

## An 824-mile yard sale

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**BY JOSH JARMAN**

**THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH**

LINNVILLE, Ohio -- Bonnie Dodson said she had no more set the first of many folding tables on the front lawn of her daughter's house when a potential customer rolled to a stop along the edge of the busy highway.

"She asked if we were part of the yard sale, and I said yes, but we weren't set up yet," Dodson recalled telling the driver with out-of-county plates. "Then she asked if she could buy the table."

Chalk it up to yard-sale fever, a pandemic that is expected to spread along Rt. 40 from Baltimore, Md., to St. Louis, Mo., this weekend during the annual National Road Yard Sale Days, which began Wednesday and will last through Sunday. Billed as America's longest, the yard sale will feature individuals, businesses and even municipalities hawking their wares along the 824-mile stretch.

While sellers along the route are encouraged to put out tables from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during sale days, most places don't set out goods until Friday, with the largest sales on Saturday. But if Dodson's experience is any indication, this could be one of the sale's busiest years.

Jen Adkins, who owns the two-story, wood-frame house where family members pooled their goods, said they had only three customers on the sale's first day last year. "We had more people stop on empty tables this year than all of last year on Wednesday," Adkins said.

The 24-year-old said her family has hosted sales for the occasion since its inception four years ago. She said folks from as far away as New Jersey and Texas have stopped, the latter a couple who said they plan their vacation each year to coincide with the sale days.



ERIC ALBRECHT | DISPATCH PHOTOS



**Heidi Chism's clan made several stops for National Road Yard Sale Days in their van "Yellow Velvet" before pulling over at Jen Adkins' home in Linnville in Licking County. Randall Adkins, 3, rings a bell as he tries out the merchandise for sale. Meanwhile, his grandmother Diana Davis makes tags for more items at the home along Rt. 40.**

While she was talking, a bright yellow conversion van pulled off the road next to the house followed by a pickup truck with Florida plates. Heidi Chism stayed perched behind the wheel of the van, which bore the moniker "Yellow Velvet" in red letters, and watched her family disembark to peruse the offerings.

Chism said the clan had loaded up in Newark that morning and headed to Zanesville along Rt. 40 looking for deals. Now on the return trip, she said the family's haul so far included a cane for her grandfather and a couple of Chilton auto-repair manuals.

While the multi-state sale is known as a treasure hunter's paradise, it also offers history buffs a chance to explore one of the country's oldest interstates. Authorized by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806, the National Road opened the land west of the Appalachians to settlement, and was the nation's first federally funded highway.

A 15-minute drive from Adkins' front porch, the historic Smith House outside Zanesville remains a popular spot on the yard-sale tour. Built of quarried sandstone blocks in 1830, the house served as a tavern and stage-coach stop during the trail's pioneer heyday.

Its driveway, once the original National Road, was packed with treasure seekers Wednesday. The house is now owned by Judith Lowther, who runs an antiques parlor there and still lives in the antiquated structure.

Lowther said the weekend has become her biggest money-maker of the year.

"I put new stuff out every day," she said. "It's a good way to clean out the shop."

For by-county listings of National Road Yard Sale Days events, visit [www.ohio40.com](http://www.ohio40.com).

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## WEB EXTRA

- [Click here to watch a video from yard sales along the National Road.](#)

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