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# THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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1st Quarter 2024 Update Report & Next Steps

Prepared by Mr. Bill Thomas  
Chairman, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
April 30, 2024

## **Overview**

Following is a brief overview of activity for the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership during the period of January 1 thru March 31, 2024.

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 thru March 31, 2024, along with Next Steps Planned for the 2024**

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 3/31/24, along with next steps for 2024. 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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The Route 66 Road Ahead Board of Directors met for its annual meeting on 4/4/24 in Claremont, CA. The focus of the meeting was on a strategic review of the organization's image, values, mission statement, desired outcomes, and organizational structure. As a result of discussions held, the "Road Ahead will initiate a strategic planning process designed to review and update the Road Ahead's overall strategic position.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – The Route 66 Road Ahead Executive Committee met in December 2023. Among other items, the Executive Committee reviewed a draft 2024 Road Ahead budget. The budget was then recommended to the full Board or its consideration and action. No 4<sup>th</sup> QTR meeting of the full Board was held.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The Road Ahead Board of Directors met on 8/23/23 for a full Board meeting. Minutes are available on the Road Ahead website.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Continue the strategic review process initiated during the Road Ahead's annual meeting held in Claremont, CA to reassess and refine the overall strategic position of the organization.</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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – IL confirmed Chain of Rocks will still be accessible on occasion. Gemini Giant saved due to Joliet Museum and City of Wilmington. McLean water tower saved. Another \$4m received for RT66 grants. MO official license plate hit minimum and launched. MO Centennial Commission “just talking” and has about \$900k. Working on Nat’l Register Nom for Gasconade Bridge. KS building drive-thru shield. OK awaiting state grant awards, Ribbon Road preservation effort ongoing, new office for OK Assn. TX organizing cleanup at Alanreed, Jericho. Amarillo festival growing. NM Association in conflict, motor tour canceled. AZ working on Centennial events and activities with possible monies coming back to Association. New website soon! CA Amboy re-opened from Kelbaker Rd, other bridges still out. Centennial Logos created in IL, OK, TX, NM.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – IL State Association now engaged on monthly calls; new park at Chain of Rocks is anticipating opening soon but rumor is bridge will close to all vehicular traffic, even with permission. Launching Pad in Wilmington in the news for negative owner behavior, landmark may be endangered. McLean water tower dispute ongoing, may be demolished. MO’s Gasconade Bridge now fenced off for safety. OK launched a kid’s membership in November; state grant \$6.6mil annual underway; Midpoint Corridor Xmas successful. NM published a letter and attended a rally re: not being included with state centennial commission. Tucumcari neon restoration ongoing. AZ building new website, planning own Centennial Working Group, and has had good engagement from communities; two \$10k grants awarded and Osterman Station being rebuilt after storm damage. New neon sign at the Kingman Powerhouse coming. CA had a good cleanup</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – IL Fairgrounds Experience opening went well, high attendance and good earned media. Working to raise the final \$175k needed by the end of April. Signage refresh and stencil deployment is going well. Working to get state funds designated for State Centennial Commission funds allocated and Scenic Byway designated as lead organization. Launching Roadside Attraction project similar to Oklahoma’s and update to National Register period of significance. MO now has ownership of Gasconade Bridge, working on securing the site. OK Revolving Fund approved by Governor, working on final grant timeline so applications can be submitted. Lt Gov no longer on that commission or Tourism, State has stopped printing booklet and passport. Meramec Caverns engaged for repair of Chandler barn mural. Ribbon Road meeting positive (not milling out asphalt) but still no firm course of action defined for preservation. Edward Keating Photo exhibit coming up at</p>	<p><b>The Associations would like to work on some kind of cross-country collateral that celebrates the Centennial and provides information for travelers.</b></p>

