

# National Road marks 200th anniversary

Written by

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3:51 AM, May. 5, 2011|

ZANESVILLE -- Travelers marking the historical significance of the National Road stopped in Zanesville on Wednesday during their celebration of the 200th anniversary of the landmark road.

A caravan of antique vehicles stopped at the Smith House and Headley Inn on the west end of the National Road in Zanesville as one of their many stops along the way.

"The National Road opened up what was the West at the time. It made a much better trail and became a very busy highway in its day," said Elizabeth Reeb, a Muskingum County representative for the Ohio National Road Association.

To mark the groundbreaking of the National Road, the National Road Alliance organized a vintage and antique car tour that began Sunday in Vandalia, Ill. The caravan will conclude its journey May 8 in Cumberland, Md., for a weekend celebration. A set of bells gathered from each state to represent bells that oxen wore on their harnesses in the early years of the road will be presented to the city of

Cumberland.

"I think this is a great way to honor the history. This is my first road trip east on the National Road," said Belinda Roddy of Martinsville, Ill., who has been traveling with the caravan since it embarked on the trip. "I grew up on the road between the old section and the new section. So this trip means a lot to me."

By the conclusion of the bicentennial celebration tour, the caravan will have made its way through all six states where the National Road lies: Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Travelers were invited to join the caravan for sections of the National Road or for the entire trip.

Gary Kruger of Effingham, Ill., has been with the caravan since the beginning. He said he embarked on the journey with his wife, Marcie, in their wedding car, a 1934 Buick.

"It's just an enjoyable trip. I have ancestors

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who worked on the road," he said.

Members of the Ohio Nation Road Association joined forces with the National Road Alliance and National Road Associations to make the celebratory trip. The travelers will make a visit to the National Road/Zane Grey Museum this morning.

"This has been a wonderful opportunity to talk about the road," said Marian Vance, Ohio National Road board member and organizer of the event. "We call it a Sunday drive through the slow road."

The National Road was legislated in 1806 to be built as a connection from the east to the west. It opened up a road for travelers that once had to journey through wilderness. Ground was broken in Cumberland, Md., on May 7, 1811.

"It really brings in the history and the culture of our country," said Mary Truitt, president of the Illinois National Road Association. She said that the cross-state celebration tour is important to mark the historical value of the landmark road. "It's important to keep the history alive and educate people about the National Road. A lot of our culture has been passed from the east coast to the west."



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A caravan of historic vehicles makes its way down the Old National Road, west of Zanesville on Wednesday. The group was making its way from the western terminus of U.S. 40 in Vandalia, Ill., to its starting point in Cumberland, Md. / Chris Crook/Times Recorder

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For more information about the 200th anniversary of the National Road or historic destinations, visit [www.ohio-nationalroad.org](http://www.ohio-nationalroad.org).

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