springfield.</p>	<p>Continue to identify and recruit co-sponsors for the two pieces of federal legislation</p> <p>Establish state-level Rt. 66 100th Anniversary Commissions in each state through which Rt. 66 runs</p>
<p>Goal 2.2 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: During the 2nd quarter of 2017, the Promotion Working Group made final edits/adjustments to a newly designed/created Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership website. The website will be launched by or before the end of July.</p> <p>The Promotion Working Group also continued to work with Jim Hinckley to make posts and place announcements regarding Rt. 66 related activities from across the country on the Road Ahead’s FaceBook page.</p>	<p>Finalize and publicly release the new Road Ahead website.</p> <p>Continue to regularly post news & announcements on the Road Ahead’s FaceBook page.</p>
<p>Goal 2.3 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: During the 2nd quarter, the Promotion Working Group took steps to move two projects forward, each of which is designed to attract more visitors to Rt. 66:</p> <p>Rt. 66 Navigation App Project – The Road Ahead formed a partnership with the Arts-Technology Program at Illinois State University [ATP-ISU]. As a result, the ATP-ISU assigned a group of graduate students to design/develop a GPS-based Rt. 66 navigational app. The purpose of the project is to address one of the most sited problems of Rt. 66 travelers, i.e. difficulty locating and knowing they are indeed traveling on Rt. 66. The project is also seen as an opportunity to create a platform on which gaming and augmented reality elements can be added, further expanding its usefulness & appeal, as well as offering corporate sponsorship opportunities.</p> <p>The Virtual Reality Project - The Promotion Working Group continued its work with faculty and graduate students at Breda Technical University in the Netherlands. This project is designed to create a pilot VR Experience, designed to introduce young people to Rt. 66 and increase brand awareness among this group. During 2nd quarter steps were taken to recruit a director, write a production script, and identify actors/locations in order to begin filming in early 3rd quarter. The VR project is also designed as a potential corporate sponsorship opportunity.</p>	<p>Meet with ATP-ISU Faculty to map out overall development plan for the Rt. 66 Navigation App during the 2017-2018 academic year.</p> <p>Finish initial filming of the VR project, then turn over video to Breda University for final development of the VR product.</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	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 3.1 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: One of the key aspects of the Road Ahead working with State Historic Preservation Offices and Departments of Transportation, relates to our organization’s involvement in what are referred to as Section 106 Reviews. These involve the opportunity for the Road Ahead to comment on projects that may have an impact on elements and assets associated with Rt. 66. The Preservation Working Group has advised the Road Ahead that it needs to employ a professional capable of conducting Section 106 consultations and reviews. Currently, funding constraints inhibit hiring such an individual. During 2nd quarter, however, the Preservation Working Group brought forth to the Road Ahead Board of Directors an interim solution to this need, when it reported that Mrs. Anne Haacker, former Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for Illinois, offered to act in this capacity for our organization. The Board accepted this offer at its 6/27/17 meeting. The Board also adopted a Preservation Advocacy Policy, which provides the Road Ahead with a principled approach to making decisions regarding national, state, and local advocacy for the preservation of the authentic roadway design, original buildings, landscapes, traditions, and experiences that together make up the idiosyncratic experience that is the essence of Route 66.</p>	<p>Map out specific processes for how/when the Road Ahead will become involved in Section 106 consultations & reviews.</p>
<p>Goal 3.2 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: With the publication of this Working Group’s “Quick Reference Guide”, during the 1st quarter of 2017, this goal was essentially completed. The Quick Reference Guide is designed to provide Rt. 66 stakeholders with historic preservation basic information, including available resources. It can be access via the Road Ahead website.</p>	
		<p>The Preservation Working Group will meet during 3rd quarter to formulate new goals</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	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 4.1 – Develop a local economic development toolkit to be used by local officials and tourism agencies to take greater advantage of Route 66 assets within their area.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: Various members of the sub-committee are exploring specific tools and case studies.</p>	<p>Submit application for subject of UIC capstone course for Fall 2017 semester.</p>
<p>Goal 4.2 – Create a central resource/information website for Route 66 travelers. This would serve as a central hub for all travel information and a resource for attractions & assets along Route 66.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: Discussions have begun on how best to move forward with this goal.</p>	<p>Compile inventory of sites & resources.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for domains & smartphone, tablet applications.</p> <p>Investigate whether an existing site would be best suited to host such a resource.</p>
<p>Goal 4.3 Reach out to State agencies conducting traveler/visitor surveys and coordinate deeper-dive questions surrounding Route 66 and heritage travel.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: Dr. Listokin brought this opportunity to the sub-committee. Given his work on the economic impact report, he may be able to leverage existing contacts to facilitate this process.</p>	<p>Inventory existing survey efforts and sponsoring agencies.</p> <p>Create a series of questions to be integrated into various surveys.</p>
<p>Goal 4.4 – Create an economic development-focused conference for local officials and businesses to attend, at which best practices and successful case studies are shared with local decision makers.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: The Working Group recognizes the need for the creation and publication of reports and studies that will provide data to the Road Ahead Initiative, the Economic Development Working Group, and users along the corridor. In addition to the prospective relationship with UIC, the Working Group plans to form strategic partnerships and pursue grant opportunities to be able to fund professional reports/studies. Chairman Fulgenzi’s participation in the annual Board of Directors meeting reinforced the need for this repository of knowledge. A visit to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque provided an excellent showcase of this concept as specifically related to Route 66 in New Mexico.</p>	<p>Identify an organizer for the conference.</p> <p>Calendar a date in either late 2017 or 2018 for a conference.</p> <p>Confer with Miles of Possibility Conference organizers.</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	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 5.1 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: This goal has been completed, as the Working Group has been established and members recruited. The group is still seeking more elementary level educators interested in Route 66 for representation. In addition, members have been requested to seek out educators who might assist individually and to located educational materials. We are attempting to work out a better schedule for our meetings to accommodate teachers who are less available to meet during the day most weeks.</p>	<p>Recruit additional elementary school teachers to join the Working Group</p> <p>Devise meeting scheduled that accommodates teachers' schedules</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>7/15/17 Update Report: The Working Group has reached out to state and international associations to identify educators teaching on Route 66, and to begin collecting their syllabi for a clearinghouse of material for educators interested in teaching about Route 66.</p> <p>Our goal for our next teleconference is to construct two “toolkits” on education and research on Rt. 66. Members have been informed of this topic and asked to think about core elements for these toolkits. Dr. Dunaway continues to supervise a dissertation with Donatella Davanzo at the University of New Mexico concerning Rt. 66 architecture in New Mexico. Eight sets of curricular materials dealing with Rt. 66 – ranging from elementary to college level materials – have been collected to date.</p>	<p>Construct toolkits on education or research on Rt. 66</p>
<p>Goal 5.3 – 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>7/15/17 Update Report: The Working Group will respond to requests for information, but we do not yet have enough educational material to assist people wanting help with Route 66 syllabi. However, this group and the Route 66 Oral History office is prepared to answer concerning the resources we do have.</p>	

