

SPRINGFIELD NEWS-SUN



Group urges motorists to take the scenic National Road route

By [Josh Sweigart](#), Staff Writer

Updated 1:44 AM Thursday, April 7, 2011

SPRINGFIELD — There are two ways to get across Ohio: The fast way and the fun way.

That's essentially the message the Ohio National Road Association is trying to get out as they suggest motorists forego Interstate 70 for old U.S. 40.

Later this year, the group hopes to erect a kiosk at the I-70 welcome center just east of Indiana suggesting people consider the National Road.

This joins a half-completed effort to string 60 signs along the road and offer materials promoting the historic route — which for more than a century served as the fount of Springfield's prosperity.

The effort is being funded with a federal byways grant and matched by the Ohio National Road Association, a membership-driven non-profit.

"The whole purpose of the byways program is for tourism, and for scenic drives," said Springfield-Clark County Transportation Coordinating Committee Planner Louis Agresta. "The idea is to get people off I-70 and onto the National Road."

The signage project started a couple years ago and has placed 23 placards along the road so far, including at sites such as the Buena Vista Inn and Madonna of the Trail statue in Springfield.

Another marker is planned for the 117-year-old Bushnell building. And one is being printed now to put along the road in Vandalia.

A brochure was printed in October that "gives a traveler different points along the National Road that they can stop," said program coordinator Melanie Runkel.

Locally, this includes the Pennsylvania House, Crowell-Collier building, Hotel Shawnee and Melody Cruise-In. Elsewhere, it includes the site of the original Wendy's restaurants, in Columbus.

Anyone interested in a brochure can call (937) 521-2129 and have one mailed to them.

Clark County Commissioners praised the effort Tuesday as they approved more than \$300,000 in private and federal pass-through money. The county administers the money for the TCC, but the statewide effort costs the county nothing.

"The idea is to promote tourism, get people off Interstate 70 and onto Old Route 40," said Commission President John Detrick. "The impact if we can get people do this is very positive."

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