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# THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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**1st Quarter 2023 Update Report & Next Steps**

**Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas  
Chairman, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
April 14, 2023**

## **Overview**

Following is a brief overview of activity for the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership during the period of January 1 thru March 31, 2023.

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 Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership is and what we are working to achieve.

We welcome and encourage feedback and questions regarding the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership in general, and this Expanded Update Report in particular. Please feel free to forward your thoughts, questions, ideas, and suggestions to: [rt66theroadahead@gmail.org](mailto:rt66theroadahead@gmail.org).

Finally, as you read this Expanded 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  
Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership

**Report on Work Undertaken on the Goals of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
During January 1, 2023 thru March 31, 2023 along with Next Steps Planned for the 2023**

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 Route 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 3/31/23, along with next steps for 2023. You'll note that the current update report 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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – The Route 66 Road Ahead Board of Directors held its annual, face-to-face meeting in Albuquerque on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Minutes of the 3/30/23 Board of Directors meeting can be accessed on the Road Ahead website. The following day, members of the Road Ahead Board who were able, attended part of the annual meeting of the Research Route 66 group.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report –The Route 66 Road Ahead Board of Directors meet via a Zoom call on December 9, 2022. Minutes of the 12/9/22 Board of Directors meeting can be access on the Road Ahead website.</p>	<p><b>Conduct an Executive Committee meeting during May 2023 and conduct a quarterly Board meeting in June 2023, to discuss the organization’s goals and outcomes.</b></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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>Goal 1.1 – Discuss and identify Route 66 needs/concerns and communicate them to the Road Ahead Board of Directors. Come up with potential solutions.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report - NM roadblock with Centennial Commission and license plate; Association still working on solutions. No progress with CA San Bernardino Bridge. Still no engagement from the IL State Association. Oklahoma’s Ribbon Road rehab project still indicating original asphalt will be milled up rather than patched; working with local legislators. AZ looking at an alternative replica for Twin Arrows due to land ownership and maintenance issues.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: The New Mexico Association has started process to engage state for Centennial efforts. CA Association working with CADOT and local Senator to find a solution for bridges that are out. No physical progress at Glenrio but locals still working on project, per NM. AZ working on solution for Twin Arrows conditions.</p>	<p><b>Proceed with Roadside Attraction signage effort; continue communicating with one another for best practices and potential support efforts.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 1.2 – Discuss and identify areas of common interest and opportunities to work together on projects/activities/challenges to be solved.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report - Discussed Oklahoma’s Hampton Inn-inspired Roadside Attraction signage replacement project, multiple other states interested. RAP expressed interest in potentially adding to Centennial projects. Digital files sent to CA, NM, TX, KS, MO, and IL for review and potential implementation. Also discussed plans for uniform stencils to allow communities to tag shields on the road. Several state Associations coming to Tulsa’s AAA RoadFest in June.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: AAA RoadFest in OK proceeding to second year; talking to IL and TX about additional events. Route 66 Info Fair in Needles proceeding in Feb, all Associations invited. Victorville CA museum and other properties purchased with revitalization plans. OK and TX working on joint Motor Tour in 2023.</p>	<p><b>Continue meeting monthly to identify needs and cross-Association working opportunities.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 1.3 – Assist the Board of Directors in communicating its work with the greater Route 66 community.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report -</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: Communicated introduction of Nat’l Trail Legislation in the Senate, with the caveat it’s at the end of session and has low change of passage due to time constraints.</p>	<p><b>Continue monitoring legislative activity and other Road Ahead initiatives for engagement opportunities</b></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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>Goal 2.1 - Ensure each Route 66 State establishes a state-level Route 66 100th Anniversary Commission</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report - No updates; pending Nat'l Trail reintroduction in Congress</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: The Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission will hold its first 2023 meeting 1/26/23 in Joliet, IL. Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Bill Thomas will attend.</p> <p>4/30/22 Update Report: Illinois had its first commission meeting. Oklahoma's next meeting is in May. No updates received from other states.</p>	<p><b>Continue monitoring legislative activity and other Road Ahead initiatives for engagement opportunities</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 2.2 - Work to identify contacts in each state that can be connected with to help influence National Route 66 Centennial Commission appointments.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: The White House sent out a Press Release announcing the names of the first 12 individuals the President intends to appoint to the Route 66 Centennial Commission. Included is Bill Thomas, Chairman of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership. Three appointments will remain to be made.</p>	<p><b>Identify key personnel in each governor's office that the Route 66 Road Ahead group can reach out to in an effort to help influence national appointments.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 2.3 - Discuss ways to expand Oklahoma's AAA Route 66 Road Fest to all Route 66 states.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – Plans are underway to help promote the AAA RoadFest during the International Mother Road Festival to be held in Springfield, Illinois in September of 2023.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: Plans are now in place to have the Road Ahead, AAA Oklahoma, and SRO – the production firm that administered RoadFest in Tulsa in 2022, coordinate communications with each state regarding the expansion of RoadFest across Route 66.</p>	<p><b>Goal is for AAA to work with each state individually to create an experience that best supports the state.</b></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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>Goal 3.1 – Collaboratively share best practices and ideas between such groups as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs).</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – The Road Ahead Historic Resources Specialist is available to participate in Section 106 consultation. The Preservation Working Group is also providing input to Route t66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Park Service, to establish Route 66 discussions with State and Local Departments of Transportation. It has been decided that a discussion format will replace the previously proposed symposium format.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: The Preservation Working Group invited by Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Park Service (NPS), to help plan Route 66 symposium with Federal Highway Administration, State and Local Departments of Transportation.</p>	<p>the RAP HRS will continue participating in current Section 106 consultations and will accept new invitations. The Working Group will assist NPS to develop a draft plan for DOT discussions.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3.2 – Share info about the meaning &amp; benefits of preservation &amp; the tools, techniques, &amp; incentives for preservation outcomes.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: No update since the 9/30/22 update - The Working Group (WG) submitted final “Quick Reference Guide for Financial Incentives” to the RAP Executive Director at the end of September 2022.</p>	<p>Post the Guide on the Road Ahead Website Resources page.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3.3 – Share information with the Board of Directors about Section 106 and the preservation of historic properties.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: No change/update since the 9/30/22 update.</p> <p>9/30/22 Update Report: The Working Group still needs to post the link to the Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page. No change.</p>	<p>Post the link on the Resources page when the forthcoming Historic Preservation Toolkit website is posted.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: No change/update since the 9/30/22 update.</p>	<p>WG has paused effort until discussions by RAP on topic progress further.</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.	
<b>Goal 3.5 – Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</b>	<b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b>  12/31/22 Update Report: No change/update since the 9/30/22 update.	<b>Launch the Toolkit when the Route 66 Commission’s website is made public.</b>

