

Ticket to Write

National Road leads to bargains, history

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FILE PHOTO

Families often pool goods for the sale, like this gathering in Hebron, Ohio.



If you're looking to hit the road soon, why not consider America's oldest?

The National Road was the first federally funded highway, begun in 1811 and eventually stretching about 700 miles from Cumberland, Md., through Columbus and on to Vandalia, Ill. What's left of the road today mostly follows U.S. 40.

And next week offers a great excuse for a drive along the venerable stretch: the fifth annual National Road Yard Sale Days.

Hundreds of yard sales will be set up along the route from June 2 through June 6 in private garages, business parking lots, town parks and other venues.

The event is quite informal, said Charla Devine, who is a Licking County representative to the nonprofit Ohio National Road Association. The idea began six years ago with an antiques dealer in Dublin, Ind., Devine said.

Today, the annual event has spread (a bit spottily) along the length of the road. Hot spots in Ohio include Licking County, Muskingum County and some sites in and near Springfield, Devine said.

A 32-mile stretch - Ohio's longest - of the National Road is found in Licking County. Towns along that stretch participating in the sale include Kirkersville, Hebron, Jacksontown, Brownsville and Gratiot, Devine said.

Although the event officially runs from June 2 through June 6, Saturday, June 5, is the prime day for buying and selling.

"If you've only got one day to go, Saturday's the day to do it," Devine said.

June 5 is the only day to visit the sale at the National Road/Zane Grey Museum in Norwich in Muskingum County. On that Saturday, dozens of vendors will operate "yard sale" booths on the museum grounds, said Debbie Allender, director of the John and Annie Glenn Museum Foundation, which has just taken over management of the National Road/Zane Grey Museum from the Ohio Historical Society.

A visit to the National Road Museum fits perfectly with a visit to the yard sale, Allender said. Admission to the museum grounds and yard sale is free.

The museum itself will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will be showing off a significant face-lift including new restrooms, a new entrance, an upgraded gift shop and a renovated exhibit on Zanesville Pottery.

Among the other exhibits are a Conestoga wagon and a 130-foot diorama illustrating the building of the National Road and the flood of immigrants that passed over it to Ohio and points west.

Visitors should also consider a stop at the John and Annie Glenn Museum, 5 miles east in New Concord. Visitors to both museums will receive a discount off admission.

"With both museums, we cover more than 200 years of Ohio history," Allender said.

The museums also offer a driving tour of the National Road between New Concord and Norwich. Sites on the route include one of the road's famous "S" bridges.

"There are only a few of the 'S' bridges left," Allender said. "I'd say we have the best one. It's beautifully renovated and is surrounded by a pretty park."

Museum yard sale booths, which rent for \$10, are still available, Allender said. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the National Road/Zane Grey Museum. For more information, call 740-826-3305 or visit www.ohiohistory.org/

nationalroad.org.

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