



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Route 66 Road Ahead Announces 2024 Black Experiences Grant Program Recipients

Route 66, USA – As the country prepares for historic Route 66 to celebrate its 100th year in 2026, the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership is proud to administer the *Route 66 Black Experiences Grant Program*. A total of \$45,000 is being awarded this year to 9 projects who have been awarded \$5,000 each. The 2024 recipients are Choctaw Freedman Citizenship Footprints, Inc., Black Business Alliance, Threatt Filling Station Foundation, Jack Dunham, Mary Alice Hayes, Wine Now, L.L.C., California Girls Legacy, L.L.C., Destined Joy's Kreations, Inc., and Ebony P. Wilson.

The Choctaw Freedman Citizenship Footprints, Inc., in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, will use its research/information grant to promote the organization's new "Black Experiences on Route 66" project by updating its website and supporting marketing of the organization and its projects to local churches and other organizations.

In Bloomington, Illinois, the *Black Business Alliance* will purchase new and update existing computer operating systems to assist their local Black-owned businesses.

Phase II of the *Threatt Family Farm & Filling Station* Restoration Project, in Luther, Oklahoma, will apply its grant money to the development of a Visitors Welcome & Interpretive Center at the site. The Threatt Family Farm & Filling Station is believed to be the only Black owned/operated gas station on Route 66 during the Jim Crow period.

Jack Dunham owns the *J & F Auto Detailing* shop along Route 66 in Winslow, Arizona. He plans to replace doors, upgrade lighting, and make roof repairs to what has been an auto garage for more than 50 years.

Also in Winslow, Arizona, the grant awarded to Mary Hayes will provide new signage, replace out-of-date equipment, and purchase products used at her small *Dare 2B Different* beauty salon.

Dezzarae Henderson, Wine Now, LLC, will apply her grant to replacing the air conditioning unit at the *Wine Now* wine tasting room, store, and lounge in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

California Girls Legacy LLC will assist in the revitalization of downtown San Bernardino, California, by enhancing marketing efforts, expanding inventory, and organizing/hosting community events at *Three Little Blue Birds*, a recently opened retail boutique along Route 66, which held its Grand Opening the first week of September.

Destined Joy Kreations' mission is to inspire and support youth in Chicago, Illinois, by helping them learn basic culinary skills. This grant award will be used to purchase supplies and food safety materials.

Ebony Wilson's *Jus' Jump Around, LLC* is a neighborhood initiative to fund the use of inflatables as a way of helping parents on the west-end of Springfield, Illinois. Grant funds will be used to purchase storage for the inflatable units and trailers to transport them. Every rental unit will include fun fact material about where the company originated and local Route 66 attractions customers can visit with their families.

The Road Ahead's Black Experiences Grant Program was established when American Express provided \$250,000 for direct grants to help Black-owned and/or operated businesses and attractions along Route 66. The funds also support research and programs that interpret and tell the stories of Black experiences associated with Route 66. The first two rounds of the Road Ahead's Black Experiences Grant Program were held in 2022 and 2023. In addition to this round of 2024 grants, the program will also be administered in 2025 and 2026.

The Route 66 Black Experiences Grant Program is part of the Road Ahead's 100th Anniversary of Route 66 celebration. Through the Centennial, the Road Ahead aims to help the millions of people who live, work, and travel along Route 66 with projects focused on preservation, promotion, research/education, and the economic development of Route 66.

Established in 2016, with the support of the National Park Service and the World Monuments Fund, The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership's mission is to revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national and international icon through partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research and education, and economic development.

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