

## [Interpretative sign unveiled in Phoneton](#)



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Written by Editor

Thursday, 29 September 2011 21:04



*Dave Fisher, Dean Ringle, Linda Moroney, and Jerry Hirt unveil the new sign.*

By **CECILIA FOX**

Record Herald Writer

**PHONETON** - The Ohio National Road Association unveiled a new interpretive sign in Phoneton on Monday, September 26. The sign is the seventeenth to be installed along the Historic National Road.

“It is important to know our history and where it takes us in the future,” said Ohio National Road Association President Dean Ringle.

The new sign commemorates the history of “Phonetown,” as Phoneton was once known. The sign was installed next to the old AT&T building that gave the town its name. The building, on the corner of National Rd. and SR 202, was once a major center of communications for the region from 1893 until 1936.

“There’s a lot of stories we could tell about this old building,” said Bethel Township Trustee, Jerry Hirt. During the Flood of 1913, Dayton was underwater and power lines were out all over the area. District Telephone Chief John Bell climbed to the roof of the Dayton telephone building a managed to make a connection to the Phoneton office. For hours that makeshift connection was Dayton’s only communication to the outside world.

The unveiling drew a crowd of current and former Phoneton residents with ties to the phone company and the old building.

“We want to thank everybody for coming out. It’s good to see a lot of the old timers and share and reminisce,” said Hirt.

The sign not only commemorates Phoneton’s history, but also the Historic National Road. The construction of National Road began in 1811 in Cumberland, MD, and was the nation’s first

federally funded interstate highway. National Road played an important role in the development of this part of the state.

“The National Road has a lot of connection with the Wright Brothers. The Wright Brothers ancestors are buried right down the road here in the Phoneton cemetery. And they came here because of the National Road,” said Dave Fisher, a member of the Bethel Township Historical Society.

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