	<p>University of Tulsa and pending Motor Tour with Texas. TX has high enrollment for tour and McLean Phillips Station refresh almost completed. Alanreed Super Station is next project. Glenrio Smoke Shop about to open, no work on rest of buildings. NM neon replacement going well, lots of earned media. Russell’s Travel Stop bought by TA, museum will remain for five years. AZ had first all-community meeting in August. Route 66 Motel in Kingman sold to Catholic charities NAU hosting of teachers for “Radicalized Spaces” exhibit was well-attended. CA working on restoring Bono’s Historical Orange. Annual work party at Roadrunner planned for October. First Ave bridge in Barstow slated for demolition, new crossing to Harvey House almost complete. Improvements made at Victorville Museum.</p> <p>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.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – General agreement to share Centennial opportunities (i.e. puzzle requests, merchandise offers, etc.) to better navigate the coming influx. Also desired a rolling Centennial kickoff schedule</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – Several states are unsure of how the Road Ahead can help further their individual missions. TX feels RAP exists to benefit itself rather than the Associations. Several states feel that communication from RAP needs to be stronger re: what is being accomplished. IL concerned their Centennial Commission is not making any progress. Would like to see a presentation from the National Commission at the Annual RAP Meeting.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – Interested in some kind of eight state visitor’s guide. General concern that Road Ahead’s main mission from Anaheim launch, to assist the eight states, has been side-tracked.</p> <p>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.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – Endorsed Centennial Communication plan, Endorsed PED Grant</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No update to report</p> <p>09/30/23 Update Report – Grant information sent out via Association channels</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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<p><b>Goal 2.1 - Ensure each Route 66 State establishes a state-level Route 66 100th Anniversary Commission</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/24 - Update Report – The "industry-facing" website designed by the Route 66 Centennial Commission has been launched and is now being used by individuals and organizations to submit potential project ideas for the Centennial. Ideas submitted are forwarded for review to one of four National Working Groups established by the Centennial Commission [Events &amp; Celebrations; Promotion; Infrastructure; Commemoratives &amp; Publications]. Working Groups review submissions and then decide whether to send projects to the full Commission for its discussion/action. If approved by the full Commission, projects are then recommended to Congress as "Official Projects of the Route 66 Centennial".</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – It is anticipated that the Route 66 Centennial Commission’s “industry-facing” website designed to solicit input/ideas from State Route 66 Centennial Commissions and other state groups coordinating Centennial activities and events will be launched by the end of January. Once launched, the Road Ahead will work to ensure State Route 66 Associations and other stakeholders are aware of this opportunity to submit ideas for projects and activities that will be considered by the Federal Commission as official recommendations of the Commission to Congress.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The Route 66 Centennial Commission is launching an “industry-facing” website designed to solicit input/ideas from State Route 66 Centennial Commission and other state groups coordinating Centennial activities and events. The Commission continues to also work with tourism departments from the Route 66 states to design a coordinated promotion campaign for the Centennial. Assistance is being sought from Brand USA.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Ensure State Associations and other Route 66 stakeholders are aware of and begin using the Federal Commission’s website designed to solicit ideas for Centennial activities and projects.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – One seat remains unfilled on the Federal Route 66 Centennial Commission.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – One seat on the Federal Commission remains unfilled by the USDOT.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission now has 14 out of 15 of its membership positions filled. The USDOT has one slot it still needs to fill.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Identify key personnel in each governor's office that the Route 66 Road Ahead group can reach out 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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The AAA RoadFest has been approved an Official Route 66 Centennial Project.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – The Road Ahead’s proposal to make the AAA Route 66 RoadFest one of the Federal Commission’s officially recommended programs will be discussed and acted upon at the Commission’s 1/25/24 meeting.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission has established four National Working Groups to solicit input/ideas from state-based Route 66 Centennial Commissions and other groups planning Centennial activities. One of these is the National and Multi-State Events and Celebrations Working Group. The Road Ahead will submit a suggestion to this Working Group that the AAA Road Fest be recommended as an official Centennial Activity.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Assuming the RoadFest is approved as an official Centennial activity, reengage AAA to work with each state individually to create an experience that best supports the state.</b></p>
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**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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – An idea was discussed during the Road Ahead Annual Meeting in Claremont, CA for the organization to make its Historic Resource Specialist a paid position. The Board of Directors approved this idea, and efforts are now under way to identify sources of funding to underwrite this position.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No new work to report on Section 106 consultations.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – No new work to report on Section 106 consultations.</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – RAP Historic Resources Specialist (HRS) is available to participate in Section 106 consultations.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>The Preservation Working Group will continue to be available to assist NPS with Section 106 consultations.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The Preservation Working Group completed and submitted to the Road Ahead Chair its "Quick Reference guide for Financial Incentives" designed to assist individuals and groups involved in preservation projects with a resource to help them identify potential funding sources.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No update to report.</p>	<p><b>Post the Guide on the RAP Resources page in early 2024.</b></p>
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	<p>9/30/23 Update Report – No Update to report.</p> <p>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.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – No update to report.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No update to report.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – No Update to report</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Post the link on the RAP Resources page in early 2024.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The Preservation Working Group submitted a draft Social Media Proposal to the Road Ahead Chair.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No update to report.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – No Update to Report</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – WG discussed the need for RAP to approach use of social media as collaborative effort.</p>	<p><b>Working Group will prepare a draft proposal for discussion with RAP Executive Committee in early 2024.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 3.5 – Develop an online “Historic Preservation Toolkit for Route 66 Communities and Property Owners”</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/24 - Update Report – The goal of creating a Route 66 Historic Preservation Toolkit has been completed by the Preservation Working Group.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – No update to report.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The Route 66 Historic Preservation Toolkit has been posted on the Route 66 Road Ahead website.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>The Road Ahead will be available to assist users with the Toolkit as needed.</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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – Contact has been made with all previous members of the working group and all wish to stay on the committee; new committee members have been approached and so far, one has joined the existing group. Still working to add at least two more NEW members.</p> <p>Working DRAFT of Tool Kit was developed in late 2023; and shared with current group. Group was informed that the DRAFT will be used to move forward with a Tool Kit. The group was also made aware that efforts going forward will center around electronic dissemination and that the Tool Kit, once completed, will be housed on the Centennial website monitored by the Road Ahead Partnership.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – No Update</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – No Update</p> <p>3/31/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	<p><b>Once monthly meetings begin, the group will focus on executing the DRAFT and work to get content on the website.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 4.2 – Begin bi-monthly meetings starting in February</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/24 - Update Report – No Update</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – Bi-monthly meetings will begin in February or March of 2024, depending on availability of members.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – No Update</p> <p>6/30/23 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 to enhance and encourage greater connection to, and understanding of, the Mother Road.

GOAL	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The Research and Education Working Group added for new members: Kari Kussman and Katrina Parks, who have added lesson plans to the group's webpage. Melva Felchin of the Autry Museum [retired] and Michael Hirsch, President of the Landscaper Architecture Society also joined the Research and Education Working Group.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – The working Group has added the President of the Landscape Architecture Society to its roster.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The group has lost some members but continues to work together.</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – This group remains in place and may add new members soon.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – The 2025 Teacher’s workshop proposal has now been submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities, for July 2025, after much work by R &amp; E Working Group members Gretchen Macalister and some by David Dunaway. If this is successful, it will be repeated for 2026. The focus is on the role of women of color along Route 66.</b></p> <p><b>Distribution continues of the Research Route 66 bibliography by members Steve Mandrogoc and David Dunaway.</b></p> <p><b>Two new projects are pending: a proposed Meeting of Experts to set forth a national research agenda for Route 66, in association with the next meeting of TRA and Researching Route 66. In addition, Dr. Dunaway is attempting to raise funds from the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and the National Historic Trust to remaster and re-release the longest documentary on the Old Road, his Across the Tracks: A Route 66 Story for July 4 and November 2026. A distributor has been lined up, but funds are needed. The goal is to reach a million public radio listeners.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – The group which prepared the 2023 NEH summer Workshop, Racialized Spaces on Route 66, has drafted a new proposal for a similar workshop in the summer of 2025. This will need to be revised in the next quarter. We will add a new emphasis on Women’s History on Route 66. A further workshop is envisioned for the summer of 2026 by our WG.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The Racialized spaces of Route 66 teacher workshop (NEH) has now been completed; R &amp; E members are beginning to post results ranging from elementary to post-secondary syllabi online at the TRA site. Preliminary discussion among the four R &amp; E members is taking place about doing this project again in 2025, with an additional focus on women along 66.</p> <p>In addition, the long-awaited publication of <i>Researching Route 66</i> from the National Park Service has today been posted online. Copies are available from the NPS office. This was produced by two R &amp; E</p>	

	<p>members as an attempt to lay a solid base in scholarship for anyone interested in knowing what has been published about Route 66. Its contents are a best-available effort but of course cannot be considered definitive as there are tens of thousands of publications on Route 66. It is hoped that funds will be available to update this as needed, once additional information is available.</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – 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 because of this project will be posted at NAU and at the TRA website for all to use.</p> <p>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.</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>3/31/24 - Update Report – An encouraging update on the proposed Route 66 National Research Center was presented at the Road Ahead's Annual Meeting by Audra Bellmore, UNM, and Dave Campbell, Lobo Development Group-UNM. Interest in the Center continues to grow at UNM. In addition, the Route 66 Centennial Commission voted to make the Route 66 National Research Center an Official Route 66 Centennial Project.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – At its January 25 meeting the Federal Route 66 Centennial Commission will discuss and act on the Road Ahead’s request to designate the Route 66 National Research Center as an official Centennial project.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – Work continues rounding up Letters of Support for the proposed Route 66 National Center. Audra Bellmore, UNM point of contact, has reached out to the UNM Provost to</p>	<p><b>Advance the proposed Route 66 National Center idea through the process used by the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission to make official recommendations to Congress.</b></p>

