



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

2021 2nd Quarter Update Report & Next Steps

**Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas
Chairman, Rt. 66 Road Ahead Partnership
July 15, 2021**

Overview

Following is a brief overview of 2021 2nd 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 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 2021 2nd 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 April, May, and June of 2022, 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 2nd Quarter, along with next steps for 2021. You'll note that the current update from the 2nd 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
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.	<p style="color: blue;">6/30/21 Update Report: The Road Ahead Board of Directors held its 2021 2nd QTR meeting, via Zoom, on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. Minutes of the meeting are available via the Road Ahead website. The 3rd QTR Executive Committee meeting will be held in August. The regular Board meeting will be scheduled for September and will be conducted via Zoom.</p> <p>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.</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 style="color: blue;">Conduct an Executive meeting during August 2021 and a Board of Directors during September 2021, to discuss/monitor the organization’s goals and outcomes.</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>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.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report State Centennial Commission progress is still sluggish in many states. Associations were surprised to hear that the Tourism Departments had expressed interest in helping form Commissions as they had not been engaged.</p> <p>3/4/21 Update Report: 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>Work with Promotions Working Group to identify members of state that had expressed interest and match them up with their State Association contemporaries.</p>
<p>Goal 1.2 – Discuss and identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work together on projects/activities/challenges to be solved.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report Tourism is still down overall across the Route 66 footprint; TX/OK seeing significant domestic traffic but CA/AZ are still much lower than normal.</p> <p>3/4/21 Update Report: 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>Changed meeting schedule to monthly instead of quarterly to help facilitate better communication and cross-association engagement.</p>
<p>Goal 1.3 – Assist the Board of Directors in communicating its work with the greater Rt. 66 community.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report National Trail Legislation has been re-introduced; now is the time to encourage Association members and the general public to express their support directly to legislators.</p> <p>3/4/21 Update Report: No discussion of this topic</p>	<p>Rhys is working on boilerplate language that can be provided to each state Association for editing and use to encourage citizen engagement in support of legislation.</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>6/30/21 Update Report: Information has been provided all state tourism directors with Bill's contact information and sample legislative language.</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>6/30/21 Update Report: All state tourism directors were provided with Bill's information and asked to identify key personnel in each governor's office that the Rt. 66 Road Ahead can reach out to in an effort to discuss national appointments. Bill is now in touch with a direct point of contact in each governor's office.</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>Continue to provide support as needed.</p>
<p>Goal 2.3 - Discuss ways to expand Oklahoma's AAA Route 66 Road Fest to all Rt. 66 states.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report: Shared the event information with all state tourism directors. Prior to committing support for the event, they requested more information about results once the first event concludes in 2022.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: Working to set up first meeting for year in April.</p>	<p>Provide tourism directors with additional information following the initial AAA Oklahoma Roadfest Event.</p>
<p>Goal. 2.5 - Work to develop Rt. 66 Charging Stations infrastructure.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report: Shared information and promised to follow up with more as work in this area progresses. Bill and The Sweeney Group are targeting Ford as a potential collaborator/sponsor for this initiative.</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>6/30/21 Update Report: It was decided to schedule a monthly meeting to discuss these individual topics.</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>6/30/21 Update Report: The Road Ahead’s Historic Resources Specialist continued to participate in Section 106 consultations for State Department of Transportation projects in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Illinois. Following is a brief overview of each consultation:</p> <p><u>Texas, Amarillo Helium Plant</u> - The Consultation has formally concluded and the TxDOT is completing Mitigation measures including educational materials at the site and for local schools and museums. The Texas Historical Commission has \$200,000 for its Easements Program and \$500,000 in its Historic Preservation Trust Fund for preservation projects in the Texas Panhandle. This money will be available for brick and mortar projects until June 2022 after which time the money will revert to the TxSHPO General Fund. Coordination is needed with local groups to ensure they have the resources to tap into those funds.</p> <p><u>Missouri, Gasconade River Bridge</u> - Discussions as to completeness and correctness of bridge marketing efforts by the Missouri DOT are ongoing between the FHWA and the ACHP. At issue is whether or not the local preservation group has financial resources sufficient to take ownership of the bridge.</p> <p><u>Illinois</u> - In Illinois the Road Ahead has started consultations on three projects that may have an adverse effect on Route 66. Two in Will County, one of which will significantly affect a National Register listed segment of the Road and the other is a minor adjustment adjacent to I-55. The third is in the East St. Louis area where interchange improvements work will be done at I-270 and IL111. We are negotiating for improved signage and way-finding materials at the Chain of Rocks Bridge on the Illinois side.</p> <p><u>Oklahoma</u> - In Oklahoma, the Road Ahead signed a memorandum of agreement for the Bridgeport Bridge Replacement Project that will provide for a new 28' wide bridge. The existing trusses will be attached to the new bridge as non-loadbearing elements. This will preserve the feeling and historical context of the bridge, if not the actual bridge itself. The OKDOT will also conduct a roadbed survey of Route 66 to supplement the existing National Register of Historic Places Multiple Resource documentation form.</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 & benefits of preservation & the tools, techniques, & incentives for preservation outcomes.