



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership Reports on Activities

Road Ahead teams up with AIANTA

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership is excited to announce a memorandum of understanding with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association [AIANTA]. Both groups share common interests in promoting public education, awareness and heritage tourism in the Route 66 Corridor. The first specific project of the new AIANTA - Road Ahead relationship will focus on a "Route 66 Tribal Itinerary" designed to highlight Tribal attractions and sights on and near Route 66.

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association [AIANTA] and the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership share common interests in promoting public education, awareness and heritage tourism regarding the Route 66 Corridor that passes through the Tribal areas in the eight states through which Route 66 runs. The organizations formalized their mutual interests during the 2nd Quarter by signing a Memorandum of Understanding designed to:

- Acknowledge that Route 66 potentially affects approximately 44 Tribal nations
- Support authentic, first-voice interpretation and representation of Tribal people in information and programming produced for the public
- Enhance visitor experiences.

International Survey

The Rt. 66 International Advisory Group, established by the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership, is undertaking its first major project, an "International Route 66 Travelers Survey." It was first tested at the Route 66 European Festival August 10-12, 2018, at Zlin in the Czech Republic.

Often hailed as one of the most famous roads on the planet, Route 66 is a perennial favorite destination of international travelers from around the world, including Europe, Australia, Asia, and North and South America. To help ensure visitors have a positive experience, the Rt. 66 International Survey asks about the biggest challenges travelers face, inquires about what Americans should know or better understand regarding international visitors, and queries what specific things would make it easier for international visitors to travel Route 66.

Rt. 66 supporters presenting and testing the International Route 66 Travelers Survey at the European Rt. 66 Festival included Zdenek Jurasek, Dries and Marion Bessels, and Jim Hinckley. Jurasek is a long-time Rt. 66 promoter from the Czech Republic who helped translate the survey into his native language. The Bessels translated the Dutch and German versions of the Survey. Dries Bessels is chairman of The Road Ahead Partnership's Rt. 66 International Advisory Group and also helped draft questions for the Survey. Well-known Rt. 66 author from Arizona, Jim Hinckley, helped promote and help conduct the Survey at the European Route 66 Festival. Jim is also a member of the Road Ahead Partnership's Economic Development Working Group.

After the European test, the survey will be available internationally, so visitors from around the globe can share their opinions. The survey will be conducted through the end of 2018, with results gathered, analyzed, and reported sometime next summer.

NPS Support and Guidance to continue into 2019

In August, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership signed a 2018-2019 “Master Cooperative Agreement” to work cooperatively in the planning and implementation of activities designed to support the development of the Road Ahead as a single voice that speaks for the interests of stakeholders from all eight Route 66 states in matters relating to the Mother Road. Stakeholders include representatives from research, education, preservation, promotion, and economic development disciplines; American Indian Nations; the state-based Route 66 Associations, and other national and international Route 66 organizations. The Agreement calls for quarterly conference calls, requires an annual face-to-face board meeting, and helps underwrite operating costs of the Road Ahead.

Route66 Road Ahead Partnership Chair Bill Thomas said, “The Road Ahead places a high value on its partnership with the National Park Service and wants to express its appreciation for the guidance, financial support, and technical assistance the NPS has provided over the past several years. The Road Ahead is committed to its current work with the National Park Service and looks forward to continuing this important partnership.”

Road Ahead Funding

The original Master Cooperative Agreement with NPS provided the Road Ahead with \$21,087.00 during the 2017-2018 government fiscal year (10/1/17-9/30/18). The recently signed Agreement includes \$21,113.00 in financial support for the Road Ahead in FY 19 (10/1/18-9/30/19). State Farm Insurance Company also supports the work of the Road Ahead as the organization’s first “Founding Corporate Member.” Treasurer’s Reports going back to the 2016-2017 fiscal year are available on the Road Ahead website (www.route66roadahead.com) under the “Resource” link in the top right of the Homepage.

Additional grassroots funding is being pursued through an affinity credit card program. Be on the lookout for more information before the end of 2018.

The Road Ahead Partnership Second Quarter Report is available on their website at <http://route66roadahead.com/resources/>. “The Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership continues to focus on national, *whole-road* issues the organization was originally founded to address. Good progress has been made through the 2nd quarter of 2018 on meeting the organization’s desired outcomes and goals. Some areas continue to move forward at a slower pace than others, but overall it has been an exciting 2018 for the Road Ahead Partnership. We have successfully established our new organization – and we have planned our work,” said Bill Thomas, Chairman of the Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership. “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...”

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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