**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.

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>2023 STATUS</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS FOR 2023</b>
<b>Goal 4.1 – Restructure the Economic Development Working Group’s focus to three distinct goals; new strategic focus –Audience, Communication Channels &amp; Resources.</b>	<b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b>  12/31/22 Update Report: The Economic Development Working Group met on Dec 19 <sup>th</sup> . Road Ahead Chairman Bill Thomas attended the meet and shared a proposed strategic direction with the entire working group.	<b>Contact all state Rt 66 leaders to request their help identifying those communities that need/want help as it relates to economic development.</b>  <b>Identify an initial audience on which EDWG focus’ its efforts.</b>  <b>Identify specific ways of communication with the above targeted audience.</b>  <b>Review and detail key statistics from existing resources that have already been developed. Use these stats to identify the structure for sharing and organizing the key stats that are most important.</b>
<b>Goal 4.2 – Begin bi-monthly meetings starting in February</b>	<b>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</b>  12/31/22 Update Report: February meeting is not set as of today.	<b>Schedule February meeting by or before end of January.</b>

**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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – This group remains in place and may add new members soon.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: This group remains in place, though its members have shifted. We may be adding one or two more soon.</p>	<p><b>Add additional high school level members to the Working Group.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 5.2 – Assist educational institutions at all levels in presenting Route 66 research to students, travelers, tourists, and the general public.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – The largest part of this Working Groups efforts during 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter focused on setting up a summer training session for teachers. This is a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to train 72 teachers in developing a Route 66 curriculum for middle and high school students. Professor Gretchen McAllister of Northern Arizona University is directing this effort. Dr. David Dunaway, the chair of the Research &amp; Education Working Group is its principal consultant. Another member of the Research and Education Working Group, Steve Mandrgoc will also be involved.</b></p> <p><b>A second project is coming to fruition in the next quarter, when the long-awaited bibliography of Route 66 will be published, Researching Route 66, a 150 page collection of what has been written about Route 66 over the years. The manuscript was reviewed this quarter and plans made for publicity and outreach to introduce the bibliography to a national audience.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: - The first ever bibliography of Route 66 was completed during 4th quarter. The Route 66 corridor Preservation Program will publish the bibliography in 2023. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a national grant to Northern Arizona University to develop a Route 66 curriculum. Plans are already in preparation for a follow up grant from the NEH for 2024.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 5.3 – Establish a Route 66 National Center</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – Plan were made during 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to initiate a campaign to secure letters of support for the proposed Route 66 National Center. They will be implemented during 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report: Recent Accomplishments for UNM as “Rt. 66 National Repository” as further support and evidence for Rt. 66 National Center Initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New (January 2023)-UNM/National Trust for Historic Preservation renewed internship to identify and document extant under-represented Rt. 66 properties in New Mexico. Dr. Audra Bellmore is currently supervising this project with Amy Webb, NTHP. Working on documenting the Santa Fe-Santa Rosa portion of the pre-1937 Old Alignment.