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report Submit draft “Quick Reference Guide” to the RAP Executive Director in 2021. No change in status due to the impact of the Coronavirus.</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>6/30/21 Update Report Post the link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page. No change in status of this goal.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: The link to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication: <u>Protecting Historic Properties: A Citizen’s Guide to Section 106 Review</u> 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>6/30/21 Update Report Develop a framework for posting specific preservation challenges and situations common to Route 66 stakeholders. No change in status of this goal.</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 – Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report A consultant to design/develop the Preservation Toolkit was selected and an agreement signed in late May 2021. Substantive work is now underway on this project.</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’s first set of deliverables due by July 2021.</p> <p>Complete Preservation Toolkit by or before end of 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>Goal 4.1 – Develop a series of surveys that will engage communities and allow them to express interest in participating and/or wanting help with economic development. Use the surveys to gather additional statistical information from communities along the Route 66.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report Next Meeting scheduled for July 12th. Meetings set up for the second Monday of each month through the end of the year.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: 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>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.</p> <p>10/7/19 Update Report – The Road Ahead Board of Directors, at its 2019 3rd 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>Develop questions to be used in the surveys. Identify the communities that will receive the survey.</p>
<p>Goal 4.2 – Develop a simple and basic economic development tool kit that is both engaging and dynamic yet contains relatable information.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report Next Meeting scheduled for July 12th. Meetings set up for the second Monday of each month through the end of the year.</p> <p>3/31/2020 Update Report: 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 2nd Quarter Update Report.</p>	<p>Begin an outline for the economic toolkit, which will include a timeline and detail what we hope to include within the toolkit. We will utilize the 2012 case study as well as the results from the surveys we develop.</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>6/30/21 Update Report This WG has lost two members and added one.</p> <p>3/31/21Update Report: This Working Group has been reformed with new, active members.</p>	<p>No next steps reported.</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>6/30/21 Update Report In this goal we have an immediate success and several interesting possibilities. The Oxford Research Encyclopedia will present “the history of Route 66” in the next month. We are told it will be available to any user requesting it. This is a huge step forward in raising historical issues needing clarification and in providing a generous set of links for students and researchers. It is written by the chair and co-chair of this WG. We have also begun planning with Northern Arizona University a large grant application to the NEH, to be submitted by the end of the year.</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>No next steps reported.</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>6/30/21 Update Report Legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historical Trail was introduced by Congressman Darin LaHood [R-IL] on May 28, 2021. HR360, as the bill is labeled, is co-sponsored by Congresswoman Grace Napolitano [D-CA]. The bill is currently in Committee.</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. At the start the new Congress in 2021, staff in the office of Congressman Darin LaHood [R-IL] began working with Democratic staff from the House Natural Resources Committee to resolve differences regarding language in the Trail bill, so it can be reintroduced.</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
<p>Goal 1 – Implement a Strategic Financial Sustainment Plan for the Road Ahead</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report The Financial Sustainment Task Force can now confirm corporate sponsorships of over \$500,000. An additional \$250,000 sponsorship has been tentatively approved and awaits final confirmation. Public announcements regarding corporate donors and how these funds will be used to support the Route 66 Centennial plans of the Road Ahead will be announced in 3rd Quarter.</p> <p>3/31/2021 Update Report: During its 1st 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.</p>	<p>Prepare 3rd QTR Financial Sustainment Update Report detailing sponsorships and Centennial strategy.</p>
<p>Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report The Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative has now raised via gifts/pledges over \$33,000.00. An initial round of the EW Micro-Grant Program awarded \$10,000 in direct grants to women owned/operated businesses and attractions along Route 66 during 2nd Quarter. As additional funds are raised/received, future rounds of the Micro-Grant program will be conducted.</p> <p>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 1st 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.</p>	<p>Monitor EW Micro-Grant awards and ensure recipients submit final reports.</p> <p>Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.</p>
<p>Goal 3 – Secure Financial Sustainment for the Road Ahead by Planning the Work of the Route 66 Centennial Commission</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report Contacts were made during 2nd QTR with governor’s offices and Congressional staff to ensure they are aware of the opportunity they have to recommend Commission members for appointment to the Route 66 Centennial Commission.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Work with the individuals/offices noted in the Commission legislation to work with them regarding appointments to the Commission.</p>

Rt. 66 Vintage Motel Task Force Report		
GOAL	2021 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2021
<p>Goal 1 – Establish a Vintage Motel Task Force to identify the needs and challenges of owners - operators of Rt. 66 motels.</p>	<p>6/30/21 Update Report An initial review of the beta version of the Route 66 Motel Collection was completed during 2nd QTR, with edits made. Additional edits to several technical/functional elements of the website also need to be made.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Complete and launch the Route 66 Motel Collection website by or before the end of 3rd QTR.</p>

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 100th 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