



---

# THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

---

**2nd Quarter 2023 Update Report & Next Steps**

**Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas  
Chairman, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
July 25, 2023**

## **Overview**

Following is a brief overview of activity for the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership during the period of April 1 thru June 30, 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 April 1, 2023, thru June 3, 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 6/30/23, 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>6/30/23 Update Report – The Road Ahead Executive Committee met during second quarter. Plans are underway to schedule the 3<sup>rd</sup> QTR meeting of the full Road Ahead Board.</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Conduct a 3<sup>rd</sup> QTR Board meeting on August 23, 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>6/30/23 Update Report – IL Fairgrounds project approaching groundbreaking. KS: Galena working on grants for charging stations and Spring River Sign restoration. Drive-Through shield CX ongoing. Baxter Springs Park CX started, and Brush Creek Bridge cleanup completed. OK: Still working on rules for funded Route 66 Commission grant process. HOPE Crew with NTHP worked on masonry restoration at Threatt Station. Association restarted Committee work. Clinton’s Glancy Motel pending demolition, City says there is no stopping it. TX: 20k attendees to Route 66 festival. No state monies allocated. McLean Phillips Station restoration ongoing. TX/OK prepping for October Motor Tour. AZ: Angel Storyfile Exhibit nearly finished. AZ Assn met with Debbie Johnson (National Commissioner) and working on state commission. Also still working with tribes on restoration ideas for Osterman Station and Twin Arrows.</b></p> <p>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.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – KS so far unsuccessful getting the state gov’t to sign MOU with Federal Centennial Commission. AZ Assn looking for web developer to help refresh their site. State Associations interested in developing a route-wide commemorative map of some kind for the Centennial.</b></p> <p>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.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – No update to report</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No update to report</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>6/30/23 Update Report – The Route 66 Centennial Commission is working with tourism departments from the Route 66 states to design a coordinated promotion campaign for the Centennial. Assistance is being sought from Brand USA.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report - No updates.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – The White House sent out a Press Release during 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR announcing the names of the 2 additional individuals the President intends to appoint to the Route 66 Centennial Commission. Included are IL Lt. Governor Stratton and Trait Thompson, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society. One appointment remains to be made.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</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>6/30/23 Update Report – Efforts are underway to have the Route 66 Centennial Commission designate the AAA Road Fest as a Certified Centennial activity.</b></p> <p>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.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – RAP Historic Resources Specialist (HRS) is available to participate in Section 106 consultations.</b></p> <p><b>Working Group (WG) received update from Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Park Service (NPS) regarding its ongoing Route 66 discussions with State and Local Departments of Transportation (DOTs). Initially, regular meetings between NPS and DOTs are proposed to share information.</b></p> <p>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 66 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.</p>	<p><b>RAP HRS will continue participating in current Section 106 consultations and accept new invitations.</b></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>6/30/23 Update Report – WG will ensure web links are active in “Quick Reference Guide for Financial Incentives” and resubmit reference guide to the RAP Executive Director at end of July 2023.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>Post the Guide on the RAP Resources page in August 2023.</b></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>6/30/23 Update Report – Post the link to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Section 106 Review Guide directly on the RAP Resources page.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>Post the link on the RAP Resources page in August 2023</b></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>6/30/23 Update Report – WG discussed the need for RAP to approach use of social media as collaborative effort.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>WG will prepare draft proposal for discussion with RAP Executive Committee in Fall 2023.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 3.5 – Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</b></p>	<p><b>6/30/23 Update Report – Route 66 Historic Preservation Toolkit has been incorporated into the beta version of the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission website, which will be made public pending its certification by the Route 66 Centennial Commission’s.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>Launch the Toolkit when the Route 66 Commission’s website is made public.</b></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	2023 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2023
<p><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></p>	<p><b>6/30/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><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></p> <p><b>Identify an initial audience on which EDWG focus’ its efforts.</b></p> <p><b>Identify specific ways of communication with the above targeted audience.</b></p> <p><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></p>
<p><b>Goal 4.2 – Begin bi-monthly meetings starting in February</b></p>	<p><b>6/30/23 Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>Schedule February meeting by or before end of January.</b></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	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>6/30/23 Update Report</b> – This group remains in place and may add new members soon.</p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – This group remains in place and may add new members 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>6/30/23 Update Report</b> – The NEH-funded, teacher-built curriculum for teaching Route 66’s history project has begun in Flagstaff Arizona at Northern Arizona University. As of this writing it is half-way done. It is called <i>Racialized Spaces on Route 66</i>, and this title reflects its orientation to addressing how the native, Hispanic, and black populations of the road have been left out of many accounts. Director of the R &amp; E Working Group, Dr. David Dunaway, led a workshop on using oral history in the schools; co-Director Dr. Steve Mandrgoc gave a lecture on Hispanics on Route 66. The group toured sites along Route 66 and prepared model lesson plans and units for teaching Route 66. The group includes 32 teachers from across the country for this first of two sessions. In-depth discussions have explored and revealed key issues involved. Session will begin soon. Lesson plans devised as a result of this project will be posted at NAU and at the TRA website for all to use.</p> <p><b>The <i>Researching Route 66 Bibliography</i> of Route 66 is awaiting final approval and dates for release of the material from the National Park Service, which will occur in the next quarter.</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>A second project is coming to fruition in the next quarter, when the long-awaited bibliography of Route 66 will be published, <i>Researching Route 66</i>, 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.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 5.3 – Establish a Route 66 National Center</b></p>	<p><b>6/30/23 – Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Drafting standard letter of</b></p> <p><b>Schedule meeting to discuss moving forward with ideas for funding with UNM Foundation, Larry Ryan.</b></p>



**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>6/30/23 Update Report – Legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives for a bill to designate Route 66 a National Historic Trail in July.</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Work with staff to introduce a bill in the Senate that compliments the House bill.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – Corporate and foundation fundraising efforts remain on hold awaiting initial meetings of the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – Corporate and foundation fundraising efforts remain on hold awaiting initial meetings of the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative</b></p>	<p><b>6/30/23 Update Report – During 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, the National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded \$60,000 to support the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative. The Road Ahead and National Trust are working closely to update and refine application materials for the EW Initiative. These funds will be used to conduct three rounds of the EW Initiative over the next 18 months. The Road Ahead and the Trust are also meeting to discuss ways the Trust can assist with marketing and fundraising efforts on behalf of the EW Initiative.</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Finalize EW Initiative application materials and launch first grant round in September 2023.</b></p> <p><b>Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.</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>6/30/23 Update Report – Action remains on hold regarding Centennial work, pending the outcomes of the Commission’s initial meetings.</b></p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – Action remains on hold regarding Centennial work, pending the outcomes of the Commission’s initial meetings.</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