Financial Sustainment Task Force Report

GOAL	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 1 – Establish 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>7/15/17 Update Report: The Sustainment Task Force continues to target national corporations as potential “Founding Members” of the Road Ahead, from whom financial support is being sought. Specific activities include:</p> <p>The Task Force entered into a partnership with Ms. Darley Newman, creator of the PBS series “Travels With Darley” and pitched the idea of State Farm Insurance Company sponsoring the program. A formal proposal was submitted to State Farm the beginning of 3rd quarter. Discussions continue with State Farm. If successful, the Road Ahead will secure a 2% donation from the sponsorship package for bringing State Farm and Travels with Darley together.</p> <p>In addition the Task Force also entered into a partnership with the Arts Technology Program at Illinois State University to develop a GPS-based navigational app, designed to address the problem of inadequate signage along Rt. 66. The Arts Technology Program will assign this project to a group of graduate students to work on during the 2017-2018 academic year. The goal is to produce a product that not only meets a basic need of Rt. 66 traveler’s but also serves as a platform for faming and augmented reality-based activities, which could provide branding/marketing opportunities for State Farm.</p> <p>The Task Force entered into a partnership with the Academy for Digital Entertainment at Breda University in The Netherlands, to develop a Virtual Reality product designed to introduce younger people to Rt. 66 and increase their brand awareness of the Mother Road. This product would also provide a concrete branding opportunity for State Farm.</p>	<p>Secure State Farm sponsorship of one or more episodes of “Travels with Darley”.</p> <p>Map out plans with IL State University to complete the GPS-based navigational app during the 2017-2018 academic year, then pitch it to State Farm as a branding & marketing opportunity.</p> <p>Complete initial filming of the VR experience, then transfer the 306 video to Breda University for final editing and product development.</p>

