

**PRESS RELEASE: March 23, 2010**

- Teresa Mitchell, Chair, National Scenic Byway Foundation, President & CEO, Great Lakes Seaway Trail, 315-646-1000 x202
- Heather Carmona, Executive Director, Woodward Avenue Action Association, 248-288-2004
- Anaise Berry, Director, Economic Development Council of Central Illinois (Illinois River Road), 309-495-5909

**Scenic Byway Foundation Taking Funding Mission on the Road to Washington**

Mahtomedi, MN -- Representatives of the National Scenic Byway Foundation will meet with federal highway and travel officials in Washington, D.C. on March 24-25 to discuss the reauthorization of the federal legislation that provides funding for the nation's byways.

The byway representatives are:

- National Scenic Byway Foundation Chairperson Teresa Mitchell, who is President & CEO of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail in New York and Pennsylvania, Sackets Harbor, NY;
- Woodward Avenue Action Association Executive Director Heather Carmona, Detroit, MI; and
- Illinois River Road Director Anaise Berry, and Illinois River Road Chairperson Brad McMillan, Peoria, IL. McMillan is also Director of the Institute of Principled Leadership and Public Policy at Bradley University and previously served as district chief of staff for now-US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood when LaHood was an Illinois Congressman.

The four byway leaders will meet with US Congressman James Oberstar (D-Minnesota), Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood; US Travel Association officials; and Federal Highway Administration officials who administer the National Scenic Byways Program.

The nonprofit National Scenic Byway Foundation was incorporated in 2003 to assist the leaders of the federally-designated and distinctive collection of 150 American roadways. Foundation programming includes education, professional and volunteer development, research, networking and communications among interest groups, government agencies, profit and nonprofit sectors, and individuals.

National Scenic Byway Foundation Chairperson Teresa Mitchell said, "The National Scenic Byway Foundation works with byway leaders to tell domestic and international travel buyers and consumers the unique stories of our treasured places and the roadways that bring you there. Projects made possible by the federal funding for byways contribute to the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational quality, and economic sustainability, of our communities and enhance their livability for travelers and residents."

In October 2009, the Federal Highway Administration announced the award of \$40,715,899 in federal Scenic Byway funding for 160 projects in 43 states.

Minnesota Congressman James L. Oberstar championed funding for byways in the original transportation enhancement legislation that created the National Scenic Byway

Program in 1991. Oberstar introduced new surface transportation reauthorization legislation on June 20, 2009.

“I am looking forward to meeting with the men and women who are promoting and enhancing our nation’s scenic byways,” said Oberstar. “Promoting these roadways ensures that more Americans can fully appreciate these historic and cultural treasures.”

Heather Carmona, Executive Director of the Woodward Avenue Action Association, Detroit, MI, said, “The federal partnership with byways helps leverage corporate support that further enhances the byway organizations’ ability to implement projects for positive return on investment to communities along urban byways such as Woodward Avenue and to the rural neighborhoods along byways throughout America.”

Illinois River Road Director Anaise Berry, Peoria, IL, said, “We believe our byways are unique American resources as valuable as national parks, forests and wildlife refuges. Byways are the ‘vehicles’ by which people from across the U.S. and travelers from around the world discover authentic American destinations and experiences. By that token, the federal funding for byways is a catalyst for the economic gains harvested from the byway organizations’ promotion and development seeding.”

The President has signed the most recent extension of funding for byways included in Public Law 111-147, the “Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act.” The legislation extends funding for surface transportation programs, including the National Scenic Byways Program, through December 31, 2010.

Learn more about the National Scenic Byway Foundation, headquartered in Mahtomedi, MN, online at [www.nsbfoundation.com](http://www.nsbfoundation.com). #

**Additional Info:**

**The Great Lakes Seaway Trail** is the 518-mile, 11-county, 86-community shoreline byway that parallels the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River and Lake Erie in New York and Pennsylvania. The route was a first-round National Scenic Byway designee (New York’s first) in 1996 and was designated for all six intrinsic resource categories: scenic, natural, recreational, historic, cultural, and archaeological. It was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1980-81. Learn more: [www.seawaytrail.com](http://www.seawaytrail.com).

**Metropolitan Detroit’s Woodward Avenue** has been dubbed the “Original Urban Byway.” The 27-mile route that begins at Woodward Avenue travels down the “main streets” of Detroit and its suburbs: Highland Park, Ferndale, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, Berkley, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township and Pontiac. This byway’s story tells a uniquely American story of the quest for economic prosperity with a special emphasis on innovation and the American automobile industry. The route was designated as Michigan’s first National Scenic Byway in 2002. Learn more: [www.woodwardavenue.org](http://www.woodwardavenue.org).

**The Illinois River Road** byway stretches 291 miles alongside the Illinois River through Central Illinois and is notable for its natural and historic qualities. The route was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2005. Its seven gateway communities include Ottawa, Princeton, East Peoria, Peoria, Pekin, Canton, and Havana with several other communities also reaping the benefits of being on the byway. Learn more: [www.illinoisriverroad.org](http://www.illinoisriverroad.org)