</li> <li>• On-going-Fall semester 2022-UNM/National Trust for Historic Preservation internship established to identify and document extant under-represented Rt. 66 properties in New</li> </ul>	<p><b>Drafting standard letter of support to send out to all above entities. They can modify and print on their own letterhead. The letters will be turned into UNM Office of the Provost for Research to verify wide support local, statewide support for initiative. A draft of the Mission Vision and Values statement will accompany the letter.</b></p>



	<p>Mexico. Dr. Audra Bellmore is currently supervising this project with Amy Webb, NTHP. Worked on documenting the Los Lunas-Santa Fe portion of the pre-1937 Old Alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going-UNM is the repository for documentation materials of recently funded NPS documentation project/Donatella Davanzo's photo-documentation project (currently underway).</li> </ul> <p>9/30/22 Update Report: The Road Ahead working to coordinate efforts with the Research Route 66 Consortium and the University of New Mexico to explore the feasibility of establishing a Route 66 National Center. Bill Thomas is the Road Ahead's liaison for this initiative and is working with Dr. Audra Bellmore, member of the Research Route 66 Consortium. Following is an overview of progress to date, supplied by Dr. Bellmore:</p> <p>On December 8, 2021, representatives from the National Park Service initiative, Research Route 66 (UNM Faculty and UNM RR66 rep., Dr. Audra Bellmore), the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Coordinator (Kaisa Barthuli), and the Road Ahead, the NPS's private, non-profit partner (Chairman, Bill Thomas) met with UNM administration representatives (Teresa Costantinidis, Lisa Marbury, Barbara Rodriguez, Amy Coburn, Rosie Dudley, Larry Ryan-UNM Foundation). It was decided that Dr. Bellmore would move forward with gaining support for the National Center Initiative amongst UNM faculty, NPS Partners, Road Ahead Board, local, county, state-wide community entities.</p> <p>January 11, 2022, Audra Bellmore (UNM), Kaisa Barthuli (National Park Service, Bill Thomas met to draft a Mission, Vision, Values statement for National Center Initiative.</p> <p>April 12-14, 2022, Joint meeting-Research Route 66 and the Road Ahead in Springfield, Missouri. During this meeting the goal of a National Center at UNM was confirmed by support of both groups. Audra Bellmore met with Amy Webb, of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to further conversation about NTHP support of National Center Initiative and possibility of UNM/NTHP partnership on Route 66 funding opportunities and internship for New Mexico Rt. 66 documentation project.</p> <p>May 20, 2022. Audra Bellmore met with Aaron Mahr, Director of the National Park Service, National Trails programs to discuss support for National Center at UNM and combined national Trails/UNM opportunities.</p> <p>June 17, 2022. Audra Bellmore met with Angelica Sanchez Clark, National Trails Coordinator to gain support for National Center and ways to further the Rt. 66 Hispano Legacies Project at UNM.</p> <p>July 12, 2022, Audra Bellmore and Amy Webb, NTHP finalized Rt. 66 internship programming with UNM.</p> <p>August 17, 2022, Audra Bellmore and Amy Webb began Rt. 66 fall semester internship with UNM.</p> <p>Other conversations to gain support for National Center at UNM have been had with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Albuquerque, Department of Cultural Affairs</li> <li>Bernalillo County, Route 66 Visitor Center</li> <li>New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division</li> </ul>	<p><b>Schedule meeting to move initiative along with Office of Provost for Research to discuss official UNM support.</b></p> <p><b>Schedule meeting to discuss moving forward with ideas for funding with UNM Foundation, Larry Ryan.</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Santa Fe Foundation</li> <li>• Spanish Colonial Arts Museum</li> <li>• Indian Pueblo Cultural Center</li> </ul> <p>Recent Accomplishments for UNM as “Rt. 66 National Repository” as further support and evidence for Rt. 66 National Center Initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNM/National Trust for Historic Preservation internship established to identify and document extant under-represented Rt. 66 properties in New Mexico. Dr. Audra Bellmore is currently supervising this project with Amy Webb, NTHP.</li> <li>• UNM is the repository for documentation materials of recently funded NPS documentation project/Donatella Davanza’s photo-documentation project (currently underway).</li> </ul>	
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**National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report**