National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report

GOAL	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<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>7/15/17 Update Report: The NHT Task Force held two teleconference meetings during the 1st Quarter of 2017. The following sub-goals were worked on by the Task Force:</p> <p>1.1 - Educate key groups/individuals in the Rt. 66 states: Efforts continue to target the identification of additional co-sponsors for HR801, the legislation introduced to designate Rt. 66 a National Historic Trail.</p> <p>1.2 Solicit and collect tangible evidence of support for NHT status for Rt. 66 from key groups in each Rt. 66 state - This process is being temporarily put on hold, although we will be continuing to get some letters of support based on earlier actions by the group.</p> <p>1.3 Apply for National Treasure designation to secure assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in seeking National Historic Trail designation. - This initiative is on hold as we await the return to work of Amy Webb, who has been out of her office on medical leave the past several months. She is anticipated to return sometime during 3rd quarter.</p> <p>1.4 Introduce a bill in Congress to designate Route 66 as a National Historic Trail and support the bill in Congress to establish a Rt. 66 100th Anniversary Commission. - HR801, the bill designed to designate Rt. 66 a National Historic Trail now has a total of 16 co-sponsors, including 10 Democrats and 6 Republicans. The bill is working it way through committees. See https://congress.gov/ for up-to-date status of this legislation.</p>	<p>Continue to work with Congressman LaHood's and Congressman Davis's staff to monitor the progress of their respective bills through Congress.</p>

Report on Establishment of Advisory Groups - International Advisory Group

GOAL	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 1 – Establish an International Advisory Group to help ensure active collaboration with as many Route 66 stakeholders as possible.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: Dries Bessell of The Netherlands, Chairman of the International Advisory Group, and Bill Thomas have communicated via email to specify the purpose of the International Advisory Group and map out next steps Dries can take in terms of recruiting members to this group and in having them begin to address the main questions this group is being asked, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problems do tourists face when traveling Rt. 66 as an international visitor? • What do tourists most enjoy when traveling Rt. 66 as an international visitor? • What could be improved for international traveler's visiting Rt. 66? • To what extent to international visitors have trouble simply finding and staying on Rt. 66 - since it is no longer signed as a U.S. Highway? • What other concerns or issue do international visitors have with Rt. 66? 	<p>Identify and recruit members of the International Advisory Group</p> <p>Establish a process for effectively communicating as an Advisory Group</p>

Report on Establishment of Advisory Groups - Tribal Advisory Group

GOAL	2017 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2017
<p>Goal 1 – Establish an American Indian Tribal Advisory Group to help ensure active collaboration with as many Route 66 stakeholders as possible.</p>	<p>7/15/17 Update Report: No 2nd Quarter Update Report was submitted.</p> <p>3/30/17 Update Report: Emerson Vallo, member of the Pueblo of Acoma, New Mexico, agreed to serve as Chairman of the Tribal Advisory Group [TAG]. Emerson attended the February meeting of the Road Ahead Board of Directors. He then conducted the first teleconference meeting of the TAG, during which goals for the group were discussed. Members of the TAG include:</p> <p>Vincent Romero – Vincent lives in Chicago and works at the Chicago American Indian Center James Surveyor – James lives in Arizona and is the Operations Manager for the Moenkopi Developers Corporation Julia Bogany – Julia lives in California and serves on the Tribal Council and as a Cultural Consultant for the Gagrieleno-Tongva Tribe Lisa Snell – Lisa lives in Oklahoma and is publisher of the Native American Times</p>	<p>Refine and finalize goals of the Tribal Advisory Group</p>

Conclusion

The Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership remains a young organization. But it has taken important and substantive steps during the first six months of 2017 to achieve its outcomes and move towards accomplishing its mission.

Our journey together, as a collaboration of Rt. 66 stakeholders from across the county, has begun. We have succeeded in setting up our new organization. We have planned out our work. Now comes the challenging task of working our plan.

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