



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

August 12, 2018 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

66,000 Signatures Sought as National Historic Trail Designation Efforts Move Forward Through the Summer

Support for making Route 66 a National Historic Trail has grown in a number of ways and for a number of reasons over the summer months, yet there is still more to be done. The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have set a goal of getting 66,000 signatures by November 11, which is the “birthday” of Route 66.

Route 66 supporters and travel enthusiasts may sign the petition to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail at www.preserveroute66.org. While there, visitors can also brush up on the road trip itinerary, sneak a peek at some of the photos taken and stories written, and meet the National Trust road trip staff.

“Driving Route 66 is the quintessential American road trip,” said Amy Webb, senior field director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “It is the most iconic, culturally celebrated, and internationally-recognized stretch of highway in America. By promoting this authentic experience, we can help preserve a beloved icon and at the same time, revive local economies in rural communities.”

In May, the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership announced that federal legislation to add Route 66 to the National Historic Trail routes was waiting for a House vote. Well, that wait is over. On Tuesday, June 5, 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed HR801, a bill to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail.

Following the vote, Congressman Darin LaHood (IL) noted, “For nearly a century, Route 66 has been a crucial transportation artery for the heartland of America. Towns across the nation and throughout my district have seen the Mother Road bring tourism, employment, a higher quality of life, and civic pride to their communities. We appreciate the support of this legislation, because it will allow visitors from around the world to experience the history of Route 66 while our local businesses and tourism industries receive the economic benefits.”

While Congress has taken important steps to designate Route 66 a permanent National Historic Trail, legislation remains to be passed by the U.S. Senate and signed by the president. Otherwise, a vital preservation opportunity may be lost. This permanent federal designation will place Route 66 among other nationally significant land or water routes that reflect America’s history. It will bring national recognition and economic development to historic sites along the historic highway.

To emphasize the urgency of National Historic Trail designation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation included Rt. 66 on its 11 Most Endangered Historic Places List which was released on June 26. The annual list spotlights important examples of our nation’s architectural and cultural heritage at risk of destruction or irreparable damage. Almost 300 places have been on the list over the last 31 years. This type of national awareness has resulted in preserving more than 95% of the sites listed.

In a strong showing of further support, the National Trust named Rt. 66 a National Treasure on July 2 and launched their 30-day road trip that same day, to build awareness and support for the Rt. 66 Historic Trail designation. The cross-country event, known as “Preserve Route 66 Road Trip” was launched in Chicago and traveled through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California to reach their Santa Monica Pier destination on August 3.

State Farm Companies signed on as the first Route 66 Road Ahead corporate sponsor to make this road trip possible. Also supported by Airstream, Polaroid and Two Lanes by Mike Wolfe, the trip documented a passenger-side view of the people, places, and stories that make Route 66 an icon of the American landscape. National Geographic tagged along, [documenting Historic Route 66](#) through the lens of their own dedicated writer and photographer.

The National Trust gained plenty of support for preserving our treasured icon of Americana for generations to come by gathering over 58,000 signatures from people all over the world. The roadies were “blown away” by the passion you--as Route 66 supporters--have for this special place.

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.

For Additional Information Contact: Bill Thomas, Chairman, Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership

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[suggested side bar] [Route66_infographic.pdf](#) [photo suggestion]

https://www.instagram.com/p/Bk8Ub7_hMzY/?hl=en&taken-by=davidkaferphotography

Caption: davidkaferphotography The #preserve66 crew stopped in St. Louis for the fair in Gateway Arch National Park where Rt. 66 supporters could stop by to spin a prize wheel, sign the Preserve Route 66 petition, and learn more about Route 66!