	<p>determine where to submit the support letters. No response has been received to this inquiry yet. In the meantime, the Road Ahead is working to ensure the proposed Route 66 National Center is identified as an official recommendation by the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission. Following the Commission’s 10/26/23 meeting, the Road Ahead will submit the National Center idea to the Commission’s Commemoratives and Publications Working Group for its consideration as an official recommendation for the Commission to make to Congress. If moved forward by the Working Group, the suggestion will then be presented to the full Commission for its review/action. If approved by the full Commission, the Road Ahead will work to ensure the Route 66 National Center is included in the Commission’s Second Interim Report sent to Congress.</p> <p>6/30/23 Update Report – No Update</p>	
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**National Historic Trail Designation Task Force Report**

GOAL	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<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>3/31/24 - Update Report – It is now anticipated that language to designate Route 66 will be included in year-end legislation.</b></p> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – Pam Bowman has requested an update meeting with our point of contact in Congressman LaHood’s office regarding the status of moving National Historic Trail designation legislation through the House of Representatives. No response has been received yet.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – With ongoing assistance from Pam Bowman with the National Trust, work continues to move the National Historic Trail bill forward in Congress.</p> <p>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.</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	2024 STATUS	NEXT STEPS FOR 2024
<p><b>Goal 1 – Implement a Strategic Financial Sustainment Plan for the Road Ahead</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/24 - Update Report – The Route 66 Centennial Commission voted to make each of the following Official Route 66 Centennial Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Route 66 National Research Center</b></li> <li>• <b>AAA Route 66 RoadFest</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure the specific activities, events, projects, and programs submitted by the Road Ahead to the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission are</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Route 66 Centennial National Kick-off Event</b></li> <li>• <b>Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program</b></li> <li>• <b>Route 66 Orchestral Suite</b></li> <li>• <b>Route 66 Black Experiences Grant Program</b></li> <li>• <b>Designation of Route 66 as an Historic Civil Engineering Landmark</b></li> </ul> <p>12/31/24 Update Report – The Road Ahead has a set of 7 different proposals it has submitted to the Route 66 Centennial Commission for consideration/action to make them official Centennial activities. These include: Route 66 Research Center, AAA Route 66 RoadFest, Route 66 Centennial National Kick-off Event, Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program, Route 66 Orchestral Suite, Route 66 Black Experiences Grant Program, and the designation of Route 66 as an Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. Each of these proposals is on the Agenda for the Commission’s 1/24/24 meeting for discussion/action.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – Processes are now nearly completed for the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission to begin receiving direct input from State-based Route 66 Centennial Commissions and other Route 66 stakeholder groups regarding proposed activities, events, projects, and programs the Commission will officially recommend to Congress. Once this process is finalized, the Road Ahead will use it to begin submitting several specific activities, projects, events, and programs – for which we have been making plans for over two years. This process being used by the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission is the key for how the Road Ahead will move forward with its fundraising efforts.</p>	<p><b>designated official Commission recommendations to Congress.</b></p>
<p><b>Goal 2 – Launch the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Initiative</b></p>	<p><b>3/31/24 - Update Report – The first of two rounds of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program was conducted during 1st Quarter 2024. The following recipients were awarded grants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vida Pazarin, Victorville, CA - HD Family Events - Friday Night Route 66 Market - Purchase equipment and supplies to host a series of night markets every Friday from 5pm-9pm, starting on March 1,2024 and ending March 7, 2025. The market will be set up on a vacant lot that is on Route 66 in Victorville</b></li> <li>• <b>Sarah Ann Lesslie, Flagstaff, AZ - Cocolita Chocolate Cafe - Solve the problems caused by our used 2-door fridge which, because of its unreliability, often causes us to lose a lot of our chocolate product. two single-door fridges for our chocolate shop, Chocolita Chocolate Café, in Flagstaff, AZ</b></li> <li>• <b>Amy Stephens, Edmond, OK - Edmond History Museum - The Edmond History Museum has an identity problem: people aren't sure what's inside our large, historic armory made of stone. The museum is marked with a logo sign above the front door, which faces a street of traffic. The other three sides, which face restaurants and a park, have no signage. The recently remodeled park now has significant foot traffic, and this funding will help the museum put logo signs on the sides of the building where the most people are walking around. This should end the "I always wondered what was in that big building" musings so that they will then come inside for a visit!</b></li> <li>• <b>Cindy Miller, Amarillo, TX - Alley Katz Unique Emporium - Replace the current, wooden ramp used at our business, Alley Katz, which is heavy, not permanently installed, and a tripping hazard. It must be moved into place each time it is needed. Replace this ramp with a new one, with an</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Launch the 2024 Round of the EW program and move forward with potential sponsorship partnership with major restaurant chain.</b></p> <p><b>Continue fundraising for the EW Initiative.</b></p> <p><b>Announce launch of 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of the Route 66 Black Experiences Grant Program.</b></p>

appropriate slope in a semi-circle -thus removing the trip hazard while insuring access.

- Jenalyn Lorilla, Seligman, AZ - Nomadic Coffee Project - Build a new custom mobile Coffee Wagon designed to propel my coffee roasting business forward by marketing my product through working events along Route 66 and its communities.
- Alliessia Arnold, Seligman, AZ - Stagecoach Motel - Upgrade the property at our Stagecoach Motel by replacing the gravel in our driveway and parking lot, as well as purchasing new outdoor furniture. The new gravel will improve safety, accessibility, and overall functionality for all visitors. The new outdoor furniture will provide comfortable and functional seating for individuals to enjoy recreational activities, socialize, and connect with nature.
- Heather Arnold, Albuquerque, NM - Routes Rentals & Tours - Enhance guest experiences and accessibility at Routes Rentals & Tours, Inc by installing new rental/rate menu boards in both English and Spanish, along with a new digital menu board that will cycle through all our tour offerings.
- Flora May Cordova, Tucumcari, NM - route 66 Welcome Center & Gift Shop - Restore the neon sign atop the column outside our Route 66 Welcome Center and Gift Shop here in Tucumcari.
- Becki Colon, Holbrook, AZ - Colonel Mustard Hot Dogs - Complete needed outdoor repairs to our hotdog stand, including repairing our illuminate "Colonel Mustard" sign, flazing and sealing windows, repairing the building's rain scuppers.
- Noelle Sosaya, Albuquerque, NM - Rat House Vintage Shop - Enhance my shop by building a new counter for my register, constructing new apparel racks/shelving, and painting a new exterior sign.

12/31/24 Update Report – The second Round of the Route 66 Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant Program was completed, and grant awards announced in the 4<sup>th</sup> QTR of 2023. Grant recipients include:

- Lisa Ellis – Rigby House Café, Waynesville, Missouri for exterior enhancements including flower boxes, new café tables, and installation of custom period booths in the interior dining room.
- Dawn Federico – Blue Swallow Motel, Tucumcari, New Mexico to repair original neon signage damaged by a hailstorm at this iconic Route 66 motel property.
- Almead Stutts – Stutts House of Barbeque, Tulsa, Oklahoma to bring the restaurant up to code, by replacing an obsolete exhaust hood above the range at this BBQ restaurant located in Tulsa’s historic Greenwood District.
- Lelia Aquino – California Route 66 Museum, Victorville, California to complete construction of a 1950’s Diner exhibit to be built at the Museum.
- Deborah Kleinheider – Rosati Winery/Museum, St. James, Missouri to repair restrooms at this recently purchased winery along Route 66, as well as fund improvements needed to make the facility ADA compliant.
- Linda Teeter – Urban Art Gallery & Gift Shop, Joplin, Missouri to support “Rebranding & Rebooting” of this boutique shop along Route 66, including new signage, business cards, gift bags, and repairs to wooden flooring.
- Amalyah Munyoz – Flamenco Works, Albuquerque, New Mexico to assist this not-for-profit in creating a marketing plan and purchasing promotional materials designed to engage more youth and families in Flamenco Works’ mission.
- Katherine Reynolds – Neon Queen, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to replace neon glass bending

	<p>equipment to allow the Neon Queen business to train new neon artists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shawna Baca – “Rosie the Riveter on Route 66” Documentary Film, Encino, California to help underwrite production costs for this new documentary film telling the story of the women who worked as "Rosie the Riveters" along Route 66.</li> <li>• Haley Young – Roxy Theatre, Holbrook, Arizona to complete needed repairs to cracked cement flooring and a leaking roof at the last operating theater located on Route 66 in Arizona.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Black Experiences Grant Program was completed in December 2023. A formal announcement of grant recipients for this program will be made during 1<sup>st</sup> QTR 2024. A 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of the BEGP will be launched in 2024.</p> <p>9/30/23 Update Report – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant program was launched in 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. Grant awards will be made during 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter. In addition, a major restaurant chain has indicated interest in a potential partnership with the Road Ahead to specifically support the Extraordinary Women Micro-Grant program.</p>	

**Conclusion**

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership will continue to focus on national, “whole road” issues throughout 2024. 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