



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Signs Route 66 Centennial Act

Washington, DC – On Wednesday, December 23, 2020, President Donald Trump signed The Route 66 Centennial Commission Act (S1014) into law. For Route 66 enthusiasts across the country and around the world, this is the best Christmas gift in 2020. Now, the countdown begins—not for the year 2020, but for the year 2026, the 100th birthday of historic Route 66. Though no longer part of the US highway system, Route 66 continues to be a popular tourist destination for both domestic and international travelers.

This Act began its journey in 2017, when Congressman Rodney Davis (D-IL) introduced HR66 at the urging of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership. In April 2019, Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) introduced a similar bill in the US Senate (S1014), where it passed out of the Senate in August and returned to the House to reconcile language differences.

"The Road Ahead thanks everyone who helped introduce and move legislation through Congress to establish the Route 66 Centennial Commission," said Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Chair Bill Thomas. "Their efforts have given Route 66 a very welcomed Christmas present!"

Now that it has been signed into law, 15 Commissioners will be appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Secretary of Transportation, Senate and House majority leaders, and governors of the eight Route 66 states. Appointees will have demonstrated both a dedication to educating others about the importance of historical figures and events, and a substantial knowledge and appreciation of Route 66.

"Now, our attention turns to making plans that will celebrate the road's 100th anniversary and focus on ways to improve the lives of the 5+ million people living and working along Route 66," explains Thomas. "We'll do so, by working on projects that promote, preserve and economically develop Route 66."

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership is taking a leadership role in the celebration of Route 66's 100th birthday. A five-year series of birthday celebration initiatives begins in 2021, culminating in 2026, the road's centennial year. A major part of the initiatives involves developing a Visionary Fund to support Route 66 through preservation, economic development, promotion, and research and/or education projects. The goal is to position the historic highway, the communities along the road, and the people who live there for success during the next 100 years.

The Road Ahead took the first step earlier this month, when they introduced the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative. The initiative seeks 66 women in each of the eight states through which the historic highway runs, to be recognized as a Route 66 Extraordinary Woman through their gift of \$1,000. The gift, which can also be given by men and organizations to honor a woman, can be paid in one lump sum or by giving \$200 per year for 5 years. To designate yourself or someone else as an Extraordinary Woman – and be one of the first 66 from your state – visit: <https://100extraordinarywomen.com/route-66-extraordinary-women-initiative>.

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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