GOAL	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>Goal 1 – Establish a National Historic Trail Designation Task Force to secure Federal designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail.</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – Plans have been put in place, under the direction of Pam Bowman, with the National Trust, to help ensure introduction of new legislation in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail. The Road Ahead is assisting by reaching to recruit Congressman/women to be original co-sponsors of the legislation.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report Efforts to pass legislation to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail before the end of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress were not successful. The measure will be reintroduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress and efforts will resume. On a very sad note, Route 66’s longtime friend and advocate, John Conoby [retired National Park Service] passed away in late December 2022. John worked tirelessly to help with the initiative to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail. His expertise and friendship will be sorely missed.</p>	<p><b>Ensure all possible steps are taken for the bill to pass the House and Senate during 2023.</b></p>

**Financial Sustainment Task Force Report**

GOAL	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><b>Goal 1 – Implement a Strategic Financial Sustainment Plan for the Road Ahead</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – Corporate and foundation fundraising efforts remain on hold awaiting initial meetings of the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report Corporate and foundation fundraising efforts remain on hold awaiting the inaugural meeting of the Route 66 Centennial Commission.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report-The National Trust for Historic Preservation initiated discussions with the Road Ahead regarding the possibility of an invitation-only grant to support the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program. The Road Ahead, pending receipt of an invitation, will submit an application to the Trust during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter.</b></p>	<p><b>Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.</b></p> <p><b>Complete and submit an</b></p>

	<p>12/31/22 Update Report</p> <p>Sufficient funds are almost in hand to move forward with a second round of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Grant Program. The EW Grant Initiative will be a featured program of upcoming Route 66 Centennial efforts, in the hope the national exposure afforded the attention the Centennial generates will secure the final funding needed to launch a second round of the grant program.</p>	<p><b>invitation-only grant application to the National Trust.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 3 – Secure Financial Sustainment for the Road Ahead by Planning the Work of the Route 66 Centennial Commission</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/23 Update Report – Action remains on hold regarding Centennial work, pending the outcomes of the Commission’s initial meetings.</b></p> <p>12/31/22 Update Report</p> <p>Action remains on hold regarding Centennial work, pending completion by the White House of the approval of Commissioners to the Route 66 Centennial Commission.</p>	<p><b>Work with the individuals/offices noted in the Commission legislation to ensure recommended appointments to the Commission are made.</b></p>

**Conclusion**

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership will continue to focus on national, “whole-road” issues throughout 2023. Primary attention will be on securing National Historic Trail status, planning for the newly enacted national Route 66 Centennial 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 - Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership