

IOWA VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY

INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN



August 2017

Front cover: The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway undulates with the landscape heading west toward Montour.

Facing page: The byway offers vistas of the scenic Iowa River Valley.

IOWA VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN

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Cardinal flowers in bloom at Beautiful Plains Prairie Park in Belle Plaine.



Saint Wenceslaus Church and Cemetery along the Czech Trail.

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Courtesy of Amana Colonies Convention & Visitors Bureau



Oktoberfest celebration in Amana.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

View from East Amana cemetery



Children of the Meskwaki Nation dance at the Tribe's 100th Annual Powwow in 2014 (photo by Steven Zumwalt, FEMA)

INTRODUCTION

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway meanders 77 miles through a broad river valley flanked by a landscape of rolling hills dotted with picturesque rural communities. The byway is anchored on both ends by iconic gateway communities. At its western gateway, byway travelers pass through the Meskwaki Nation Settlement, the only tribal land in Iowa. At the eastern end, travelers experience the Amana Colonies, one of the largest and longest-lived communal societies in the country. Between these unique communities lie vibrant villages that embrace their Czech, English, and Belgian heritage.

The gateway communities are nationally recognized and, at first, seem distinctly different from each other. However, each group immigrated to Iowa seeking land and a refuge where they could freely practice their religions and lead lives without the repression of a larger society. Both groups shared the core values needed to help their way of life and identities survive the challenges of economic upheaval and sweeping social changes.

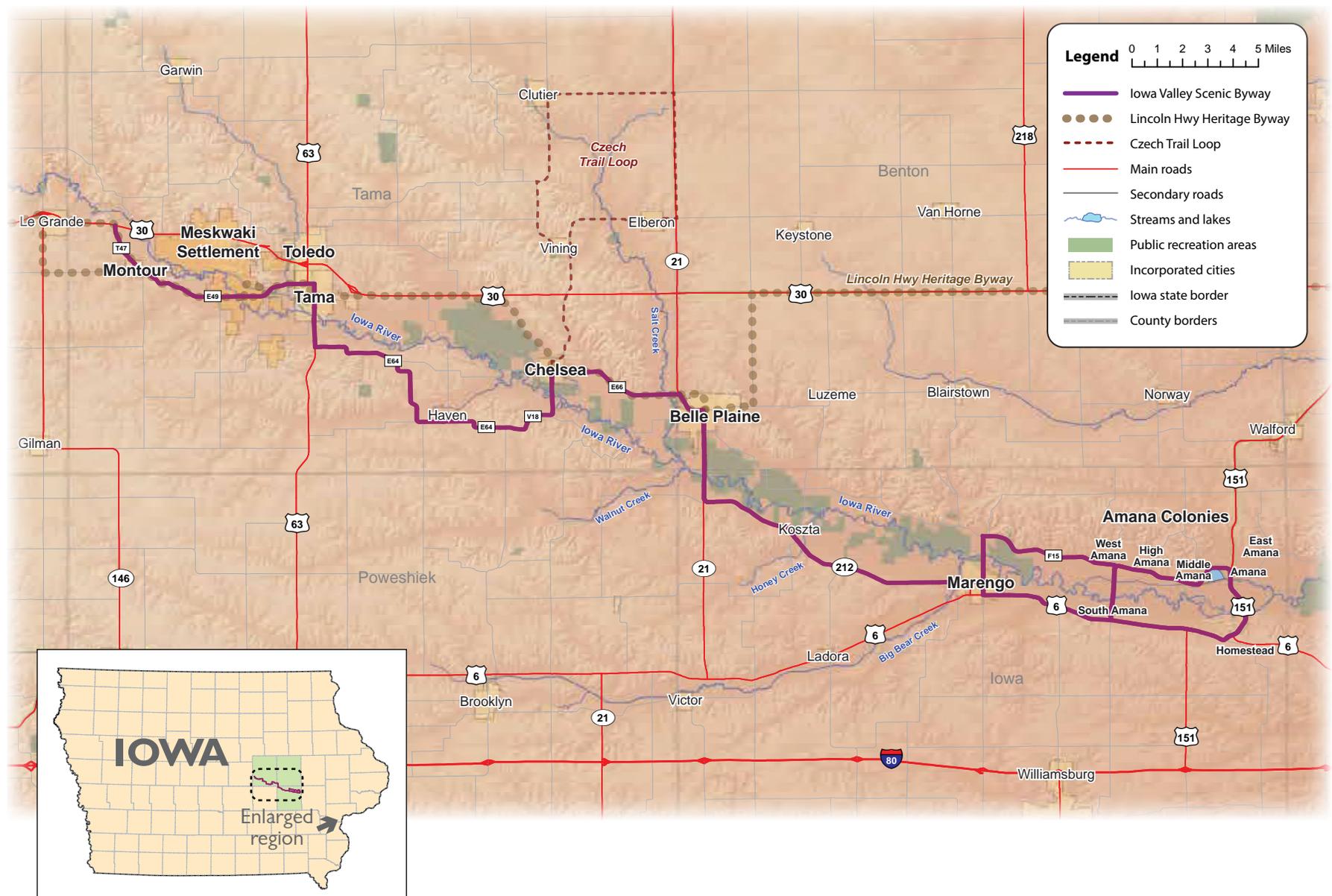
Meskwaki Nation

The Meskwaki Nation was the first tribe in North America to purchase their communal land instead of living on a federally designated reservation. In 1857, they acquired 80 acres on the Iowa River. Over the years, their holdings have expanded to 8,000 acres. A thriving economy was stimulated by a tribal casino from which profits help support efforts to educate about the rich cultural heritage of the Meskwaki Nation and to better the lives of the people.

Amana Colonies

The Amana Colonies are a major tourist destination today, but they began as a communal movement of Germans, called the Community of True Inspiration, who sought religious freedom. The utopian commune was reorganized in 1932, and today the for-profit Amana Society manages it for the good of the Amana community. The Amana Colonies were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965. The 21,000 acres of the Historic District contain almost 1,000 buildings and sites associated with the 1850s communal settlement. Visitors sometimes

IOWA VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY MAP





Belle Plaine celebrates its railroad heritage with an outdoor display.

mistakenly assume that the Amana people are Amish or Mennonite, but there are only superficial similarities and few ideological commonalities.

Connecting Communities

Nine incorporated cities, four unincorporated villages, and 21 “ghost towns” are located along the byway. Each has a story, a personality, and a sense of place. The flat river valley has traditionally provided a travel

corridor—first by river, then railroads, then highways. Iowa was the western destination for immigration by the time railroads became a driving force in settlement. Communities like Belle Plaine became major stops on the rail lines, and highways followed the railroad corridors during the Good Roads Movement in the 1920s. Other towns farther from the railroads faded away as residents moved to the booming rail towns.

Immigrants came to Iowa seeking land, freedom of religion and speech, and economic opportunity. They encouraged relatives and friends to join them. Ethnic settlements grew because people needed the support of others who spoke the same language and held similar values. As children attended public schools and interacted with other groups, the need for this support system diminished.

The acceptance of other cultures has been a tradition in the Iowa River Valley. The flat river valley provided an accessible route for travel. Even isolated immigrants buffered by river floodplains were destined to interact with increasing numbers of travelers, traders, and encroaching settlements. Eventually the cultural divides softened and the isolated groups assimilated characteristics and some shared values of the larger society.



Historic barns in Middle Amana.

But many of the core values and unique attributes of communities in the Iowa River Valley are still evident and exhibit a strong sense of place.

Iowa River

The Iowa River creates a rich, dynamic floodplain that supports fertile wetlands, wildlife, and abundant recreational opportunities. Historically, the river served as a travel corridor, a source of water for crops and industry, and continuously replenished soil in the floodplain. In recent years, the river has raged above its banks, flooding towns like Chelsea and threatening the existence of river valley communities.

After the disastrous flood of 1993, many landowners realized that agriculture could not be sustained in the floodplain along the river. A government program called the Iowa River Corridor Project was initiated to purchase land and conservation easements, converting agricultural fields to restored wetlands and forests. Today, the Iowa River Corridor Project encompasses 50,000 acres of floodplain. About 10,000 acres are protected as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

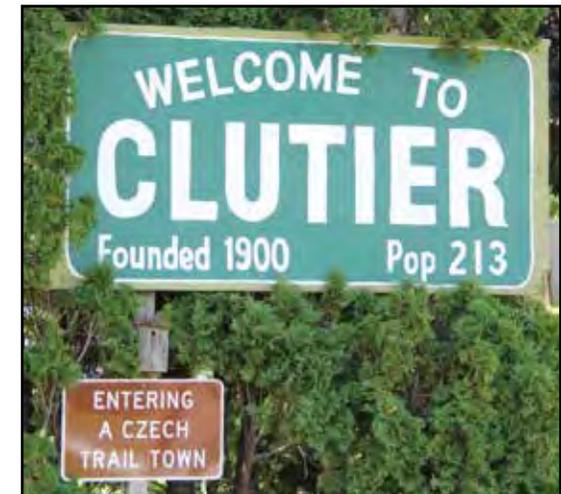
Scenic Byway Corridor

The scenic byway corridor is defined in the Corridor Management Plan, 2012, as “contiguous view shed limits between the Meskwaki Settlement and the Amanas.” It encompasses an area of approximately 300,000 acres centered on the Iowa River and the byway. The plan specifically states that the corridor boundary is not a regulatory determination and is not intended to exclude sites, organizations, or individuals from participating in planning activities related to the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.

Several other heritage corridors cross this byway and are prominently identified where they intersect the route. The nationally significant Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway shares the Iowa Valley byway route from Belle Plaine to Chelsea (5.4 miles) and from Tama to the western terminus near Montour (9.3 miles). The Czech Trail Loop begins in Chelsea and travels north to the historic Czech communities of Vining, Clutier, and Elberon in the “Bohemian Alps.” Both of these corridors have regional or national importance and must be interpreted on the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.



The Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway shares the route of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway for a total of nearly 15 miles.



Clutier is one of several small communities that are part of the Czech Trail.



These uniform Iowa Scenic Byway signs marked the byways from 1993 to 2011.

ESTABLISHING THE BYWAY

The Iowa Byways program began in 1993 when the Iowa Department of Transportation designated four routes as Iowa Scenic Byways to encourage tourism. Six additional state byways were added later. The byways are:

- Grant Wood, 1993
- River Bluffs, 1993; additional segments, 2000
- Western Skies, 1993
- Woodlands (renamed Historic Hills), 1993
- **Iowa Valley, 1998**
- Loess Hills, 1998 (designated a National Scenic Byway, 2000)
- Driftless Area, 2000
- Glacial Trail, 2000
- Delaware Crossing, 2002
- Lincoln Highway, 2006 (designated as an Iowa Heritage Byway)

Initially, uniform Iowa Scenic Byway signs were placed along these routes. However, the byways lacked local support and promotion. There was little or no information provided to tourists about what to see and do.

The Iowa Byways Sustainability Project (IBSP) began in 2008 as a response to this need. The IBSP is a collaborative effort between the Iowa Department of Transportation and Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) across Iowa to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote Iowa's scenic byways. The Iowa Valley RC&D in Amana serves as the lead entity for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. In the intervening years, much has been accomplished in this mission to interpret and promote the byways.

Three additional byways were approved in 2016:

- Bridges Byway in Madison County
- Jefferson Highway Heritage Byway
- White Pole Road Byway

SCOPE OF WORK

In January 2012, Golden Hills RC&D, based in Oakland, Iowa, was awarded a Transportation Enhancement Grant through the Iowa Department of Transportation to complete interpretive master plans for ten Iowa byways. Additional funds were awarded for the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway plan and the Western Skies Scenic Byway plan through the Iowa West Foundation.

A request for proposals was issued in early 2013, seeking interest from firms to provide professional services to develop long-range interpretive master plans for Iowa's byways. Four firms were interviewed in August 2013. In February 2014, a professional services agreement for the ten interpretive master plans was entered into between Golden Hills RC&D and Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters agreed to develop one interpretive master plan for each of the following scenic and historic Iowa Byways: Delaware Crossing, Driftless Area, Glacial Trail, Grant Wood, Historic Hills, Iowa Valley, Lincoln Highway, Loess Hills, River Bluffs, and Western Skies.

The work is divided into three phases, with Loess Hills and Western Skies completed in the first phase. Phase one interpretive master plans were delivered in 2015. Phase two includes interpretive master plans for Driftless Area, River Bluffs, Grant Wood, Delaware Crossing, and Iowa Valley scenic byways. These plans have been or will be delivered in 2016 and 2017. Phase three includes plans for Historic Hills, Glacial Trail, and Lincoln Highway scenic byways. These will be delivered in 2017.

Each interpretive master plan is based on the following tasks:

- Task 1: Inventory and Analysis of Byway Resources
- Task 2: Stakeholder Coordination and Public Input Process
- Task 3: Development of Interpretive Themes and Conceptual Interpretive Plan
- Task 4: Finalize Interpretive Plans with Recommendations and Design of Interpretive Elements
- Task 5: Reporting



The byway's western terminus at the intersection of Highway T47 and Highway 30, just north of Montour.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Interpretation is defined as a communication process that guides visitors in their search for meanings in objects, places, and landscapes. We adhere to the philosophy that interpretive planning is a process of consensus development—of achieving a shared perspective by all stakeholders of why interpretation is needed, who it will serve, and what significant stories it will tell. Effective planning answers the following questions, which can be illustrated by the Planning Triangle:

Who?

Determine who the byway visitors are and the experiences that they are seeking. This includes activities and visitor groups that are not currently being targeted.

Chapter 3: Byway Travelers

Why?

Confirm and/or further define the purpose, vision, and goals of developing a master plan for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.

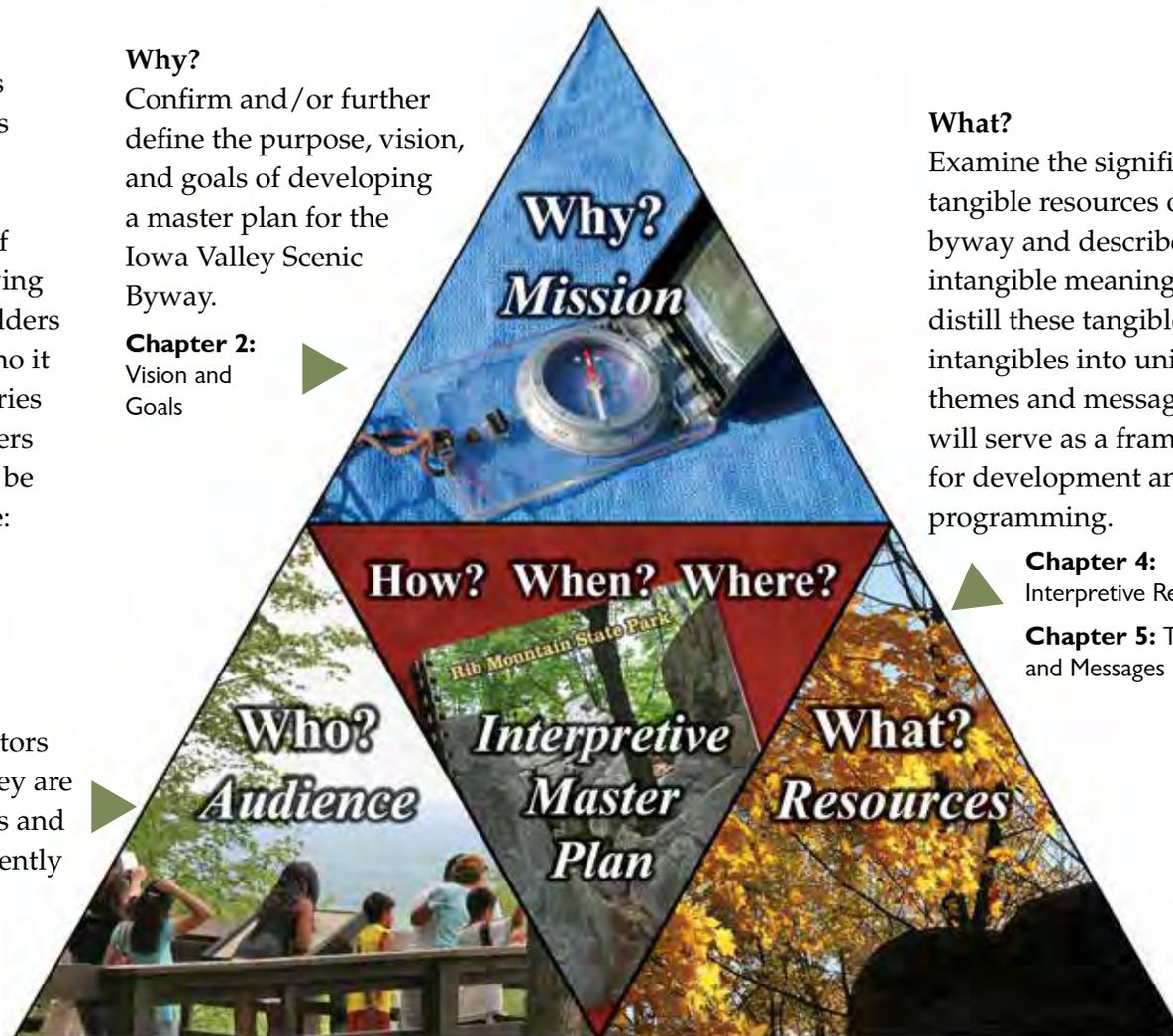
Chapter 2:
Vision and Goals

What?

Examine the significant tangible resources of the byway and describe their intangible meanings. Then, distill these tangibles and intangibles into unifying themes and messages that will serve as a framework for development and programming.

Chapter 4:
Interpretive Resources

Chapter 5: Themes and Messages



Where? When? How?

Based on the why, who, and what, develop a plan for interpretive facilities, media, and programs that best facilitate visitor-resource connections within the parameters of the mission and vision of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.

Chapter 6: Interpretive Media

REFERENCES

- ▶ *Iowa River Corridor Project: Final Comprehensive Management Plan* (2013). U.S. Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 3 (Midwest Region), Bloomington, MN.
- ▶ Pope, M., Peterson, C., Bennett, M., Haldy, L., & Hoehnle, P. (2012). *Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*. Office of the State Archaeologist. The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway curves past historic West Amana barns.

CHAPTER 2

VISION AND GOALS



Otter Creek Marsh observation platform

Photo by Carl Kurtz



A painted turtle basks in Lily Lake, Amana.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway: Vision Statement

To **promote national awareness of the extraordinary resources** of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway while **protecting its diverse cultural, historical, and scenic assets**. With the Iowa River as its ever present backdrop, the Byway is envisioned as a path that **interweaves the incomparable culture-history and complementary stories** of the Amana Colonies National Historic Landmark and the Meskwaki Nation tribal settlement with other rural ethnic enclaves within the Corridor.

Corridor Management Plan, 2012

VISION AND GOALS

A byway's vision and goals serve as an inspirational road map that describes what the byway will be and what it will achieve in the future.

The overall vision and goals for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byways were established in the Corridor Management Plan (2012). This section reviews the implications of the vision and goals for interpretive planning, and offers unique interpretive goals to guide future planning, management, and implementation.

Vision

A vision statement reflects the broad and sweeping aspirations that a community has for its byway. It embodies the values of the byway resources and its stakeholders.

The vision statement for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway was developed for the Corridor Management Plan in 2012. It is included in its entirety in the sidebar at left.

Interpretation will play a major role in achieving this vision:

"...promote national awareness of the extraordinary resources..."

One of the primary goals of interpretation is to connect the interests of visitors to the meanings of byway resources. This is accomplished most effectively when visitors are experiencing the resources on-site.

"...protecting its diverse cultural, historical, and scenic assets..."

Another major goal of interpretation is to promote responsible visitor use and support for a site. Visitors who have a connection to the resources tend to become advocates for the byway and protect the resources.

"...interweaves the incomparable culture-history and complementary stories..."

This plan presents a theme and message framework for developing interpretation that is meaningful and unified throughout the byway (Chapter 5). The primary theme (main idea for the byway) describes the interweaving cultural story and its connection to the Iowa River Valley.

Goals

Goals support the vision as ambitious, broad statements of desired conditions. The goals are meant to be translated into actions (programs and projects) that the byway organization, partners, and supporters can implement.

Byway goals were developed in conjunction with Corridor Management planning in 2012. They are included in the sidebar at right. Several of these goals directly relate to interpretation:

“5. Preserve, maintain, and interpret the resources that contribute to the intrinsic qualities...”

This plan identifies natural and cultural resources that best tell the stories of the byway (Chapter 4), and recommends interpretive methods for telling those stories (Chapter 6).

“6. Encourage authenticity and respect for the traditional communities...”

A primary goal of interpretation is to connect visitors with the meaningful authentic stories of the byway. By increasing knowledge and understanding, interpretation has been shown to strengthen respect for resources and cultures.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway: Goals

1. Promote the unparalleled story of the IVSB through its designation as a National Scenic Byway.
2. Stimulate the local economy in positive ways while preserving the quality of life for residents along the Corridor.
3. Work to strengthen nationwide awareness of the IVSB by fostering marketing efforts. [or]
4. Strengthen nationwide awareness in the IVSB by encouraging marketing strategies among local communities and partners.
5. **Preserve, maintain, and interpret the resources that contribute to the intrinsic qualities of the IVSB.**
6. **Encourage authenticity and respect for the traditional communities along IVSB.**
7. Create a framework with multiple partnerships for the future community support, enhancement, and stewardship of the IVSB.
8. **Create a unifying thematic framework for interpretation of the IVSB's intrinsic qualities**
9. **Develop wayshowing and wayfinding itineraries to strengthen the visitor experience along the IVSB.**
10. Encourage the thoughtful placement of new roadway alignments and a sensitive design of new engineering and landscape developments.
11. Preserve particularly vulnerable and high priority historic structures, sites, natural resources, and landscapes through a broad array of conservation and preservation options.

Corridor Management Plan, 2012

“8. Create a unifying thematic framework for interpretation of the IVSB’s intrinsic qualities...”

This plan develops a theme and message framework to organize and unify the stories interpreted along the byway (Chapter 5).

“9. Develop wayshowing and wayfinding itineraries to strengthen the visitor experience...”

While comprehensive byway wayfinding is beyond the scope of this plan, wayfinding is essential for successful interpretive experiences. Several wayfinding recommendations are provided in this plan (Chapter 6). These include specific media recommendations, such as experience hub kiosks, travel guides, and digital guides, along with roadside wayfinding, such as official byway and off-byway attraction direction signs.

An interpretive master plan visioning meeting was held in June 2015 at the Iowa Valley RC&D office in Amana.

Interpretive Goals

To understand the interpretive vision of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway more thoroughly, an Interpretive Master Plan Visioning Meeting was conducted on June 25, 2015 at the Iowa Valley RC&D office in Amana. Stakeholders from throughout the byway were invited to participate. Eight people attended. The complete results of the meeting are included in Appendix 1.

One of the questions asked was: **“What is your vision of success for improving the visitor experience on your scenic byway?”**

The responses to this question have been grouped into three broad interpretive goals:



Interpretive Goal 1

Develop quality interpretive media that guides visitors in their search for meaningful experiences on the byway.

Stakeholder responses related to Goal 1:

- “Visitors need the three E’s: experience, explore, enjoy”
- “Interpret more personal stories of people and how they lived and succeeded”
- “Install interpretive signs in places without focal point businesses”
- “Develop signage that visitors can read and experience”
- “Identify resources that lend themselves to panels”
- “Tell stories of the steam locomotive days and the days of early travel”
- “Document one-room schools and barns that are disappearing”
- “Keep the vibrant oral stories that will be passed on”

Goal 1 Actions:

- Secure grants and other funding sources to implement this interpretive master plan.
- Organize byway representatives to collect oral stories, historic photographs, and documentation that can be used for interpretive program development.
- Develop interpretive experiences that go beyond reading or viewing; encourage byway travelers to explore and immerse themselves in sites that bring the stories to life.



The best interpretation connects visitors with the personal stories of those who lived, worked, and played in the byway corridor. Above, Henry Muesse feeds a donkey colt in the Amana Colonies (Homestead), 1911.



With numerous highways, byways (Lincoln Highway), and driving trails (Amana Colonies Trail, Czech Trail) crisscrossing the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, wayfinding is an important part of the overall traveler experience.

Interpretive Goal 2

Enhance wayfinding to improve the visitor experience and assist travelers in finding attractions and information.

Responses related to Goal 2:

- “Visitors need to find the byway after turning off Highway 30”
- “Capture people on the Lincoln Highway”
- “Get the information out”
- “Appeal to passive and active visitors”
- “Capitalize on biking and hiking interest”
- “All attractions will have hours posted”

Goal 2 Actions:

- Secure grants and other funding sources to improve overall wayfinding along the byway.
- Implement recommendations for improving interpretive site wayfinding that are presented in this plan (Chapter 6).
- Develop a “package” of related interpretive experiences that offer multiple wayfinding methods—experience hub kiosks, digital apps, websites, information center exhibits, etc.
- Develop interpretive media that targets special interest groups, such as outdoor recreation or historic-transportation enthusiasts.

Interpretive Goal 3

Foster relationships between byway communities and local residents through participation in interpretive developments.

Responses related to Goal 3:

- “Local residents are tuned into the byway so a visitor can interact with people who are informed”
- “Help local residents take pride in the byway”
- “Foster ownership in all of the Iowa byways”
- “Cross-marketing: town residents share information about other byway attractions”
- “Cross-marketing on social media”

Goal 3 Actions:

- Partner with byway communities to create interpretive media that unifies each community’s story around common byway themes while celebrating their uniqueness.
- Develop “experience hubs” that highlight regional attractions along the byway and encourage travelers to visit multiple communities.
- Encourage community participation in the development of interpretive media.



The Meskwaki tribe is very interested in rehabilitating a historic Civilian Conservation Corps stone building and developing public interpretation. This project could be a beneficial partnership between the Meskwaki and the Iowa Byways program.

REFERENCES

- ▶ Iowa Valley Scenic Byway: Interpretive Master Plan Visioning Meeting Results. June 25, 2015. Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development. Amana, IA.
- ▶ Pope, M., Peterson, C., Bennett, M., Haldy, L., & Hoehnle, P. (2012). *Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*. Office of the State Archaeologist. The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway passes through rolling hills east of Montour.

CHAPTER 3

BYWAY TRAVELERS

Painting landscapes in the Amana Colonies





A traveler stops to observe birds along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.



The planning team views exhibits at the Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum.

BYWAY TRAVELERS

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway offers an array of cultural and natural experiences along its 77-mile route. Visitors have a unique opportunity to explore the history and life today of the Meskwaki tribe on the western end of the byway, travel through the “Bohemian Alps” where Czech immigrants settled, and discover the Amana Colonies on the eastern end, home to German immigrants who developed a communal settlement in 1855.

Visitation at Primary Attractions

During the summer of 2015, our planning team interviewed staff and volunteers who have knowledge of the visitation at several popular resources along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. This provides a snapshot of current byway travelers.

Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum

This facility interprets the rich culture of Meskwaki Settlement residents. The museum tells the story of the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa and the nearly 1,400 tribal members who own this land in Tama and Palo Alto counties.

According to the museum director, Johnathan Buffalo, about 500–800 people visit annually with a maximum of 1,000 during some years. Tour groups stop in, but visitors come primarily from the casino/hotel nearby, where a collection of artifacts are displayed.

Tama County Historical Museum and Genealogical Library

Located in Toledo, this is the historic site of the Tama County Jail. The current facility maintains remnants of jail cells and solitary confinement, along with a wealth of artifacts, exhibits, and historical records. The site is staffed by volunteers who say most of their visitors are non-locals, but they see several school groups each year too. The Historical Society oversees several other attractions, including the Log Cabin, located on-site, and Haven Country School, located west of Chelsea on Highway E64.

Pioneer Heritage Museum and Resource Library

This museum complex in Marengo consists of a Heritage Center with exhibits, a 1930 filling station, an 1861 railroad depot from Victor, and an

1861 log house and bachelor's cabin. According to the museum's attendance records, 456 people visited the museum from October 2015 to October 2016. Of those visitors, 62 percent were from within Iowa County, 22 percent were Iowa state residents from outside the county, and 16 percent were from out-of-state.

Amana Colonies

The Amana Colonies consist of the seven villages of Amana (Main Amana), South Amana, Homestead, East Amana, Middle Amana, High Amana, and West Amana. Visitors are welcomed and encouraged to discover a culture that settled the Iowa landscape 150 years ago. Shops, local artists, museums, trails, festivals, and culinary experiences provide many options for tourists. According to the Director of the Amana Colonies Convention & Visitors Bureau, David Rettig, over 30,000 people stopped at the visitors center in 2014, primarily families in the summer and retirees in the fall.

Festivals are primary attractions in the Amana Colonies that draw both locals and out-of-town visitors. The Amana Colonies Festivals Coordinator, Ellie Cutler, reported that five events were conducted in 2015:

- **Maifest:** Held at the beginning of May in Main Amana and drew about 5,000 participants
- **Wurst Festival:** Held over Father's Day weekend for the first time in 2015 and attracted about 2,000 people to Main Amana
- **Oktoberfest:** Held the first weekend of October and drew 40,000 visitors to Main Amana, in addition to activities held in all seven villages
- **Tannenbaum Forest/Prelude to Christmas:** A month-long event that attracts 16,000 people to Main Amana
- **Winterfest:** Held the third weekend in January and brings 1,000–3,000 people to the area

The director of the Amana Heritage Society, Lanny Haldy, has seen a recent increase in visitation to the Amana museums. He reports that there is a trend of more people visiting "for the right reasons," to discover more about the history and culture of the Amana Colonies, not just coming for a meal and shopping. Haldy believes the Internet helps inform visitors before they arrive at the site.



A planner interviews Tama County Historical Society volunteers at the Haven Country School near Chelsea.

Courtesy of skwagner, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Visitors celebrate Oktoberfest in Amana.



Visitors browse shops in historic Main Amana.



Iowa Valley Scenic Byway in Tama.

Travelers in East-Central Iowa

To gauge the characteristics of travelers in the state, the Iowa Tourism Office surveyed visitors at official Iowa Welcome Centers in 2016.

The Welcome Center in Wilton, about 50 miles

away from the eastern end of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, was the closest participating facility. While the survey may not convey the exact makeup of Iowa Valley byway travelers, it is well within the marketing area for the byway and serves as a broad stroke for understanding travel in the east-central region of the state. Results from the Wilton Welcome Center survey indicate the following:

Visitor Demographics

- The average age of respondents who filled out a survey was 56.7 years

- The average size of traveler groups was 2.3 people
- 70% were adults traveling with no children, and 19% were families with children under 18
- 1% were part of a group tour
- Travelers spent on average \$431 per day
- Most visitors to the Wilton Welcome Center were from Illinois (17.7%); Iowa (8.6%); Michigan (8.6%); Indiana (6.1%); and Ohio (5.2%)

Visitors' Main Areas of Interests

According to the previous 2013 Wilton Welcome Center survey, more than 45 percent of visitors listed “scenic byways” as a “main area of interest.” The most recent survey, however, simplified the question and eliminated “scenic byways” as an option. But scenic byways also serve as important portals to other attractions—the resources offered on each byway. The main areas of interest reported on the 2016 Wilton Welcome Center survey are:

- Arts, History, and Culture: 50.9%
- Scenic/Nature: 44.3%
- Outdoor Adventure: 39.2%
- Food and Drink: 33.8%

- Family Fun: 33%
- Shopping: 19%

Economic Impact of Travel, 2015

Travelers make a significant economic impact in East-Central Iowa. According to a report entitled “The Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties 2015” prepared by the U.S. Travel Association:

- Travelers spent \$81.32 million in 2015 in Iowa, Benton, and Tama Counties
- \$2.3 million in local taxes was collected
- \$11.57 million was generated in payroll for travel-related jobs, providing employment for 700 people

Target Audiences

Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted a Visioning Meeting on June 25, 2015 with Iowa Valley byway stakeholders. Participants were asked, “Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?” The following is a list of responses:

- All ages
- Those traveling off the beaten path
- Tour groups (such as railroad or Lincoln Highway enthusiasts)

According to the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2012), there is significant potential for expanding visitation related to ecotourism, agritourism, and recreation along the byway. Camping, RVing, motorcycling, bicycling, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, winter sports, birding, hunting/fishing, and other related events are niche areas that draw additional tourists to the area. In addition, wineries, breweries, culinary tours, barn tours, and barn quilt tours are generating more interest for travelers to enjoy.

Peter Hoehnle, an Amana historian and lifelong resident, reported that the

Amana Colonies would like to attract more families as well as a younger demographic in the future.

Lanny Haldy, longtime director of the Amana Heritage Society, believes that while coach tour groups are an important target group, the small groups of walk-in visitors at the site are the most effectively targeted with the Amana story due to the quality of a small-group experience. Haldy sees those visitors from out-of-state or out-of-region as being better informed about the story of the Amanas compared to regional or local residents.



Motorcyclists stop in Chelsea along the byway.

Stages of Economy Evolution

B. Joseph Pine II & James Gilmore



A young visitor enjoys a tangible experience in West Amana along the Iowa Valley byway.



Staging Experiences

In their book *The Experience Economy*, B. Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore propose that the American economy has evolved in four stages, illustrated by the following example:

“*In an agrarian economy, mothers made birthday cakes from scratch, mixing farm commodities (flour, sugar, butter, and eggs) that together cost mere dimes. As the goods-based industrial economy advanced, moms paid a dollar or two to Betty Crocker for premixed ingredients. Later, when the service economy took hold, busy parents ordered cakes from the bakery or grocery store, which, at \$10 or \$15, cost ten times as much as the packaged ingredients.*

Now, in the time-starved new millennium, parents neither make the birthday cake nor even throw the party. Instead, they spend \$100 or more to “outsource” the entire event to Chuck E. Cheese’s, the Discovery Zone, the Mining Company, or some other business that stages a memorable event for the kids, and often throw in the cake for free.

The implications of this economic progression impact Iowa River Valley travelers—if planners stage themed immersion experiences, the byway will increase in popularity and visitation.

Planners must distinguish between experiences and services. “Experiences are as different from services as services are from goods.” The idea is to intentionally use services as the stage and goods as props to engage tourists in ways that create memorable events. Goods are tangibles, services intangible, and experiences memorable. Goods and services are external to the tourist. Experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level.

Nine Keys to Staging Experiences along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway

1. **Create a rich portfolio of experiences—a series of related experiences that flow one from another.**

Develop descriptions of attractions, activities, and events that incorporate the resources of the corridor and its communities. Organize these into categories of related experiences.

For example, a birdwatching category might include Otter Creek Marsh viewing platform, Big Bend Conservation Area, Lily Lake in Amana, Tama County Nature Center programs, Sandhill Crane Festival, etc. Market the related experiences through electronic, print, and on-site interpretive media so visitors can easily choose those that provide the experiences they seek.

2. Use experience hubs in locations where people naturally congregate.

Place experience hub kiosks, interpretive panels, and website information at strategic locations and attractions on the byway where travelers can easily see them and stop to discover the local experiences that are available. Restaurants, casinos, and travel centers should be considered points of contact for prospective byway travelers.

3. Create flagship locations—places where you stage the very best, most dynamic experiences.

Develop rewarding visitor center experiences along the byway. Engaging audiovisual programs, exhibits, and quality personal services should feature the unique attractions

of the Iowa River Valley and provide orientation to the byway. The Amana Colonies Visitors Center in Main Amana is the most active information center along the byway, and would be an ideal location for interpreting the entire byway corridor.

4. Integrate physical and virtual experiences.

Use the website as an interactive venue for holistically exploring the byway and to help people plan their travel. Promote the website on all media. Develop mobile apps and other interactive multimedia/audio tours to holistically tie together the physical resources of the byway.

5. Theme the experience—the theme drives all design elements and staged events of the experience toward a unified storyline.

Use the interpretive themes developed in this plan, such as immigration and



The Amana Colonies Visitors Center is an ideal “flagship location” to initiate a dynamic tour of the Iowa Valley byway.

travel corridors, to create thematic experience packages that integrate tours (self-guided or conducted), interpretive media, special events and festivals, programs, shopping, dining, and sleeping accommodations. Feature sites that are already providing meaningful experiences related to the theme.

6. **Harmonize impressions with positive cues—impressions are the “takeaways” of the experience.**

Create a strong identity for byway communities, which may include historical murals, sculptures, and thematic kiosks. The byway audio tour could address some of the thematic messages of immigration and transportation that can be seen in unique ways in each community. The railroad, for example, created or modified every byway town in good and bad ways, so local stories of these impacts would create an intriguing link between communities.

7. **Eliminate negative cues—anything that diminishes, contradicts, or distracts from the theme.**

Each community must be committed to improving the visual character of the corridor. Enhancing wayfinding to principal attractions must be a top priority. All interpretive and wayfinding media should use unified graphics and other visual cues.

8. **Mix in memorabilia and photo opportunities.**

Certain goods have always been purchased primarily for the memories

they convey—a physical reminder of the experience.

A range of byway-related memorabilia should be sold at tourist attractions. Patches, buttons, books, local crafts, local foods, and other goods help reinforce the experience. The Amana Colonies brand the experience as “the handcrafted escape” and attempt to provide locally produced quality items. It would be desirable to develop other “takeaway memories” and photo opportunities such as high watermarks of Iowa River floods in places like Chelsea. Markets for the purchase of Meskwaki sustainable foods from Red Earth Gardens or locally produced Meskwaki crafts should be highlighted.

9. **Engage the five senses.**

Plan areas that excite the senses and create “get-out-of-the-car” activities for visitors to experience. The byway is rich with opportunities to be immersed in the resources, such as hiking trails, a nature center, scenic overlooks, fascinating museums, festivals, and historic town walking tours. A concentrated effort should be made to challenge travelers to become immersed in the historic sites and overlooks. The eagle-

shaped Otter Creek overlook, for example, invites exploration and lures travelers out of their cars to see, smell, and hear the wetlands. Additional developed overlook and wildlife viewing sites should be considered. Local restaurants offer thematic and sensual opportunities: family-style German dining in Amana, historic roadhouse diners at the Lincoln Café in Belle Plaine or the King Tower Café in Tama, and traditional cuisine at the Czech Point Restaurant & Pub in Clutier.



Attractions like the Amana Meat Market engage the five senses and offer “takeaway memories.”

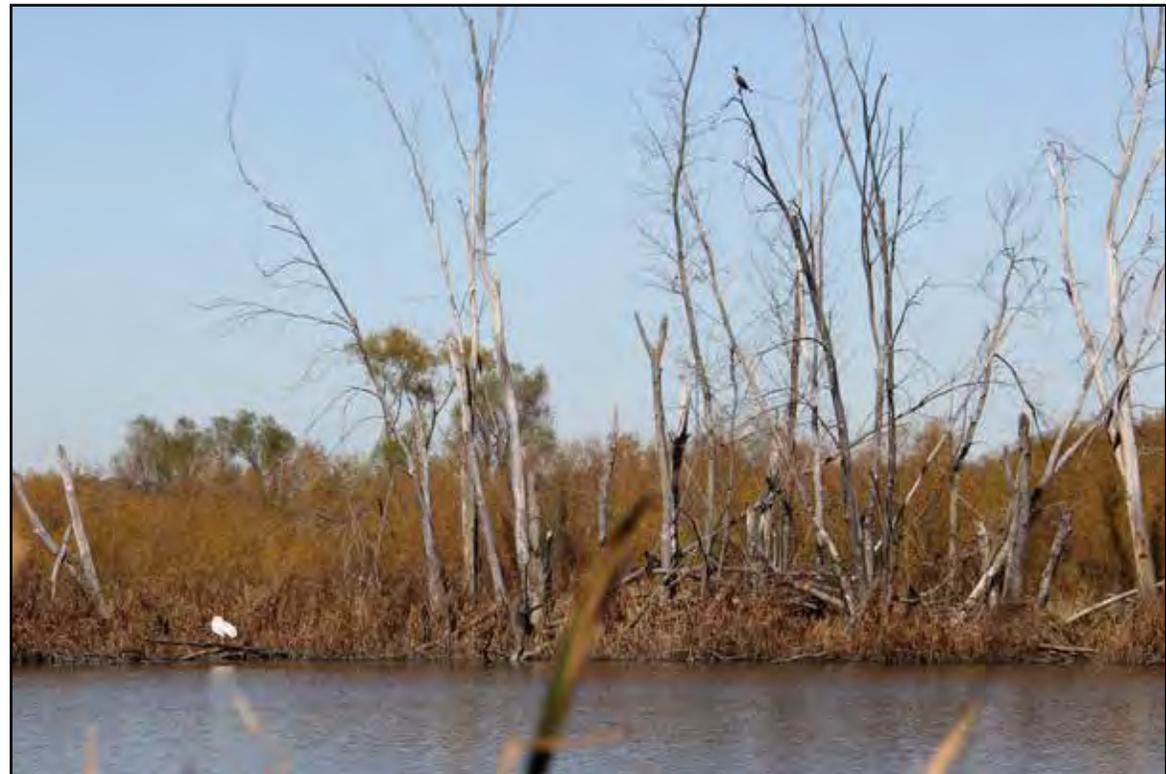
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Personal Communication (email/phone):

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- ▶ Ellie Cutler, Amana Colonies Festivals coordinator
- ▶ Lanny Haldy, director of the Amana Heritage Society
- ▶ Peter Hoehnle, Amana historian
- ▶ David Rettig, director of the Amana Colonies Convention & Visitors Bureau

A cormorant and pelican spotted in the Otter Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area.



A large pond filled with American lotus plants, with a water tower and trees in the background.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES

American lotus in Amana Lily Lake

INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES

This inventory of interpretive byway resources describes the diversity of natural and cultural attractions along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway corridor. It serves as the foundation for the development of themes and messages that link tangible resources to their intangible meanings.

The interpretive planning team conducted a visioning session on June 25, 2015 at the Iowa Valley RC&D Office in Amana. The primary local authors of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, Peter Hoehnle and Lanny Haldy, provided information. Representatives from the Iowa County Historical Society, Czech Trail, Amana Heritage Society, Belle Plaine Area Museum, and Iowa County Conservation Commission also participated. The following questions were posed:

- What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?
- What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?
- Who are key people we should interview and what are some

documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

The planning team used the results from this visioning session, supplemented by information from other publications and documents, to personally experience each byway resource. Staff and stakeholders associated with many of the resources were also interviewed.

Resource Categories

The U.S. Department of Transportation Scenic Byways Program identifies six intrinsic qualities that define and describe a scenic byway. This plan lists each core interpretive resource in these categories, combining Scenic and Natural, and Historic and Archaeological. Intrinsic quality categories are:

Scenic and Natural

Resources related to geology, nature, or overlooks with scenic views.

Historic and Archaeological

Resources with artifacts or other tangible evidence of prehistoric or historic people and events.

Cultural

Resources that provide insight into the Iowa River Valley culture and sense of place.

Recreational

Resources for camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, or paddling.

Iowa Valley Regions

This resource inventory is organized into four regions along the Iowa River, which provide travelers with opportunities to visit resources in close proximity to each other. The regions from west to east are:

- **Tama-Meskwaki Region:** Montour, Meskwaki Settlement, Tama, Toledo, Haven, Otter Creek Lake and Park
- **Czech Trail Region** (follows the Czech Trail Loop north): Chelsea, Vining, Clutier, Elberon
- **Belle Plaine-Marengo Region:** Belle Plaine, Koszta, Marengo, Ladora
- **Amana Region:** Seven villages of the Amana Colonies



Montour is the western gateway to the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.



Montour City Park

TAMA-MESKWAKI REGION

Tama County

Tama County is named in honor of Taimah, a Wisconsin Meskwaki tribal leader from the early 19th century prior to the Blackhawk War and the Meskwaki move to Iowa.

Montour

Built along the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad line in 1864, Montour was originally called Orford. In 1873, after letters were being lost due to the similarity of the name to Oxford, Iowa, the name was changed to Montour. By 1879, the town boasted a grain and livestock dealership, blacksmith shop, dry goods shop, hardware store, restaurant, drug store, bank, farm machinery dealership, and grocery store.

Today, Montour is a quiet town that anchors the west end of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, just south of Highway 30. A city park along the byway offers a shelter, picnic tables, and a children's playground for travelers.

1 First National Bank of Montour

Opened in 1904, the brick building of the First National Bank still stands as

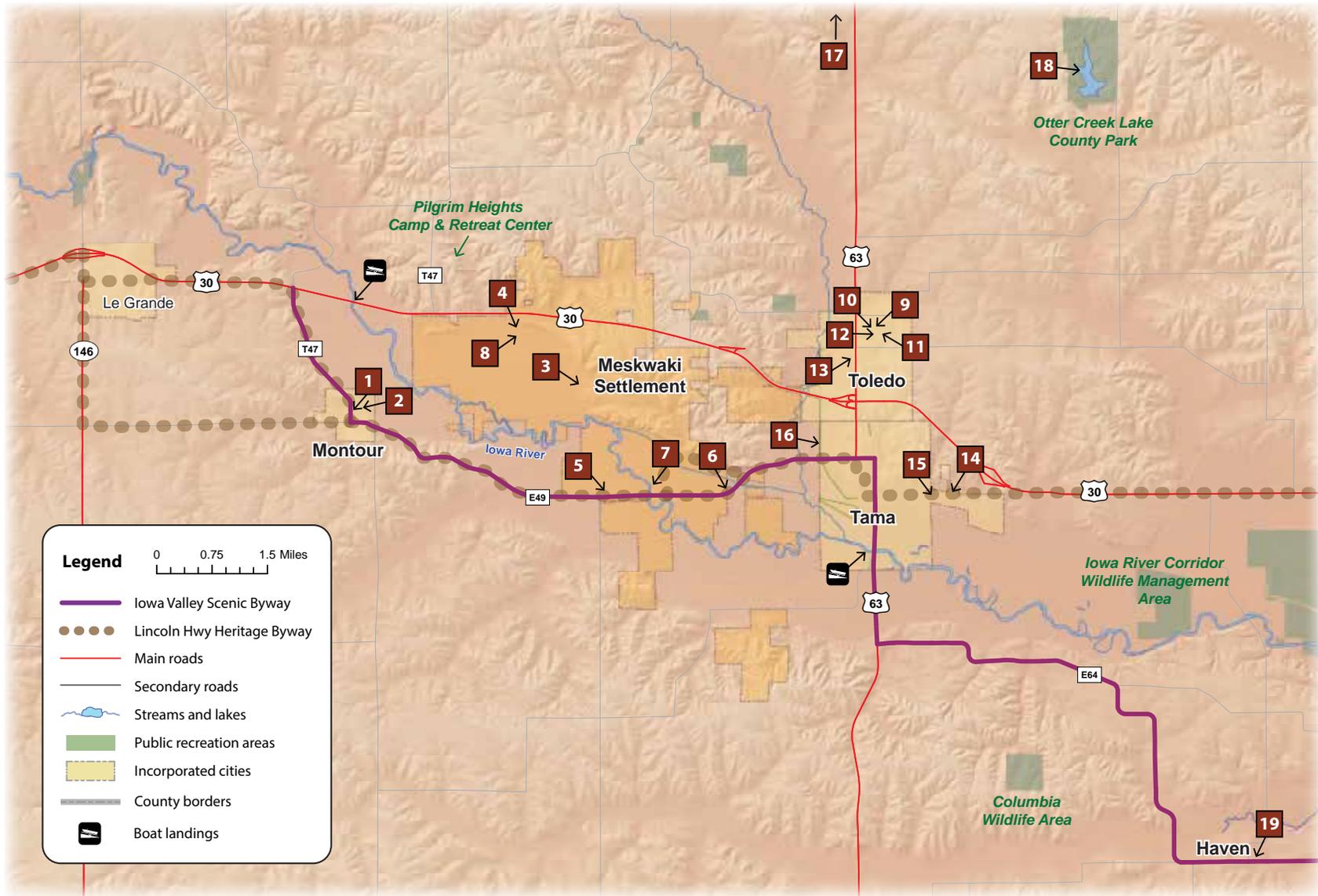


a tangible remnant of Montour's past thriving community.

2 Rube's Steakhouse

Opened by Glen Rubenbauer in 1973, this was the original "grill your own steak" restaurant. The restaurant is still open, serving local steaks from farmers within a 150-mile radius. Rube's Meat Company across the street ships fresh steaks throughout the country.





- | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1 First National Bank of Montour | 5 Meskwaki Stone House | 9 Tama County Historical Museum | 13 "Butter Cow" and Calf Statue | 17 Lincoln Land Grant Marker |
| 2 Rube's Steakhouse | 6 Wildlife Viewing Area | 10 Tama County Courthouse | 14 King Tower Cafe | 18 Otter Creek Lake County Park |
| 3 Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum | 7 Powwow Grounds | 11 Wieting Theatre | 15 Lincoln Highway Bridge | 19 Haven Country School |
| 4 Meskwaki Bingo Casino | 8 Red Earth Tribal Gardens | 12 Toledo Stoplight | 16 South Tama Recreational Trail | |



Exhibits in the casino and in the cultural center and museum tell the story of the Meskwaki tribe.

Meskwaki Settlement

The Meskwaki Nation was the first tribe in American history to purchase their own tribal land base. The initial 80 acres were purchased in 1857. The Settlement, which is held in common by all tribal members, has grown to nearly 8,000 acres. While it is not a reservation, the tribe is recognized by the United States government as a sovereign nation.

The Meskwaki have a proud history of maintaining their tribal sovereignty in the face of public and government demands for tribal removal, religious conversion, land allotments, and assimilation. The tribe is known as The Red Earth People and is legally termed by the federal government as the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa.

Cultural Landscape of the Settlement

The seemingly casual dispersal of homes and other buildings in the Meskwaki Settlement is not a random pattern. In the winter of 1901-02, a smallpox epidemic killed about 50 of the 400 tribal members. To combat the spread of disease, the federal government burned the central village and forced the Meskwaki to live in scattered home sites.



3 Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum

Operated by the Historic Preservation Department, this public tribal museum offers the tribe's perspective of Meskwaki heritage. Colorful exhibits and authentic artifacts tell the history and modern events of the tribe.



4 Meskwaki Bingo Casino and Exhibits

Gaming and live entertainment are the main draw to this 67,500-square-foot building. However, several exhibits

inside the lobby provide insight into Meskwaki culture. Just inside the front doors, prominent display cases feature clothing and crafts. A large display wall adjacent to the gaming area interprets tribal history through dramatic paintings, photographs, and artifacts.



5 Meskwaki Stone House

This significant structure was constructed as a Civilian Conservation Corps, Indian Division project in 1941 on the former route of the iconic Lincoln Highway. Its tangible but gracefully disintegrating stone walls connect viewers to the Great Depression and efforts to maintain meaningful employment among the Meskwaki during that difficult time. It was a central gathering area prior to highway rerouting and the Settlement's development toward the north. It is symbolic of the tribe's ability to cope with change.

6 Wildlife Viewing

The scenic byway along Highway E49 east of the powwow grounds skirts the edge of numerous ponds and wetland areas near the Iowa River, providing diverse wildlife viewing opportunities, including a Bald Eagle nest active in 2016.



7 Powwow Grounds

This quiet site along the Iowa River has been the home of the four-day Annual Meskwaki Powwow since 1913. The event is a social gathering that is open to the public. The colorful dancing is a central aspect of the event and draws thousands each year. This is also part of the tribe's original 80 acres.



8 Red Earth Tribal Gardens

This tribally-owned garden promotes sustainable local food production, grown without chemicals or pesticides, as a means toward healthier lifestyles in the Meskwaki community. It is a tangible outgrowth of the Food Sovereignty Movement that advocates for the right of people to eat healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced ecologically and sustainably. There have been significant efforts to maintain the genetic purity of endangered traditional tribal foods such as Tama Maize.





The 1866 Tama County Courthouse.



Numerous historic buildings grace the streets of downtown Toledo.

Toledo

Toledo has been the county seat of Tama County since 1853. During the initial meeting to organize the county seat, Adam Zehrunge, the oldest person present, was given the honor of selecting a name. He chose his former hometown of Toledo, Ohio. At one time there were over 20 towns named Toledo in the United States. A number of historic buildings stand in the downtown area around the square, including a unique historic courthouse from 1866.



9 Tama County Historical Museum and Genealogical Library

The 1870 county jail has served as the home for the Tama County museum since 1974. The museum features three floors of exhibits on community history, including the jail itself. A restored and furnished 1880s Czech log cabin has been relocated

to the grounds. It is open afternoons, five days a week. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

10 Tama County Courthouse

This impressive Romanesque Revival building was constructed in 1866. It has a belfry and unique rounded corners and sits prominently in the tree-covered town square. The clock tower is original, and the internal workings of the clock are exhibited on the second floor. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.



11 Wieting Theatre & Opera House

The two-story Colonial Revival brick opera house opened in 1912. Ella W. Wieting gifted it to the community as a memorial to her husband, C.W. Wieting,

a dentist by trade and a successful businessman. The couple lived in Toledo from 1867–1900, before moving back to New York state. The theatre served a variety of functions, including traveling shows, local school productions, political meetings, movies, and even hosted a Ku Klux Klan rally. Since 1960, the theatre has been operated by the Wieting Theatre Guild. The building underwent a major restoration from 2008-2014.



12 Toledo Stoplight 

A seemingly out-of-place red stoplight in the middle of an intersection was constructed in 1949 as the first stoplight in town. In 2011, the city voted to restore the quaint and ailing light with new LEDs. There is now a Toledo Stoplight Festival each July.



13 “Butter Cow” and Calf Statue 

This outdoor bronze statue of a cow and calf honors the late Toledo native Norma “Duffy” Lyon, who sculpted life-size cows and other icons out of butter for the Iowa State Fair from 1960 to 2005.

“Butter Cow” and Calf Statue, honoring Norma Lyon, creator of the Iowa State Fair “Butter Cows”



Tama's downtown grew along the railroad.

Tama

Tama began as a railroad town in 1862. The town was named after a well-known Meskwaki leader, Taimah, who lived prior to the tribe's settlement near present-day Tama. The name Taimah translates to "thunder."

The Lincoln Highway, the country's first transcontinental road, was selected to travel through Tama due to the existing railroad corridor, the flat topography, and the community enthusiasm for the road. Toledo, just to the north, and Tama have nearly grown together in recent years.



14 King Tower Cafe

When it opened in 1937, this truck stop was the epitome of modern travel conveniences. The two-story restaurant was air-conditioned and the truck stop had a service station and 18 overnight cabins. Today, the restaurant is a local favorite and a must-see stop for aficionados of the Lincoln Highway. Murals and other connections to the Meskwaki can be viewed inside.

15 Lincoln Highway Bridge

This 1915 concrete bridge with its architectural embellishment of "Lincoln Highway" in its cement railings immortalizes Tama's connection to the nation's first transcontinental highway. In recognition of the economic opportunities afforded by the travelers to the community, the county supervisors invested in this "expensive" bridge.





16 South Tama Recreation Trail 

A 5.6-mile biking-walking trail, surfaced with crushed stone, connects the towns of Tama and Toledo, and loops around Cherry Lake. An Iowa Valley Scenic Byway wayside exhibit, funded through a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG), is installed where the trail crosses Highway E49 near the country club. It interprets pollinators and their habitats.

17 Lincoln Land Grant Marker 

In 1852, this 40-acre parcel was granted to Abraham Lincoln for his service in the Black Hawk War. Ironically, the property is nearly adjacent to the Meskwaki Settlement, whose citizens are related to Black Hawk's people.



Otter Creek Lake County Park



18 Otter Creek Lake County Park  

This 529-acre park features a 70-acre no-wake boating lake, two-acre native prairie (never tilled), three miles of trails, camping, picnic shelters, play areas, and boat ramp. A Tama County Nature Center is perched on a hill with sweeping views of the lake. Open seasonally, it features a Riparian Diorama depicting wetland and stream habitats, a discovery wall, and exhibits about wildlife. The park is located about 6 miles northeast of Toledo.



Haven

Originally called Eureka, this small community was platted in 1854 by James Marshall. The name was changed to Haven on July 1, 1874. Today, community residents have restored the one-room schoolhouse.

19 Haven Country School

The Richland No. 5 country schoolhouse was built in 1872 and closed in 1968. It

was the last one-room school to close its doors in Tama County. When 20 elementary students were displaced by a flood in Chelsea in 2008, the school was used again for two weeks. It has been restored to a school house museum that is open by appointment.



Chelsea City Hall and Library

CZECH TRAIL REGION

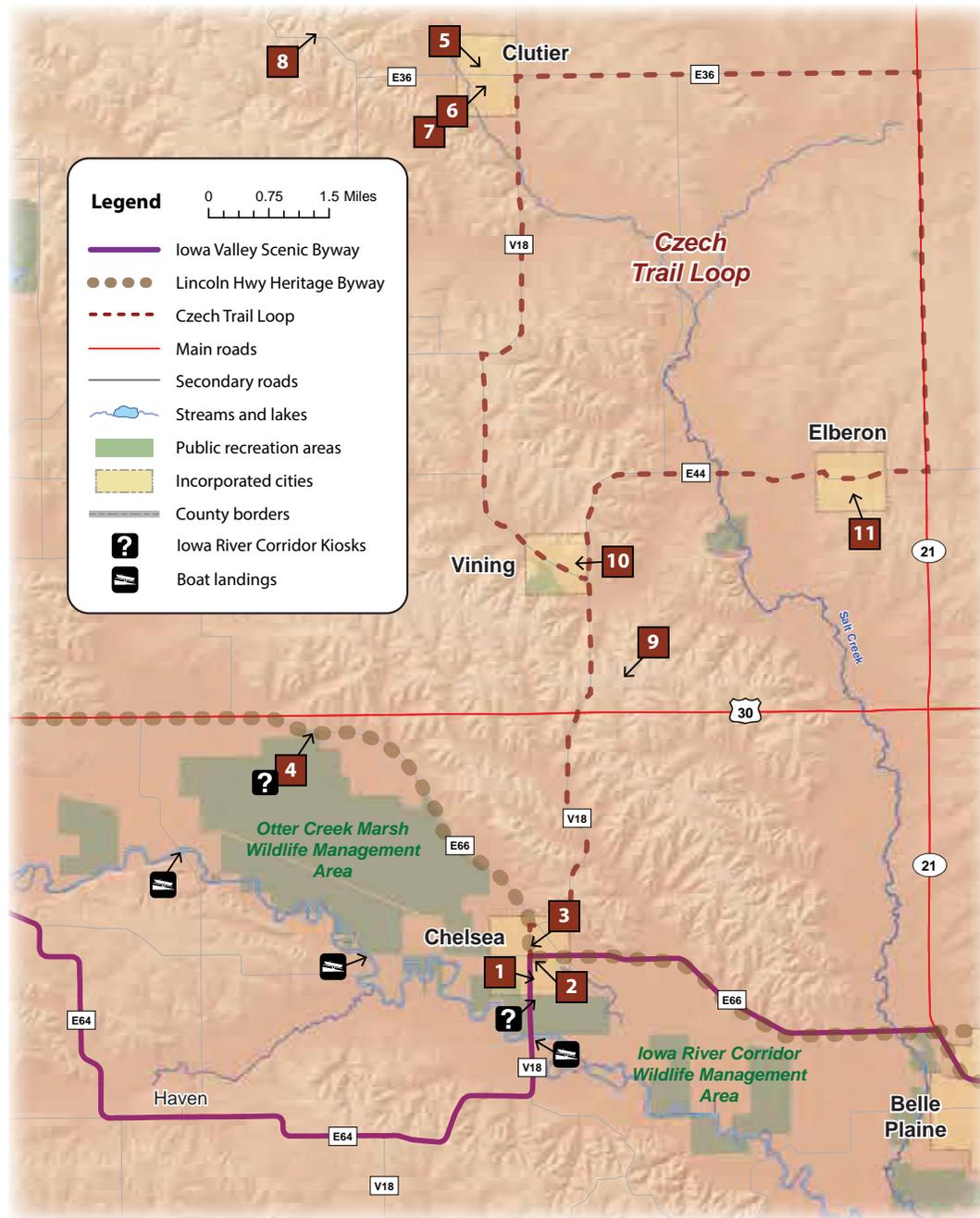
Chelsea

This site was a planned water stop station on the 1864 rail line and originally called Otter Creek Station. By 1867, the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad (later known as the Chicago and North Western Railway Co.) built the first tracks all the way across Iowa. Chelsea was on the initial route of the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast road in America.

The Iowa River has been a blessing and a curse to Chelsea, bringing the railroad and the Lincoln Highway, but also frequent floods. Chelsea's residents

have become renown for their tenacious resistance to move, despite the periodic floods that inundate the town.





- 1** St. Joseph Catholic Church
- 2** Lincoln Highway Concrete Marker
- 3** Otter Creek Bridge
- 4** Otter Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area and Viewing Platform
- 5** ZCJB Czech Museum & Meeting Hall
- 6** Clutier Museum, Bohemian Village, and Historic Town Jail
- 7** Czech Point Restaurant & Pub
- 8** Saint Wenceslaus Oratory & Cemetery
- 9** The National Cemetery
- 10** CSA Hall-Karel Jonas 279
- 11** Elberon United Methodist Church



1 St. Joseph Catholic Church

This red brick church with a soaring steeple has been a community icon since 1904.

2 Otter Creek Bridge

In 2007, this bridge over Otter Creek was rebuilt in the style of the original, which was constructed in 1929 on the old Lincoln Highway route. The original lampposts and railing styles were reused. The bridge symbolizes Chelsea's bittersweet relationship with the river.



3 Lincoln Highway Concrete Marker

Located in front of the fire station, this marker is among those placed every mile from coast to coast on the Lincoln Highway by Boy Scouts in 1928. This was to commemorate the "named" road before it became Highway 30 in the new national highway numbering system.



Otter Creek Marsh Viewing Platform



4 Otter Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area and Viewing Platform



This 3,300-acre wildlife area is open for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation in upland and bottomland forests and marshes. A dike system provides hiking opportunities. This area is part of the broader Iowa River Corridor Project (see page 65 for more information).

A unique viewing platform in the shape of a stylized eagle offers views of the floodplain habitat along the Iowa River. It features a viewing scope for wildlife observation and four panels that interpret the Iowa River Corridor history, Bird Conservation Area, marsh wildlife, and Meskwaki history. It is located northwest of Chelsea on Highway E66.

The Czech Trail

The Czech Trail is a driving tour that connects with the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway in Chelsea. It travels through an area known as the “Bohemian Alps,” a scenic rolling landscape settled by Czech immigrants. The road passes through several rural communities that celebrate their Czech heritage.

Clutier (on the Czech Trail)

Clutier was founded in 1900 by Wm. E. Brice of the Iowa, Minnesota, and Northern Railroad. It was named to honor Brice’s sister and brother-in-law, Maude and Bertram Clutier. It then became a Czech settlement town.

5 ZCJB Lodge & Czech Museum

The *Zapadni Cesko-Bratske Jednoty* Lodge, Cesti Bratri No. 104, was chartered February 16, 1901 and is the only lodge building in Iowa still tied to its original fraternal association, now known as the Western Fraternal Life Association. These fraternal organizations provided life insurance to immigrants and served a social function as well. The building has always been a gathering place for



Czech dances and community events, weddings, and anniversaries.

The second floor Czech Museum includes lodge memorabilia, photos, a complete 1940s original kitchen, and an impressive library of nearly 1,000 works written in the Czech language.



Clutier Museum & Bohemian Village



Czech Point Restaurant & Pub

6 Clutier Museum, Bohemian Village, and Historic Town Jail 

This local history museum houses exhibits and artifacts that interpret the story of the town. The Bohemian Village preserves the Carroll #8 country school and the town's historic jail. The jail has one of the two original iron cage cells remaining, which is always open to the public for photo opportunities.



7 Czech Point Restaurant & Pub 

This local gathering place is owned by longtime residents of the Dvorak family. Historic photographs of Clutier add a hometown atmosphere, while the menu includes Czech food choices like pork and dumplings, sauerkraut, and imported Czechvar Beer.

8 Saint Wenceslaus Oratory, Cemetery, and Shrines 

Saint Wenceslaus (also known as Saint Vacláv) is the patron saint of Bohemia and the Czech state. He was responsible for the construction of Bohemian churches and is recognized for his Christian deeds as a Bohemian duke in the first century. The cemetery dates to 1899, and the oratory held its first mass on Christmas Day 1900. There is a strong sense of the Czech culture at this site.



Saint Wenceslaus Oratory and Cemetery

Vining (on the Czech Trail)



Vining, located in the “Heart of the Bohemie Alps,” celebrates a history of Czech settlement at about the time that the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad was built in 1881. As the smallest community in Tama County, it is also known as “The Little Town in the Bohemian Alps.”



9 The National Cemetery

This 1930 Czechoslovakian community cemetery has a rare cast iron grand archway and entry lane lined with evergreens.

10 CSA Hall-Karel Jonas 279

Built in 1913, this hall was part of a fraternal organization known as the Czechoslovak Society of America that offered support for immigrants. Members received insurance for health and funeral expenses.



Elberon (on the Czech Trail)

Like the other towns in this region, Elberon owes its existence to the railroad. The town was surveyed in 1881 just south of the proposed Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Line. It was originally to be named Halifax,

but when President Garfield was assassinated in September 1881, the town was named in memory of Elberon, New Jersey, where the president was killed.



11 Elberon United Methodist Church

The Elberon Methodist Church was founded in 1884 by local families. The early congregation met in the school house at the west edge of the village. In 1889, work began on the construction of a church, which was dedicated in 1890.



Belle Plaine's attractive downtown reflects the rich history of the community.



The King Theater was built in 1930 and has been operated by the Mansfield family ever since.



BELLE PLAINE-MARENGO REGION

Belle Plaine

Belle Plaine is a French phrase that means “Belle of the Prairie” or “Beautiful Plain.” The area, settled in the 1840s, was originally a rich land of tall prairie grasses. The community was founded in 1862 when it was certain that the railroad would have a stop here.

Several historical events have defined the community. In 1886, a well being drilled went out of control, spouting water over 50 feet into the air and flowing for 14 months. It became known as the “Jumbo Well.” In 1894, a massive fire destroyed five blocks downtown, leading to the construction of brick structures along Main Street that still stand. In 1913, the Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental highway in the country, was routed through Belle Plaine in order to avoid the hilly “Bohemian Alps.”

Belle Plaine Audio Tour

A 20-station audio tour, accessed by cell phone, interprets the history of Belle Plaine. The tour was planned by the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway as part of a multi-community tour; the Amana Colonies

and Marengo were also participating as of 2017. Resources interpreted as part of the audio tour are marked with a .

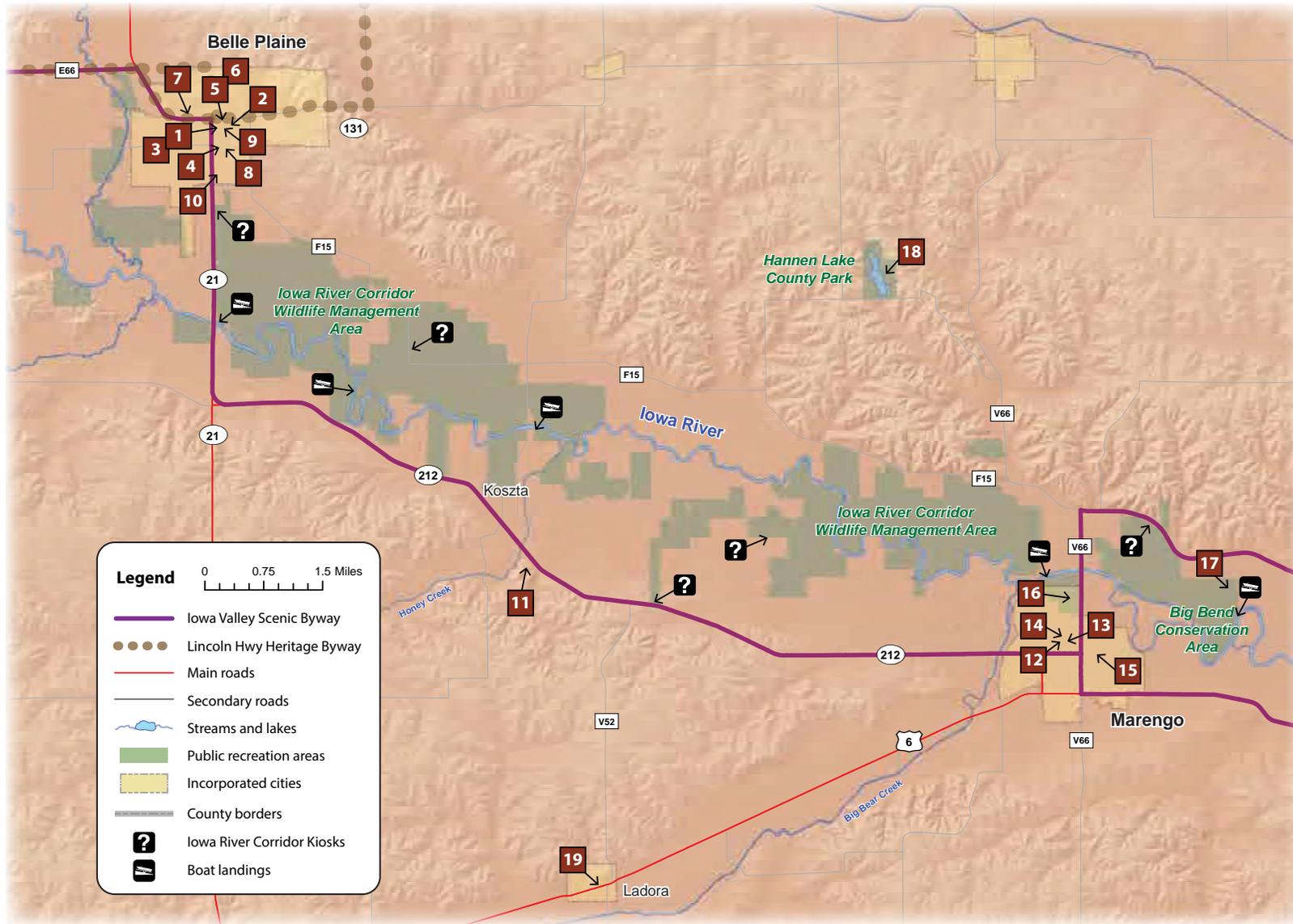
1 Main Street Historic District

Belle Plaine's downtown is recognized as a National Historic District due to its collection of beautiful buildings that document the development of the commercial district over time. A revitalization project that included facade, streetscape, and storm water improvements was completed in 2012.



2 Belle Plaine Area Museum & Legacy Mural

This local history museum tells the story of the Belle Plaine community. A 5,000-square-foot annex was constructed in 2011 and houses an exhibit on the



- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Belle Plaine Main Street Historic District | 5 Lincoln Cafe | 9 Chicago Northwestern Depot | 13 Marengo Public Library | 17 Big Bend Conservation Area |
| 2 Belle Plaine Area Museum | 6 Sankot Motor Co. Garage | 10 Beautiful Plaines Prairie Park | 14 Marengo City Park | 18 Hannen Lake County Park |
| 3 Downtown Murals | 7 Preston Station | 11 Koszta Cemetery | 15 Pioneer Heritage Museum | 19 Ladora Savings Bank |
| 4 Jumbo Artesian Well Site | 8 Frank & Katie Zalesky House | 12 Iowa County Courthouse | 16 Gateway Park & Preserve | |



Jumbo Well mural



Historic Lincoln Highway mural



Jumbo Well site marker

life of town native son and well-known philanthropist, Henry B. Tippie. The Legacy Mural on the west side of the museum is the largest brick mural in Iowa (18'x28') and depicts 150 years of history. A fountain adjacent to the museum commemorates the 1886 “Jumbo Well” event that took place several blocks away.

3 Downtown Murals  

Five wall murals on the exterior of downtown brick buildings interpret important aspects of Belle Plaine history:

1. Jumbo Well mural (10'x20')
2. Lincoln Highway mural (10'x20')
3. Railroad mural (8'x28')
4. Belle Plaine Sesquicentennial mural
5. Legacy Mural (see above)

4 Jumbo Artesian Well Site Marker  

This granite boulder and plaque document the location of the “runaway” artesian well that captivated the public’s attention in 1886 as it threatened to flood the town for 14 months. The town celebrates this event with an annual festival.



5 Lincoln Café   

The Lincoln Café is a classic 1928 highway restaurant on the nation’s first transcontinental highway located in downtown Belle Plaine. It celebrates its connection to the Lincoln Highway.



6 Sankot Motor Company Garage  

Constructed in 1914 on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway, this garage is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been owned continuously by the same family and is still in operation.



Built in 1872, this historic brick house is a connection to the region's Bohemian immigrant community. Frank Zalesky was a butcher and staunch supporter of Czech independence. He was a follower of Czech philosopher František Klácel, who was cared for by the Zaleskys in this house at the end of his life. Klácel is buried in the town's Oak Hill Cemetery.



7 Preston's Station  

A 1923 gas station on the Lincoln Highway is decorated with a covering of road signs. The old gas station was owned by George Preston, who was once interviewed by Johnny Carson on the Tonight Show. Preston died in 1993, but the station remains and has become a legendary symbol for Lincoln Highway enthusiasts.

8 Frank & Katie Zalesky House  



9 Chicago Northwestern Depot  

Constructed in 1894, this privately owned two-story depot can be viewed from the nearby Belle Plaine Area Museum railroad viewing room windows.

10 Beautiful Plains Prairie Park   

A gateway to the community, this park features a restored tall grass prairie that can be enjoyed from a picnic shelter or by walking a short interpretive trail. Vertical signs near the shelter interpret Belle Plaine's history, prairie ecology, indigenous peoples, and the Iowa Valley and Lincoln Highway scenic byways.





Today, the community of Koszta consists of a Methodist church and a few homes surrounded by agricultural fields.



Iowa County Courthouse in Marengo

Koszta/Honey Creek Township

Honey Creek Township was established in 1856. According to some accounts, the creek was named when William Taylor, a “great bee hunter,” cut a bee-tree on the bank of the creek in 1844. When the tree broke, honey and honeycombs flowed into the stream.

Samuel Huston laid out a community on Honey Creek in 1856 and named it Koszta after a Polish nobleman. He also built a bridge over the Iowa River. In its heyday, the town boasted a general store, blacksmith shop, wagon shop, grist mill, sawmill, hotel, and shoemaker’s shop.



11 Koszta Cemetery  

Included on the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway audio tour, the cemetery harbors the grave of Elizabeth Wright Heller, half-sister of architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Marengo

Marengo has served as the Iowa County seat since 1845, despite not being incorporated until 1859. The city was named after its resemblance to the plains of Marengo, Italy, where Napoleon defeated the Austrian army in 1800. Marengo’s location on the navigable Iowa River made it a profitable commercial river port in its early days.

Marengo Area Audio Tour 

A 15-station audio tour, accessed by cell phone, interprets the history of several



resources throughout Marengo, Koszta, and Ladora. The tour was planned by the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and the Iowa

County Historical Society as part of a multi-community tour. Resources on the audio tour are marked with a  .

12 Iowa County Courthouse 🏛️ 🎧

The Iowa County Courthouse, constructed in 1892, is a Romanesque Revival style of architecture with large arched windows and dramatic turrets. It is the largest building of many historic structures on Main Street. Visitors can climb the 137-foot tower to enjoy panoramic views of the community and surrounding landscape. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



13 Marengo Public Library 🏛️ 🎧

The Marengo Public Library was originally a Carnegie library constructed in 1904. Marengo is believed to be the smallest town in the United States to be awarded a Carnegie grant. The library was carefully renovated in 2007 to enlarge the building while preserving the design elements of the original structure.



14 Marengo City Park 👤 🏛️ 🎧

Located in the middle of the downtown public square, the city park has served as the core of the community since its early days. A 1915 book reported that Marengo had “one of the finest public square parks in the Middle West,” with trees planted in the 1850s and ‘60s. Today, the park features a bandstand, two shelters, a restored fountain, playgrounds, and an interpretive panel that tells the story of John Brown in Iowa and of the state’s role in the Underground Railroad Movement.

15 Pioneer Heritage Museum & Resource Library 🏛️ 🎧

Spread over half of a city block, this museum complex interprets Iowa

County history. The Heritage Center displays artifacts and dioramas of a rural schoolhouse, general store, and doctor’s office. The museum is also home to a 1930 filling station, an 1861 railroad depot from Victor, and an 1861 log house and bachelor’s cabin.





16 Gateway Park and Preserve

This 131-acre park on the south bank of the Iowa River is a reclaimed sand and gravel excavation site. It features a 41-acre lake, a 12-acre pond, a network of trails, and an arboretum that was under development in 2017. Plans include a water garden, wetlands restoration, education gardens, numerous pavilions, and a welcome center.

17 Big Bend Conservation Area

The 320-acre wildlife area, located 2 miles northeast of Marengo along the Iowa River Corridor, is open to hunting, fishing, birdwatching, and hiking. In 2016, a Conservation Innovation Grant interpretive panel was installed at the entrance to the conservation area along Highway F15.



18 Hannen Lake County Park

This 218-acre park of rolling hills, prairie, and wetlands surrounds Hannen Lake, recognized as the first artificial lake in Iowa to be constructed by the County Conservation Board system in 1960. The park features trails, campsites, a boat ramp, fishing piers, a swimming beach, and picnic shelters. It is located about 7 miles northwest of Marengo.

Ladora

Prior to the town being platted in 1867, the community applied for a U. S. Post Office on the Wilson Farm. Mrs. General Scofield, a music teacher, suggested “la, do, ra” as the town name, and it was entered in the application.

Ladora is also the birthplace of Mildred Augustine Wirt Benson, best remembered for writing 23 of the first 30 Nancy Drew

mystery books under the pen name “Carolyn Keene” from 1930-1953.

19 Ladora Savings Bank

The Ladora Savings Bank is a 1920 Neoclassical building that failed during the Great Depression. It is an unusual “jewel box bank” architectural style. It has been renovated and now serves as a restaurant called The Ladora Bank Bistro.



The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

AMANA REGION

Amana Colonies Overview

The Amana Colonies in Iowa began in the 1850s as a communal settlement of Germans, the Community of True Inspiration, who sought religious freedom in America. *Amana* is a name from the Bible, Song of Solomon 4:8, which means “remain true.”

The Great Change of 1932 ended the traditional communal society and split the Amana Society into two organizations—the non-profit Amana Church Society focuses on the spiritual needs of Inspirationist believers, while the for-profit Amana Society owns and manages the land and economic assets of the Colonies.

Visitors sometimes mistakenly assume that the Amana people are Amish or Mennonite, but there are only superficial similarities and few ideological commonalities among these groups.

This is one of the largest and long-lived communal societies in the United States. The Amana Colonies were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965. The seven historic villages are spread throughout 21,000 acres along the Iowa

River. The Amana Historic District contains nearly 1,000 buildings and sites associated with the historic commune.

Some homes within the villages are owned and occupied by non-society residents, but everyone within the Colonies must conform to land use plans that protect the cultural and historic character of the Amana Colonies. Most, but not all, residents of the villages are descendants of the original Inspirationists.



Quaint wood and sandstone buildings dominate the streetscape along 220th Trail through Main Amana.



A historic barn welcomes travelers to East Amana.



Cultural Landscape of Amana

Today, the seven Amana villages still exhibit the functional design that was needed to make each hamlet an independent communal entity. The historic bakeries, meat shops and smokehouses, communal kitchens, churches, cooperages, and blacksmith shops are repeated in each village. Some of these are open as museums, but most are now privately owned.

Farming defines the cultural landscape of the Colonies. Communal farming practices required concentrated areas of use that stand in stark contrast to typical Iowa single-family farm landscapes. Gray, naturally weathered barns of German-American design are clustered with other communal agricultural sheds

on the edges of each of the seven villages. Cattle graze the pastoral hills that surround the villages. The Amana Society owns one of the largest contiguous farms in Iowa at 26,000 acres and with a herd of 2,400 beef cattle.

Simple lumber, sandstone, and brick residences still dominate the visual character of each village. Grape

trellises cover the exteriors of many houses. The grapevines provided wine for the village vine master who cultivated and harvested them for community use. Some sidewalks still show evidence of communal activities, distinct from single-family residential traffic patterns.

Taglohner (hired hands) houses were the homes of outsiders who worked in the Colonies before The Great Change of 1932. High Amana still has some good examples of these homes that seem a little out of place among the larger communal dwellings.

The early Inspirationists planted groves of Austrian pine throughout the Colony. Some forests provided lumber for construction (Tannenwalder), while

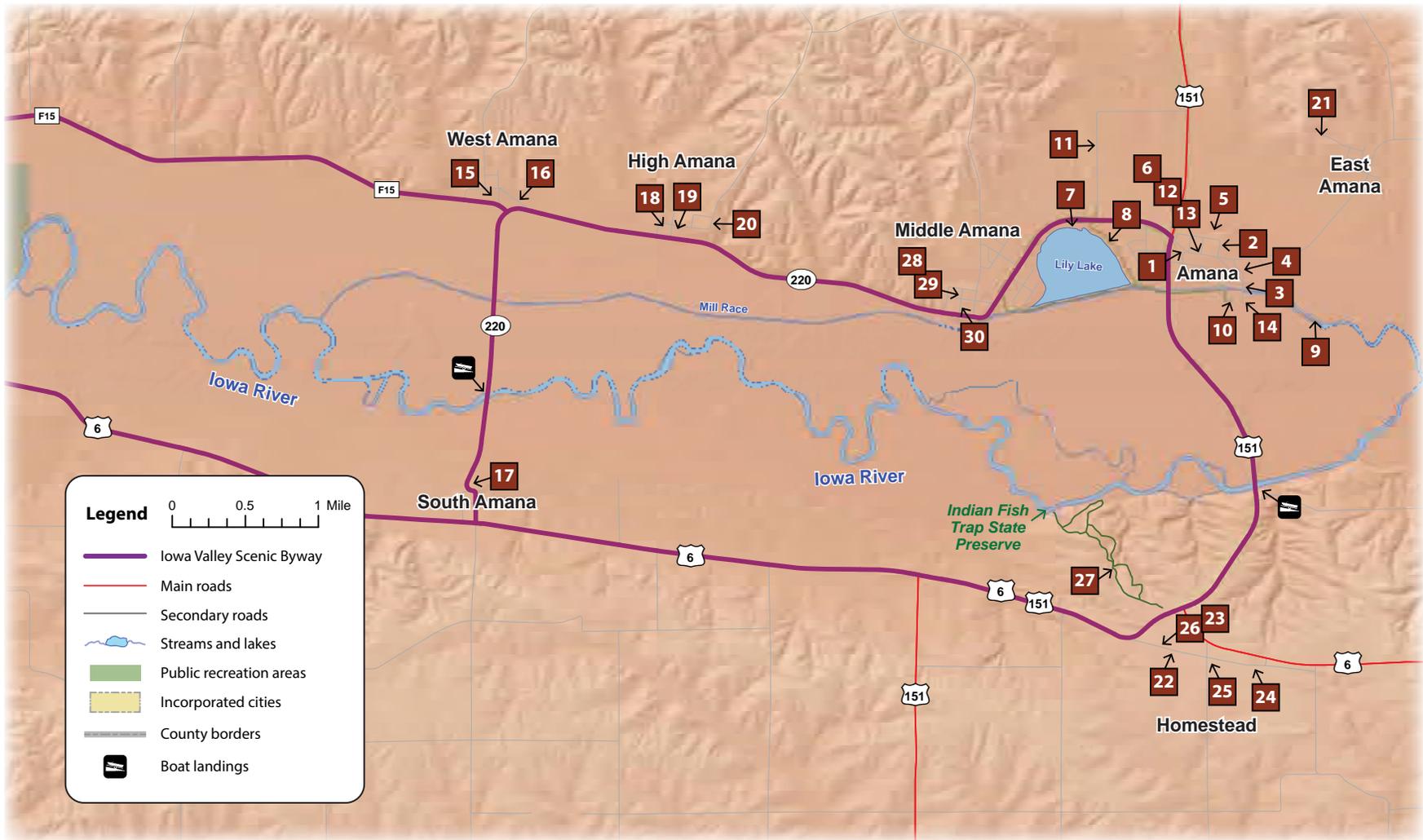
others were maintained by school children (Schulwalder).

Cemeteries in each village are enclosed by a wall of pine trees. Grave markers are simple, made of concrete with the deceased's name, date of death, and age. They are buried facing east, the direction that Inspirationists believe Christ will return from. Graves are arranged in chronological order of the death date, rather than by family, demonstrating that everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

Amana Colonies Audio Tour

A free audio tour, accessed by cell phone, interprets the history and resources of the Amana Colonies. Audio Tour signs are installed at 17 significant resources spread throughout the villages. The audio messages include music, sound effects, and narration from numerous Amana Colony residents. Resources on the audio tour are marked with a .





- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1 Amana Heritage Museum | 6 Amana General Store | 11 The Old Creamery Theatre | 16 Philip Dickel Basket Museum/
Broom and Basket Shop | 21 East Amana Cemetery | 26 Henry's Village Market |
| 2 Amana Colonies Visitors Center | 7 Lily Lake | 12 Traditional Restaurants | 17 Henry Moore's Mini-
Americana Barn Museum | 22 Amana Community Church
Museum | 27 Amana Colonies Nature Trail/
Indian Fish Trap Preserve |
| 3 Amana Woolen Mill | 8 Kolonieweg Trail | 13 Breweries and Wineries | 18 Amana Arts Guild | 23 Homestead Blacksmith Shop | 28 Communal Kitchen &
Cooper Shop Museum |
| 4 Amana Furniture Shop | 9 Mill Race | 14 Iowa Valley RC&D | 19 High Amana General Store | 24 Die Heimat Country Inn | 29 Hahn's Hearth Oven Bakery |
| 5 Amana Meat Shop | 10 Amana Train Depot | 15 Opa's Tractor Barn Museum | 20 High Amana Cemetery | 25 Zuber's Homestead Hotel | 30 Middle Amana Church |

Amana (or Main Amana)

The Village of Amana was the first village founded by the Inspirationists in 1855. Today it serves as the hub of tourist activities for the Amana Colonies.

1 Amana Heritage Museum

This museum shares the history of the Amana Colonies through exhibitions of artifacts, photos, and reconstructions. The museum also features an orientation video, store, and information. It is housed in several historic buildings: a brick 1864 communal kitchen/residence, a wash house/woodshed, and a wooden 1870 schoolhouse.



2 Amana Colonies Visitors Center

Built in a restored 1942 corn crib on the Amana farm yard, the visitors center offers traveler information year-round. The pine lumber used to build the corn crib was cut from the Schulwald (school pine grove) located west of the village. Visitors can climb to the cupola of the building for a birds-eye view of Amana. Walking and van tours of the village leave from here.

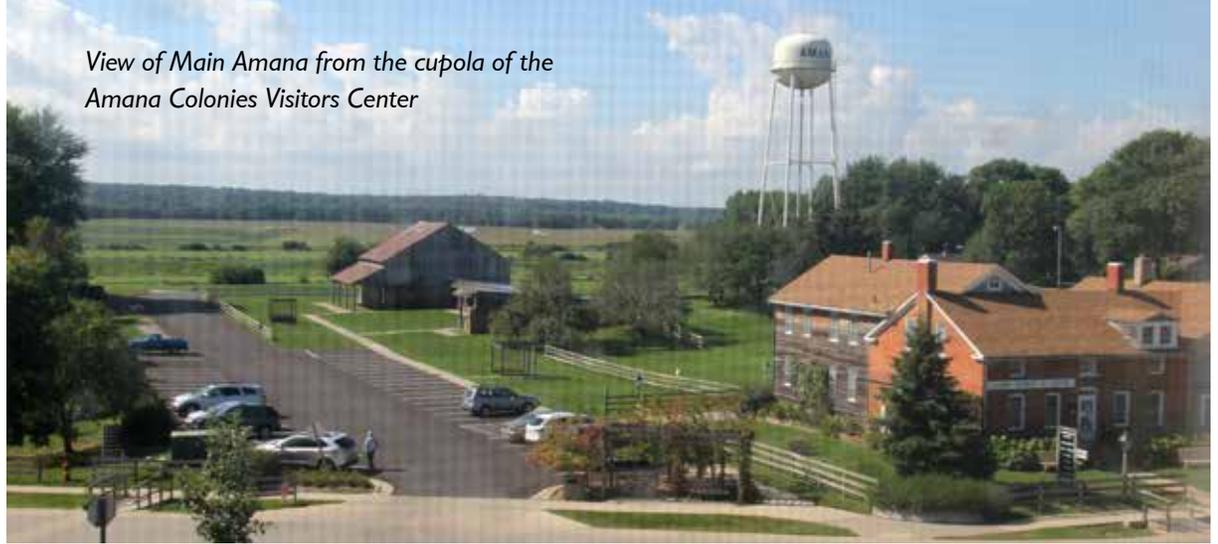


3 Amana Woolen Mill

The Amana Woolen Mill, built in 1857, dominated life in the Colonies for many years. The chugging of machinery could be heard throughout the village, and over 3,000 sheep were raised near East Amana. By 1890, the woolen mills were manufacturing 3,000 yards of blankets and fabric daily, and additional wool had to be imported. Today, the Woolen Mill still produces handcrafted products.



View of Main Amana from the cupola of the Amana Colonies Visitors Center





4 **Amana Furniture Shop**   

Built in 1861, this building was originally part of the Amana Calico Print Mills. At the height of its production in the 1890s, the mill encompassed eight buildings and produced 4,500 yards of printed calico cloth daily. The mills operated until the 1910s, when dye from Germany became hard to acquire. In 1917, two of the buildings were converted to a cabinet shop. Today, the Amana Furniture Shop still features handcrafted furniture and clocks for sale. A viewing gallery with interpretive panels allows visitors to observe craftsmen working.



5 **Amana Meat Shop & Smokehouse**  

Each Amana village had its own facility, identified by a distinctive three-story smoking tower, that provided meat to the community kitchens. Butchering

normally took place in the cool fall and winter months and meats were preserved by smoking them. The central stone building of the Amana Meat Shop was built in 1865. Today, it continues to sell a variety of meat products based on traditional recipes.



6 **Amana General Store**  

The Colonies' general stores provided families with necessities they couldn't produce themselves. Built in 1858, this sandstone and frame building served as a general store on the first floor and a residence on the second until 1932. The Amana Society's Corporate Headquarters was located in the frame portion until 1972. Today, the store continues to offer unique merchandise.

7 Mill Race  

This seven-mile-long canal was excavated through Amana property from 1865 to 1869. The Iowa River was dammed upstream and the water diverted to the canal to power the water wheels and drive shafts of two woolen mills and a grist mill. Electric generators replaced the water power in the 1920s, but the mill race remains as a tangible symbol of the past.



Mill Race near the Amana Woolen Mill

8 Lily Lake  

In 1880, Lily Lake was created by a break in the Mill Race and a subsequent flooding of an existing slough. The shallow lake is popular due to the thousands of American lotus flowers that cover its surface in summer. Lotus blossoms were sold to tourists. In earlier times, the roots were eaten as a traditional food by the Meskwaki Tribe who frequently visited and traded here. The lake served as a source of ice for the Amana colonies and provided recreational opportunities.

**9 Kolonieweg Trail** 

The Kolonieweg (Colony Way) is a 3.2-mile long asphalt walking and biking trail that travels along the Mill Race, circles Lily Lake, and connects Amana and Middle Amana. It was built in 1998 by the Amana Colonies Trail, Inc.

**10 Amana Train Depot**   

The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad built this depot in 1883, an important gateway for shipping wool, calico fabric, and other goods. Restored in 2001, the depot now serves as the trailhead for the Kolonieweg Trail, with parking and seasonal restrooms.





Tourists have always enjoyed hearty “family style” meals in the Amana Colonies. Several restaurants in Amana are located in historic community kitchen buildings, celebrating the communal lifestyle of the Inspirationists.

The Ox Yoke Inn, founded in 1940, and Ronneburg Restaurant, founded in 1950, are two examples that keep this tradition alive.

11 The Old Creamery Theatre 

This professional non-profit theatre company was founded in 1971 in an old creamery building in Garrison, Iowa. In 1988, the company moved to a new Main Stage facility that seats over 300 people just outside of Amana. It is the oldest professional theatre company in Iowa.

12 Traditional Restaurants  



13 Breweries and Wineries 

Beer and wine were traditional in this German community. **Millstream Brewing Company**, the first micro-brewery in Iowa, was founded in 1985. Tours are available as well as a tasting area and sales outlet. Several wineries have also made their home in Amana. The **Ackerman Winery** is the oldest operating winery in the state of Iowa, started in 1956.

14 Iowa Valley RC&D 

Located in Amana, the Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) is a nonprofit organization that helps communities protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, while stimulating economic development. The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway is coordinated through the RC&D.



Millstream Brewing Company, the first micro-brewery in Iowa



Ackerman Winery, the oldest operating winery in Iowa



Iowa Valley RC&D office

West Amana

The second village established by the Inspirationists was West Amana in 1856. Many of the buildings are built of local sandstone. The wood-framed wagon shop and blacksmith shop are still intact with original equipment.

15 Opa's Tractor Barn Museum

Located in West Amana's 1883 horse barn, this museum displays vintage tractors, farm machinery, and agricultural artifacts used in the Amana Colonies.



Opa's Tractor Barn Museum, housed in West Amana's 1883 horse barn

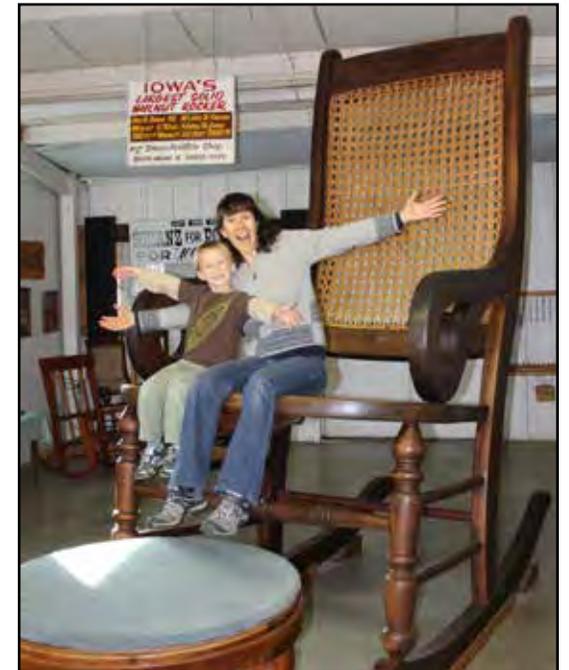
16 Philip Dickel Basket Museum/ Broom and Basket Shop

The museum features a changing exhibit of handmade baskets from around the country. The shop sells handmade

brooms created on a "kicker" broom winding machine and locally made baskets. Inspirationists brought willows for basket-making from Germany and planted willow fields.



An adjacent building houses Iowa's largest solid walnut rocking chair, weighing in at 670 pounds. This was handcrafted by the Schanz Furniture Shop in South Amana. The building also features numerous hands-on entertaining contraptions, including instruments and a golf ball run.



Iowa's largest solid walnut rocker, located at the Broom and Basket Shop

South Amana

South Amana was third village to be settled by the Inspirationists in 1856. It is located on the south side of the Iowa River.



17 Henry Moore's Mini-Americana Barn Museum



This museum displays the largest collection of miniature replicas built by a single person, Henry Moore (1911-1983). It features over 200 buildings representing the history of rural America with incredible attention to detail. The museum is housed in South Amana's horse barn, which was rebuilt in 1913 after it was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

High Amana

In 1857, High Amana was the fourth village established. The first sawmill in the Colonies was constructed here, which helped build structures in all the villages. The audio tour describes the importance of agriculture.

18 Amana Arts Guild

The Arts Guild is housed in the 1858 High Amana Meeting House, or church, built of sandstone. It serves as a public art gallery and sales outlet. Workshops are offered in various art and craft mediums. Several other buildings surround the church, including the wooden 1858 village school, an 1879 wash house, and a traditional Amana garden.

19 High Amana General Store



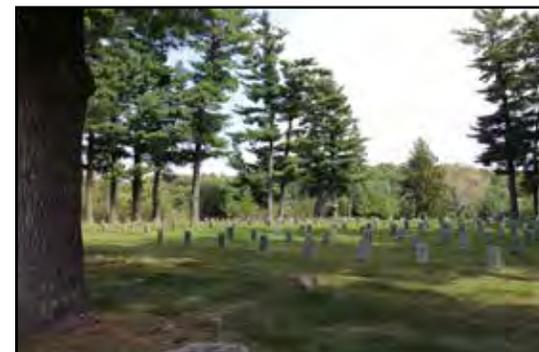
High Amana Meeting House/Amana Arts Guild (right) and school (left)



This building has operated as a general store since 1857. Much of the interior has been preserved, including a pressed metal ceiling, wooden floor, long sales counter, and glass-topped display cases.

20 High Amana Cemetery

The cemetery in High Amana is in a beautiful setting surrounded by large pine trees. It is accessible from G Street and 16th Avenue.



East Amana

In 1859, East Amana was the fifth and smallest village to be settled. It is located on a hill overlooking the countryside, and was originally a sheep herding outpost. Today, it is entirely residential, but it still preserves a former carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, and sheep barns from 1881.



21 East Amana Cemetery

The East Amana Cemetery offers breathtaking views of the rolling landscape, fields, and cattle that surround the Amana Colonies. It is accessible at the western terminus of C Street.



22 Amana Community Church Museum

This is the best place to visit an Amana Meeting House (church). Guides interpret Amana religious beliefs and the architecture of this brick 1865 structure. It is open May through October.

Homestead

Unlike the other villages, Homestead is the only community that existed as a town prior to the creation of the Amana Colonies. It was purchased by the Society in 1860 when the Rock Island Railroad was planned to pass through it, making it the sixth village to be established. The rail service was important to the Colonies for conducting commercial business like the woolen mill that required the import of raw wool and the export of products.



23 Homestead Blacksmith Shop

The original village blacksmith shop and forge serves as a museum for the demonstration of “smithing” techniques, historic printing, and bookbinding practices. During the communal years each village had a blacksmith shop. It is open Saturdays, May through September.



24 Die Heimat Country Inn

Built in 1856, this was the original stagecoach stop and railroad inn for travelers visiting Homestead. It also served as a communal kitchen. Today, the

inn continues its original function as a 16-room bed and breakfast.



25 Zuber's Homestead Hotel  

This hotel was built in 1862 to serve travelers arriving by stage and railroad. In 1949, William Henry Zuber, a pitcher in the American League from 1936 to 1947, purchased the building and ran it as a popular restaurant. Today, it is again a 15-room bed and breakfast style hotel.

26 Henry's Village Market  

The Homestead Meat Shop and Smokehouse was built around 1868. Today it operates as Henry's Village Market, a small grocery featuring local products, which is open limited hours.



Trailhead of the Amana Colonies Nature Trail, just north of Homestead.

27 Amana Colonies Nature Trail/
Indian Fish Trap State Preserve  

The nature trail consists of a series of trail loops between Homestead and the Iowa River, with the longest 3.5 miles. The trail once led to a fish weir in the Iowa River likely built by Meskwaki Indians. The V-shaped rocks funneled fish for harvesting. It was designated an archaeological state preserve and is on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the weir has not been visible since 1999 and is likely buried in silt. Three Early Woodland burial mounds are located along the trail nearby.

Middle Amana

Middle Amana, founded in 1862, was the last of the seven villages to be settled. It was originally known as “Amana at the Corner” due to its location at a bend in the road. The Colonies’ second woolen mill was built here and operated until the late 1930s.

28 Communal Kitchen & Cooper Shop Museum

The historic communal kitchen has been preserved since its closing in 1932. Built in 1863, the Ruedy Kitchen is the only intact communal kitchen still remaining in the Colonies. More than 50 kitchens like this once served the Amana Colonies. It is interpreted by guides on most summer days and weekends from May to October.

The Cooper Shop was built in 1863. During the communal days, craftsmen created barrels and tubs from wood and iron to hold flour, wine, milk, and other liquids for the Amana Colonies. The museum exhibits tools and products of the barrel-makers.



29 Hahn’s Hearth Oven Bakery

Each Amana village once had a bakery that supplied bread to every kitchen on a daily basis. This 1864 bakery is the last open hearth bakery remaining in the Amana Colonies. Many of the recipes are of German origins, including German black bread and pastries.



30 Middle Amana Church

The Middle Amana Church, or meeting house, was built in 1863 and has served continuously as a church. Services for the approximately 300 present-day members of the Amana Church Society are held here, and the building houses the Society’s offices and library.

IOWA RIVER CORRIDOR

Iowa River Corridor Project

The Iowa River Corridor Project is an innovative program created after the disastrous floods of 1993 caused massive damage to farm fields in the Iowa River floodplain. The program is an effort by federal and state agencies to work with nonprofit organizations and landowners to restore flood-prone croplands back into productive wetlands.

The project area encompasses about 50,000 acres of Iowa River floodplain, following 45 miles of the river from the city of Tama to the Amana Colonies. About 10,000 acres are currently owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge and are open for public recreation. This land is managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Another 12,000 acres are protected through private Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Easements.

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway parallels the edge of the project area for much of its route, crossing through it near Tama, Chelsea, Belle Plaine, Marengo, and the Amana Colonies. Although portions of these lands are open to many types

of outdoor recreation, they are geared more toward hunters, anglers, and adventurous hikers and birdwatchers. The rustic parking lots and lack of facilities tend to limit use by most casual byway travelers.

A few sites, such as the Otter Creek Marsh viewing platform, offer

comfortable experiences for more casual travelers. Proposed development is suggested at some additional sites to provide more access, such as an overlook area along Highway 212. See page 128 for more information.



View of the Iowa River Corridor Project from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service parking area along Highway 212.



*Highway 212 Overlook
USFWS single kiosk*

Several kiosks installed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service feature maps and interpret the Iowa River Corridor Project. See the map on the next page for locations. Four of these are located on the byway route and can serve as an orientation to the Iowa River and its resources for byway travelers.

1. Marengo Kiosk: Located on the byway northeast of Marengo on County F15. This double kiosk interprets watersheds, pollinators, the Iowa River Corridor Bird Conservation Area, and invasive species.

2. Highway 212 Overlook Kiosk: Located on the byway on the north side of Highway 212 between Marengo and

Belle Plaine. Perched on a ridge, this site offers one of the best views of the Iowa River Valley. The single kiosk interprets prescribed fires and Barn Owls.

3. Belle Plaine Kiosk: Located on the byway just south of Belle Plaine on Highway 21. This double kiosk interprets wild rivers, reclaiming the floodplain, sandhill cranes, and the Bird Conservation Area.

4. Chelsea Kiosk: Located on the byway just south of Chelsea on T Avenue. The single kiosk interprets different types of wetlands and river otters.

In addition, two other remote kiosks are located within the Iowa River Corridor Project itself, providing a true immersion into the restored wetland habitat:

5. I Avenue Kiosk: Located west of Marengo and east of the Highway 212 Overlook. The single kiosk interprets several birds of the Iowa River Corridor and describes the floodplain story.

6. DD Avenue Kiosk: Located southeast of Belle Plaine on the north side of the

river. The single kiosk interprets the floodplain story of the region, along with amphibians and reptiles.

The **Otter Creek Wildlife Viewing Platform** north of Chelsea, owned by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, has four additional panels that interpret the Iowa River Corridor history, Bird Conservation Area, marsh wildlife, and Meskwaki history.

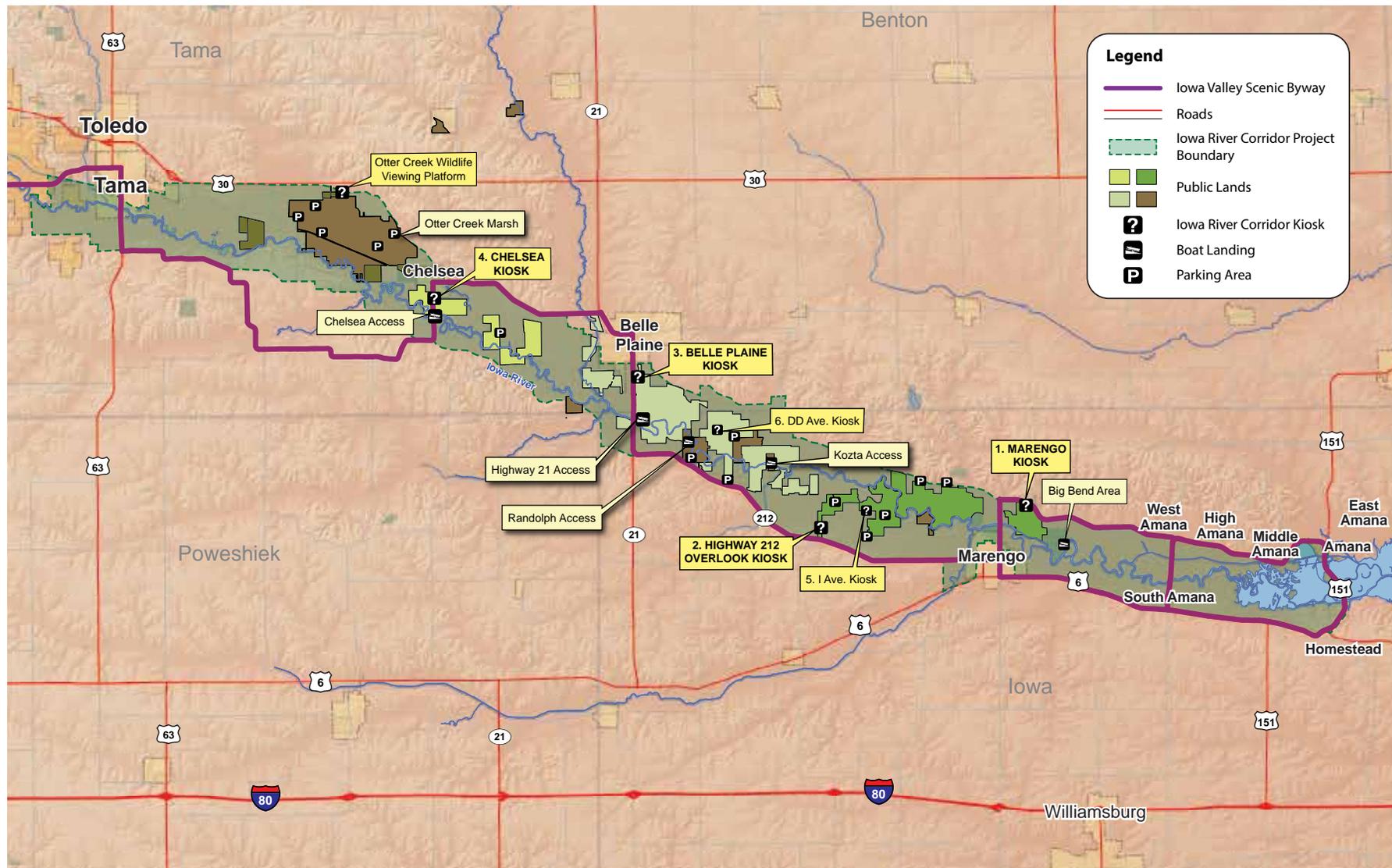


Belle Plaine USFWS double kiosk, Highway 21



Otter Creek Wildlife Viewing Platform (4 panels)

IOWA RIVER CORRIDOR PROJECT: PUBLIC LANDS MAP



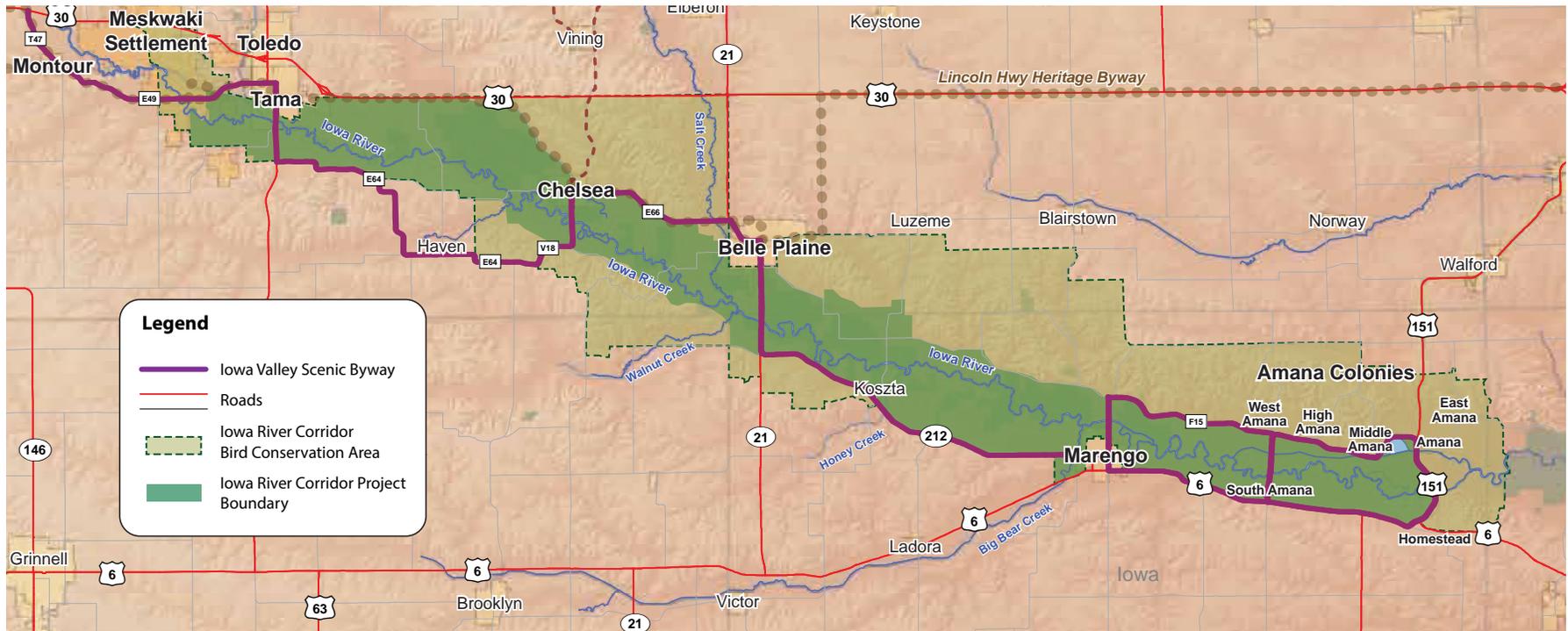


Bald Eagles nesting along the byway on Meskwaki Settlement lands, included in the BCA.

Iowa River Corridor Bird Conservation Area

In 2004, the Iowa River Corridor Bird Conservation Area (BCA) of 133,475 acres was established to protect key bird breeding habitat along the river. At its core are the protected lands of the Iowa River Corridor Project. The BCA provides habitat for 68 of Iowa's 85 "Bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need," those birds that are declining or at risk. These birds include Bald Eagles, Red-

headed Woodpeckers, Sandhill Cranes, Solitary Sandpipers, American Bitterns, Least Bitterns, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Loggerhead Shrikes, and Red-shouldered Hawks. Due to its national importance as a nesting and migratory rest area, this area is also designated as a globally recognized Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Audubon Society.



Iowa River Valley Water Trail

Sponsored by the Iowa Valley RC&D, the nearly 90-mile water trail is a paddling tour of the Iowa River as it winds through Tama, Benton, Iowa, and Johnson counties. Much of the route is natural, traveling through the restored public lands of the Iowa River Corridor Project. It provides ample wildlife watching opportunities. About a dozen boat launches are conveniently located

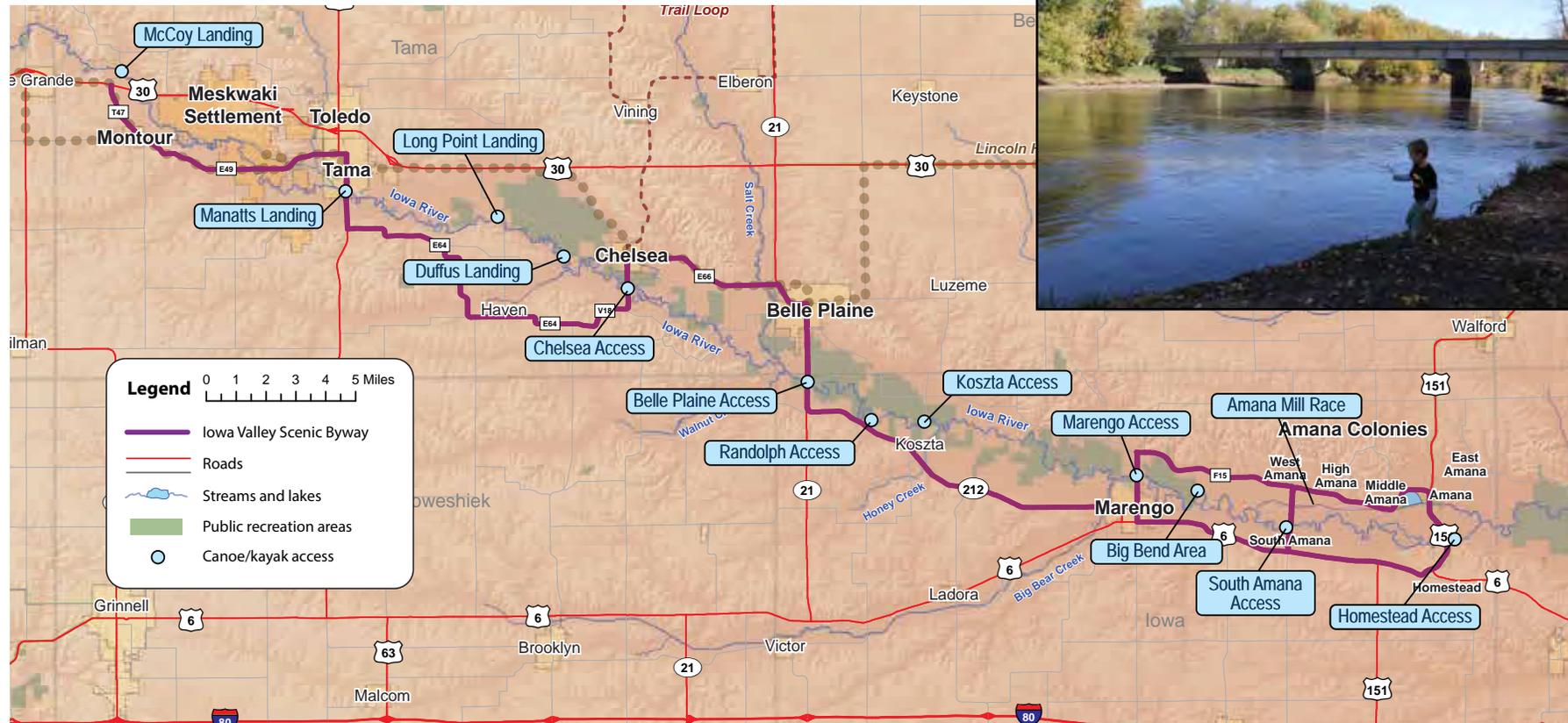
along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, which provide access to the river for sightseeing, wildlife watching, fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

From Montour to Koszta, the river is designated as “non-meandered,” meaning users must stay on or in the water since the stream banks are private property. From Koszta to the Mississippi,

the river is designated as “meandered,” allowing users to access the stream banks.

Many of these boat landings are located at prominent river views and bridges on the byway, making them potential sites for interpretive media.

Manatt’s Landing, just south of Tama.



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CHAPTER 5

THEMES AND MESSAGES

Iowa River from a boat landing near Chelsea

Photo courtesy of Iowa Valley RC&D



Blazing star wildflowers fill a railroad prairie along the byway.

THEMES AND MESSAGES

An interpretive theme creates a framework for planning meaningful interactions between visitors and resources. Themes represent the major concepts, ideas, and messages that we want visitors to experience as they travel the byway. Once these important concepts are identified, the most appropriate sites, resources, and stories are selected to illustrate them.

A theme statement, which is ideally stated in one succinct sentence, should contain **universal concepts**. Universal concepts are intangible meanings that are significant to everyone, such as life, death, family, parenthood, jealousy, loyalty, forgiveness—all of the emotions, challenges, and values that make us human.

Effective interpretive themes should connect a tangible resource (object or fact) to the interests of the visitor. Interpretation is most successful when visitors can relate the themes and messages on a byway to something relevant in their own lives. A good theme will stir emotional and intellectual feelings and thoughts in a visitor, even

if that same person cannot repeat what the theme or message was. Provocation is more significant than simple factual information. Inspiring people to relate the information to their own lives is a measure of success.

Organization of Themes and Messages

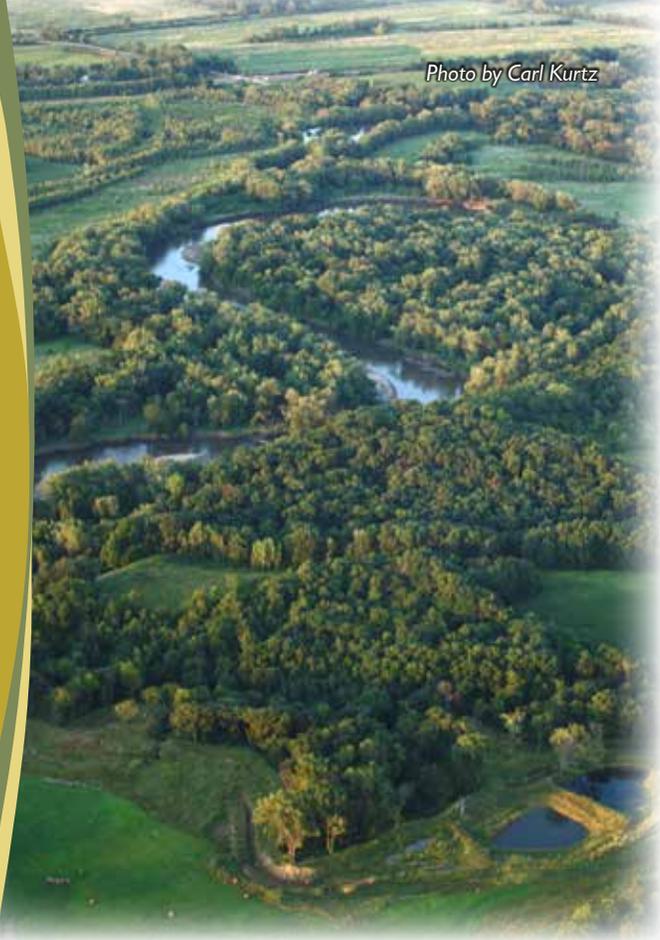
- A **primary theme** states the major concept that unifies all the stories of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway within one big overriding idea. In order to plan a cohesive visitor experience, all interpretation should relate to this holistic concept.
- **Sub-themes** divide the primary theme into sub-sets of related ideas that allow for a more workable framework of storylines.
- **Messages** break down the broad sub-themes into specific stories of people and places that can be encountered along the byway.

PRIMARY THEME

The rich natural resources of the Iowa River Valley between Montour and the Amana Colonies have brought together Meskwaki Native Americans, communal Amana Germans, Czech farmers, and other immigrants into a diverse cultural patchwork.

Bohemian Alps near Vining

Photo by Carl Kurtz



The rich resources of the Iowa River Valley attracted waves of immigrants.

SUB-THEME 1

Immigrants settled the Iowa River Valley because it offered fertile soil, abundant water for farming, groves of timber for building and, at times, an isolated location safely buffered from the influences of a larger society.

Messages:

- 1.1 Cloistered colonies of immigrants (Inspirationists, Meskwaki, and Czechs) formed dynamic communities. There is a tradition of tolerance and acceptance for other cultures in the Iowa River Valley as evidenced by the long and friendly interactions of the Amana and the Meskwaki Tribe.
- 1.2 The Native American tribe of Meskwaki was an early immigrant population to the Iowa River Valley looking for freedom to practice their religion and way of life, after being displaced following their removal from their more eastern homelands along the Mississippi River.
- 1.3 The economic success of the Amana and Meskwaki communities in the Iowa River Valley eventually caused them to become dependent on the larger society beyond their own boundaries.
- 1.4 The roads and rails brought people to the Valley who sought social and political isolation, but the transportation corridor also exposed these groups to the larger American society. The first transcontinental Lincoln Highway passed through almost half of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway corridor including the Meskwaki Settlement, Tama, Belle Plaine, and Chelsea.
- 1.5 This river valley served as a travel corridor for immigrants on their way west to other areas of Iowa or beyond. Near Marengo's Gateway Park, the James Emmett Expedition of Mormons encamped in 1844. Some members of the Expedition were buried here in the site known as "Mormons Bend." Archaeological evidence and oral tradition document the existence of Meskwaki villages near the Amana Colonies.

- 1.6 Immigrant settlers were determined and tenacious to survive in this new country, as seen in the efforts of towns like Belle Plaine to rebuild after the Great Fire of 1894 or Chelsea to refuse to move away from the river after the historic 1993 flood of the Iowa River.
- 1.7 The natural environment along the Iowa River is rich in wildlife habitat, which allowed people living here to harvest mammals and fish to supplement their diets.
- 1.8 Iowa River cultures were and still are synchronized with the seasons. Food gathering, hunting, agricultural planting, and harvesting all must be harmonious with the seasons.
- 1.9 Artisans and craftspeople can be found in many of the ethnic communities practicing the skilled work that is historically associated with their culture. Meskwaki women elders teach younger women the art of tribal sewing, beading, and weaving. In the Amana Colonies, wood carvers utilize local Society grown wood, and the Amana Arts Guild is a cooperative of metal artisans, painters, and other artists and craftspeople.

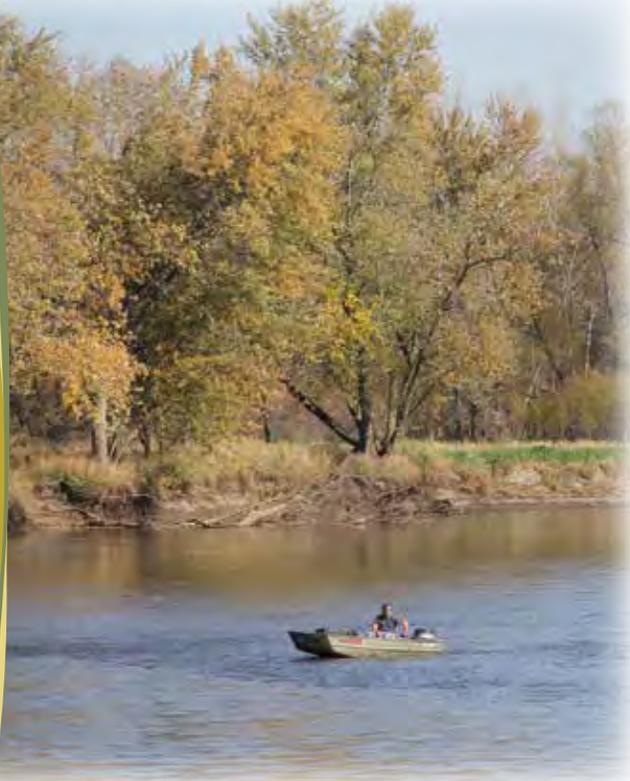
- 1.10 Music and dance are significant and obvious at festivals in many of the ethnic byway communities. Maipoles and German music is important in the Amana Colonies, polkas dominate the Czech events, and the traditional Meskwaki powwow is characterized by seasonal ceremonial dances.
- 1.11 Both ends of the byway exhibit communal land use patterns since the Meskwaki Settlement is shared tribal land and the Amana Villages

were all shared Society property. Other communities reflect the town's orientation to railroad service and, later, to highways.

Photo courtesy of Amana Convention and Visitors Bureau

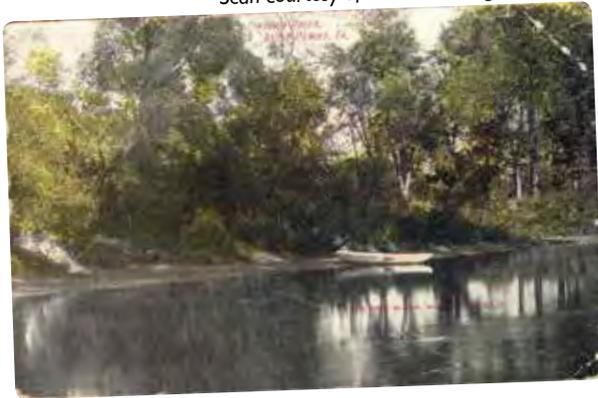


Maifest in the Amana Colonies



Boater in the Iowa River near the Koszta bridge.

Scan courtesy of Grinnell College Libraries



Postcard of Iowa River, Belle Plaine, circa 1907

SUB-THEME 2

The Iowa River is a powerful waterway that flows relatively unimpeded through diverse wetland floodplains, havens for wildlife, until it reaches the Coralville Dam west of Iowa City.

Messages:

- 2.1 The flat river valley has traditionally provided a travel corridor for many modes of transportation (first by river, then railroads, and finally, highways).
- 2.2 The Iowa River is a 323-mile-long tributary of the Mississippi River that connects diverse natural communities of plants, animals, and humans.
- 2.3 This waterway maintains a dynamic floodplain with associated wetlands, recreational opportunities, and, periodically, devastating floods. The Coralville Dam is 65 miles from its mouth at the Mississippi. There are a total of 12 low head dams along the course of the Iowa River.
- 2.4 River crossings, such as bridges, are important transportation links between communities. Some have taken on historic significance, such as the Lincoln Highway bridges at Tama and Chelsea or the Chambers Ford Bridge. High water from flooding has taken a toll on these structures and on old railroad beds.
- 2.5 Fishing, both recreational and commercial, is common on the Iowa River. The impoundment produced by the Coralville Dam is fished commercially for carp and buffalo fish. Recreationists fish for large and smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, panfish, and channel and flathead catfish.
- 2.6 Indian Fish Trap State Preserve is a one-acre site in (or silted into the riverbank of) the Iowa River near Middle Amana that is listed on the National Historic Register. It is an archaeologically significant stone fish trap with wings in a “v” shape that guide fish into a holding pond

constructed of glacial boulders. Some estimate it to be from the prehistoric or early historic period, while others believe it is less than 350 years old.

- 2.7 Twelve boat landings provide access to the river along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.
- 2.8 The Iowa River Corridor Project is an innovative land use program that resulted from the devastating flood of 1993. It is a massive attempt by state and federal agencies to work with nonprofits and landowners to return flood-prone farmlands into protective wetlands. The project area is 50,000 acres in size, stretching along 45 miles of the river from Tama to the Amana Colonies. It is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge System and is managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Much of this land is available for public recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation.
- 2.9 The Iowa River Corridor Bird Conservation Area, established in 2004, protects key breeding habitat in the 133,475 acres designated along the river. The habitat supports 68

bird species of Iowa's 85 "Species of Greatest Conservation Need." Several boat landings and overlooks on the byway invite observation of these species.

- 2.10 The devastating 1993 Iowa River flood destroyed 40 homes in Chelsea, which prompted an unsuccessful effort to relocate the town to higher ground. The proposal attracted national media attention and instilled a will and spirit in the 250 residents to end any discussion about moving the community.
- 2.11 The majority of the Iowa River is listed as a non-meandering river, which means that its shoreline is privately owned and subject to trespass ordinances. The non-meandering term is in reference to the original survey teams and their habit of "meandering" along a deep and impassable river until they found a suitable crossing. If they could wade across along their survey line, then they labeled the river a "non-meandering" river.

Photo by Carl Kurtz



Bald Eagle at Otter Creek Marsh

- 2.12 Water has shaped much of the human history in the Iowa River Valley. In 1885, an artesian well in Belle Plaine blew out of control and spouted unrestrained for about a year. Called the "Jumbo Well," it was a headline story around the world.

Photo by Cindy Hadish, www.HomegrownIowan.com



Flooding in Chelsea, July 4, 2014.

Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Society



Scene of Amana, 1894

Photo courtesy of Hamilton College Library



Photo by C.H. Hermann of his mother carrying food from a communal Kitchen in Middle Amana, circa 1907

SUB-THEME 3

The Amana Colonies provide unique insights into the long-lived communal society of German “True Inspirationists” who came to Iowa in 1855 seeking religious freedom.

Messages:

- 3.1 Members of a religious group called the Community of True Inspiration were persecuted in Germany by the government and the Lutheran Church, so they eventually immigrated to upstate New York in 1842, and finally to a larger and more isolated tract of land in Iowa in 1855. This new land was named *Amana* which translates to “remain true.”
- 3.2 All decisions in the Colonial Amana Society were made by the Council of Elders of the Amana Church, sometimes referred to as the Board of Trustees. These decisions included where one would live and what work they would do, and how they would marry. The Council met monthly in different Amana villages and also served as the high court in legal matters.
- 3.3 There were 11 mandatory worship services each week during the communal years. Services were conducted in German. The Amana Society Church continues today with over 350 members.
- 3.4 Each of the seven Amana villages was semi-independent in regards to gardens, kitchens, blacksmith shops, butcher shops, and general stores. Outside economic transactions were limited to the import of needed commodities such as wool for the mills and sales to external customers. The village of Homestead was purchased by the Amana Colonies because the railroad was planning to lay track there and the colonies needed transportation for the woolen mills.
- 3.5 Amana residents ate communally in about 55 separate kitchens spread

- throughout the seven villages where groups of 30-45 people ate mostly in silence, since talking was discouraged during meals. The communal meals began to break down as early as 1900 when parents would take the prepared meals home for the family.
- 3.6 The Great Change of 1932 was a Society-wide vote to dissolve the communal society and transition to a stockholder corporation structure. The Amana Church Society remained unchanged after the transition. The move was in part a reaction to difficult financial times during the Great Depression and a longing for more mainstream social practices, especially by the young.
- 3.7 During the political paranoia of WWI, there developed some regional resentment toward German-speaking Amana residents who didn't suffer as much hardship due to their self-reliance on the commune. In WWII, the Colonies had a number of men serve in the military. The Amana Colonies profited from military contracts during the war producing flannel uniforms and blankets.
- 3.8 Amana's German traditions and its communal and religious heritage are driving forces in the daily affairs of the contemporary Amana Colonies. The Amana Society is a significant force in the culture and economics of the community. The Amana Heritage Society and the Amana Arts Guild oversee the preservation of the cultural landscape and buildings.
- 3.9 The Amana Colonies and the Meskwaki maintained a unique and mutually beneficial relationship for over 150 years. Both communities survived and flourished as sub-cultures within the larger society. The American lotus symbol of this byway is also symbolic of their shared history and values.
- 3.10 The Amana people are not, and have never been, affiliated with the Amish or Mennonite religions or cultures, other than their German origins.
- 3.11 Amana Appliances was founded by Middle Amana resident George Foerstner in 1934, when he was challenged to build a reliable commercial beverage cooler. The Amana Society purchased the company in 1936. Investors, including Foerstner, purchased it back from the Society in 1950 and sold it to an outside corporation in 1964. The company still employs a large number of local workers.
- 3.12 The Amana Society has continued to own and manage the 26,000 acres of the Amana Colonies since the Great Change in 1932. The landscape has retained its historical look of communal land use and building occupancy. Over 450 structures from the communal era still dominate the cultural landscape.
- 3.13 The Amana Society manages 7,000 acres of forests. This may reflect the traditional German value for nature, especially forests. The lumber is milled and kiln-dried in the Colonies for use in the furniture factory and by local craftsmen.
- 3.14 On February 12, 1875, the Amana or Homestead Meteorite illuminated the night sky from Omaha to Chicago. It seemed to disappear in the Amana area. Residents found fragments of it for months and even discovered a 74-pound chunk near High Amana (the sixth largest meteorite recorded at that time). A piece of the meteorite is on display at the Amana Heritage Museum.

Photo courtesy of Iowa State University



Meskwaki family members celebrating a fall harvest inside a wickiup, 1924.

Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Museum



Meskwaki Indians in the Amana area, circa 1900

SUB-THEME 4

The Meskwaki Settlement is home to the only federally recognized Native American tribe in Iowa, and its creation set a precedent in 1857 as the first tribally purchased land in the United States.

Messages:

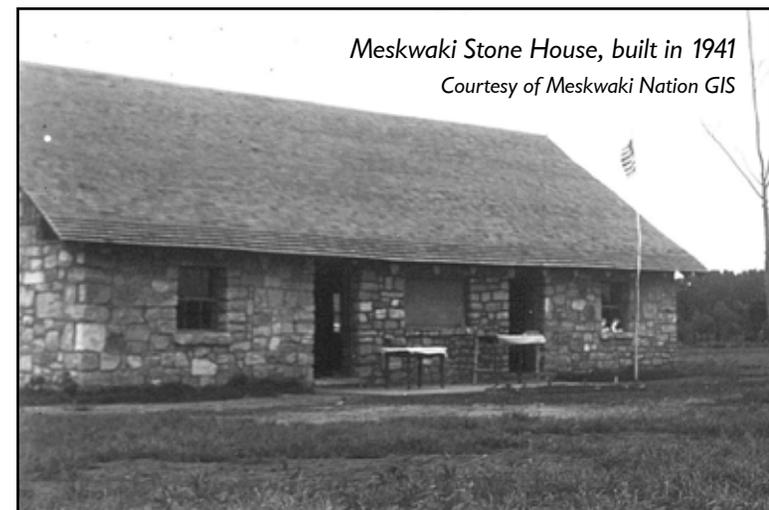
- 4.1 The Meskwaki Tribe, self-identified as The Red Earth People, is officially recognized by the federal government as the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa. The related Sac Tribe are known as the People of the Yellow Earth. Blackhawk, who became infamous because of the Blackhawk War, was a member of the Sac Tribe, not the Meskwaki.
- 4.2 The Meskwaki are the only federally recognized American Indian tribe in Iowa.
- 4.3 The Meskwaki are of the Algonquin lineage and were historically from the St. Lawrence River region of the northeast. The tension of French fur trading and the pressure of eastern settlement pushed the tribe westward through Wisconsin and the upper Mississippi Valley and into Iowa during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 4.4 The Iowa River is named *Ne ko to si ya* in Meskwaki which translates to the "Single Backbone River." The river provides abundant resources as evidenced by the stone fish weir in the river near Amana.
- 4.5 The tribe historically harvested lotus roots for food and ceremony. The lotus flower is now a symbol of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.
- 4.6 The Meskwaki resisted resettlement in the Kansas and Oklahoma Territories during the period following the Blackhawk War of 1832. The tribe eventually purchased its own community land with the support of neighbors and the Iowa Legislature. The original 80 acres has expanded to nearly 8,000 acres.

- 4.7 The Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division built the Meskwaki Stone House in 1941 in the hopes that it would function as a commercial center for the tribe. It eventually failed to meet the economic needs of the tribe because the main Meskwaki village moved due to flooding and U.S. Highway 30 was rerouted to the north.
- 4.8 Twenty-seven Meskwaki men served in World War II (16% of the settlement). Eight men were code talkers. Surviving veterans or their families were presented with Medals of Honor in 2005.
- 4.9 The Meskwaki Casino and Hotel complex was developed in 1993. This has provided an economic engine for tribal initiatives and improvements such as the tribally-run Settlement School.
- 4.10 United States veterans of the Blackhawk War of 1832 were paid with land holdings; ironically, some were located near the Meskwaki Settlement, as was the case of Abraham Lincoln whose land holding was within seven miles of the Settlement.

- 4.11 Housing in the Meskwaki Settlement is largely dispersed due to a 1902 government effort to decentralize the population during a severe smallpox outbreak. Meskwaki resisted smallpox vaccinations for philosophical reasons, which fueled fear in the surrounding Euro-American communities.
- 4.12 The Meskwaki Powwow is an annual public event that began in 1913 and has served as a means of sharing the tribe's way of life with the larger American society. The tribe's quest for self-governance has historically included educating the non-Indian community concerning tribal traditions and values.
- 4.13 The Meskwaki and the Amana Colonies maintained a unique and mutually beneficial relationship for over 150 years. Both communities survived and flourished as sub-cultures in a larger and more dominant society.
- 4.14 The Patterson Trading House, located just outside South Amana,

served the Meskwaki from 1839 until the tribe was forced to move by the federal government in 1842. The Meskwaki lived in a large village adjacent to the trading house under the leadership of Wakusasse. Following the tribe's move, the building became a general store.

- 4.15 Self-determination continues to be of paramount importance to the Meskwaki people. The first federally administered school initiated in 1875 on the settlement was relatively unsuccessful because it was not supportive of the Meskwaki culture. Today, Meskwaki children attend the tribally-run Settlement School where they learn the language and culture of their people.



*Meskwaki Stone House, built in 1941
Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation GIS*



Headstones in the Saint Wenceslaus Cemetery represent the strong Czech culture of the region.

SUB-THEME 5

In the late 19th century, large numbers of Bohemian, Czech, and Slovak people immigrated to this region of Iowa, nicknamed the Bohemian Alps, seeking inexpensive farmland and companionship with their fellow countrymen.

Messages:

- 5.1 Many Czechs immigrated in increasing large numbers to Iowa between 1850 and 1890 as a result of deteriorating social and economic conditions in Czechoslovakia. Overpopulation, competition for available farmland, and political repression under the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy also caused people to leave.
- 5.2 Many Czech immigrants were from middle-class farm backgrounds since they had the resources needed to resettle, but not enough wealth to persevere difficult economic times back home.
- 5.3 Letters from friends and relatives encouraging immigration to Iowa motivated many to resettle here. Magazine advertisements by railroads and others marketed cheap land in Iowa and Nebraska and lured many to relocate.
- 5.4 The landscape of the area was also a factor for settlement. The hills of the “Bohemian Alps” reminded settlers of their Czech homelands, and some residents even thought that the wind sounded like the wind in Bohemia.
- 5.5 Czechs, like many other immigrant groups, often sought the companionship of fellow countrymen in the new land. Villages of predominantly Czechoslovakian people were established in relatively short periods of time.
- 5.6 Some of the most scenic hills on the byway are the Bohemian Alps. These hills are steep enough to have caused the Lincoln Highway to be routed south to the Iowa River Valley.

5.7 Fraternal lodges still stand in some of the Czech towns where they host dances, weddings, and community events. These organizations provided insurance for life and burial. The institutions stayed solvent even during the Great Depression when many banks in America failed.

5.8 Mailboxes and cemetery headstones in this area still display a number of Czech last names, and celebrations and festivals of Czech themes are held in many of communities.

5.9 The “Charging Czechs” women’s high school basketball team of the 1930s and ‘40s became legendary in Iowa sports, compiling a record of 201 wins, 18 losses, and one tie in a nine-year span. They competed in the Iowa State Tournament six of the nine years and won in 1942.



“Charging Czechs” State Champions, 1942



Czech immigrants settled in the rolling landscape known as the “Bohemian Alps.”

Photo by Nathan Holmes



Iowa Interstate (IAIS) train at Marengo.

SUB-THEME 6

The flat Iowa River Valley provided an ideal travel corridor for railroads, a motivating force that shaped settlements along the byway, and for early roads, including the country's first transcontinental highway.

Messages:

- 6.1 The majority of transcontinental railroads were built through government subsidized programs such as land grants. Congress gave railroads land on which to build tracks and additional land to sell at profits.
- 6.2 Railroads advertised inexpensive land in other countries and in the eastern U.S. to increase land profit for track development and to assure future products for rail transportation.
- 6.3 Many communities moved or vanished when a rail line was created that bypassed their town. Other towns materialized almost overnight when tracks were laid through their location.
- 6.4 Railroads historically required "water stops" to periodically renew the water in steam locomotive boilers. Streams, lakes, and rivers were important resources to early railroad right-of-ways.
- 6.5 The railroad mural on Country Foods in Belle Plaine is interpreted on the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Audio Tour. The story of the "bust and boom" of railroad towns is well documented in this audio narrative.
- 6.6 Railroads often provided the vital resources needed to combat tragedies and natural disasters, such as the Great Fire of 1894 that burned 27 buildings and 80 businesses in downtown Belle Plaine. The Chicago Northwestern sent special trains to carry goods from other communities to fight the fire and provide relief.
- 6.7 Community names in the Iowa River Valley often bear ties to the railroad owners and developers, their families, and hometowns. Chelsea

and Clutier are two towns that were named as railroad stops.

- 6.8 Mining and agriculture were important industries in the Midwest, Great Plains, and the West. Railroads were the most efficient mode of transportation of these materials. Both industries were very labor intensive and therefore provided enormous numbers of jobs to immigrant workers willing to resettle newly opened land.
- 6.9 Road development often paralleled railroad tracks in order to utilize the existing infrastructure of hotels, restaurants, and other traveler amenities. The best topographically-friendly travel corridors were selected by the railroads and were then followed by cross-country motor routes like the Lincoln Highway.
- 6.10 The Lincoln Highway was the first coast-to-coast highway in North America and remains one of the most celebrated. It passes through the Iowa River Valley and the byway follows some of the historic route. The Tama Lincoln Highway Bridge is a well-known early structure that still survives.

- 6.11 U. S. Highway 6 passes through some parts of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. It was, at one time, the longest highway in America at 3,652 miles long.



"Digging the car out of the mud near Tama, Iowa," Lincoln Highway, 1915

Belle Plaine celebrates its railroad heritage with a mural





František Ludimír Klácel, an Augustinian monk philosopher and writer, lived in Belle Plaine



Pin-up girl painted by Earl Moran, an artist who was born in Belle Plaine

SUB-THEME 7

The Iowa River Valley has been the home of many famous and influential people, representing a melting pot of cultures and ideas.

Messages:

- 7.1 František Ludimír Klácel (1808–1882), an Augustinian monk philosopher and writer, was a close friend of Gregor Mendel who he encouraged to develop research that laid the foundation for the field of genetics. Klácel was a strong proponent for Czech independence before and after he immigrated to America. He lived in Belle Plaine later in his life and died there.
- 7.2 Two notorious western gang members, Tom and Frank McLaury, were famously killed in 1881 at the shootout at the OK Corral in Tombstone, Arizona. They grew up on a farm near Belle Plaine.
- 7.3 Earl Moran (1893–1984), born in Belle Plaine, gained fame in the 1940s and '50s as a popular pin-up and glamor artist and was a close friend of Marilyn Monroe.
- 7.4 T. Nelson Downs (1867–1938), “The King of Coins,” was born in Garwin, Iowa just north of Montour. He was an internationally famous magician who specialized in coin and card tricks.
- 7.5 George Alexander (1839–1923) was a pioneer businessperson in Belle Plaine in the 1860s through the 1880s. He later moved to California and served as the mayor of Los Angeles from 1909–1913.
- 7.6 Leroy Shield (1893–1962) was a famous music composer for films. He created the music used in the immensely popular Laurel and Hardy movies of the 1930s and wrote the theme song for the “Little Rascals” movies. Shield lived in Belle Plaine during his teen years.

- 7.7 Mildred Augustine Wirt Benson (1905–2002) wrote 23 of the first 30 “Nancy Drew” mystery books under the pen name Carolyn Keene from 1930–1953. She published over 130 books during her 83-year career. She was born in Ladora in 1905 and died there in 2002.
- 7.8 Elizabeth Wright Heller (1860–1950) was the half-sister of the famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. She raised her family on a farm south of Koszta. She wrote her memoir and gave insights into her difficult relationship with her famous sibling.
- 7.9 Clarence Whitehall (1871–1932), a famous opera singer, was born in Iowa County and grew up and attended schools in Marengo. He enjoyed a long career with the Metropolitan Opera and made recordings of both opera and popular music. He was buried in Marengo.
- 7.10 Clifford Berry (1918–1963) was the co-creator of the world’s first electronic digital computer. Professor John Vincent Atanasoff teamed with Berry, his graduate student, to create the Atanasoff-Berry Computer (ABC) during the

period of 1937–1942 at Iowa State University. He grew up in Marengo.

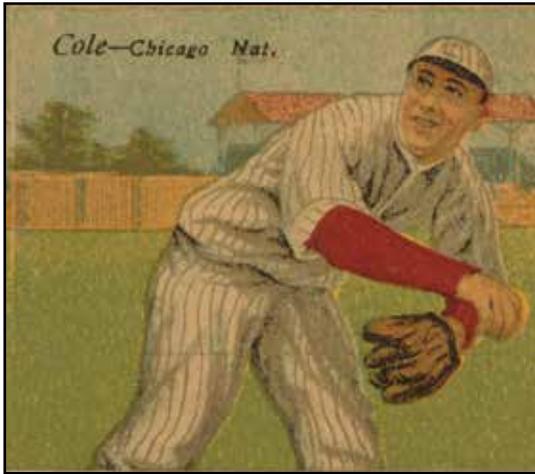
- 7.11 Harriet Henders (1904–1972), a 1930s Metropolitan Opera soprano, was born Harriet Henderson in Marengo.
- 7.12 Frank Luther Mott (1886–1964) served as the editor of the *Marengo Pioneer Republican* newspaper until 1913. He went on to become a leader in journalism education in the United States. He served as dean of the University of Iowa Journalism program, and later of the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He was a Pulitzer Prize winner.
- 7.13 Mildred Mott Wedel (1912–1995), daughter of Frank Mott, was born in Marengo. She became one of the first female archaeologists in the United States, pioneering studies of the prehistoric peoples of the Midwest.
- 7.14 John Brown (1800–1859) frequently traveled through the Iowa River Valley. In 1859, he stopped at the Draper Reynolds farm near Marengo just prior to his failed raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, a major event leading up to the Civil War.



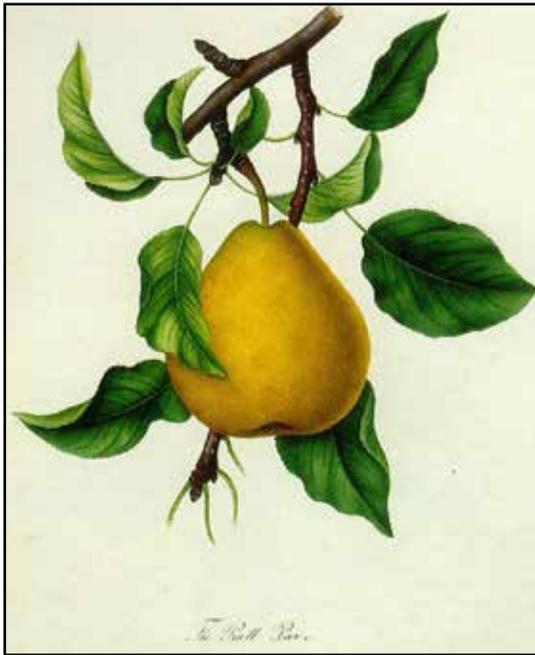
Harriet Henders, a 1930s opera soprano, born in Marengo



Mildred Mott Wedel, an archaeologist born in Marengo



“King” Cole, born in Toledo, Iowa, was a professional pitcher from 1909–1915.



Drawing of “The Pratt Pear” by Joseph Prestele, a botanical artist who lived in the Amana Colonies

7.15 George Preston (1911–1993) operated a filling station on the Lincoln Highway for almost 70 years. He became a well-known personality because of the stories he told about the highway and his hometown of Belle Plaine. In 1991 he made a notable appearance on Johnny Carson’s “Tonight Show.”

7.16 Leonard Leslie “King” Cole (1886–1916), born in Toledo, Iowa, was a baseball player with the Chicago Cubs, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the New York Yankees during a six-year professional pitcher career. He notably gave Babe Ruth his first major league hit. He had a 20–4 record in 1910 with the Cubs.

7.17 Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was a landowner in Tama County, though he never lived there. He was awarded land for his service during the Blackhawk War. After his assassination, his heirs sold the property.

7.18 Henry C. Ostermann (1877–1920) died in an automobile accident between Tama and Montour while out promoting the coast-to-coast Lincoln Highway. As the first secretary of the Lincoln Highway

Association, he drove the pioneer roadway six times.

7.19 William H. Zuber (1913–1982) played baseball from 1932–1946 with the Yankees and Red Sox. He and his wife retired to his hometown of Homestead and ran the famous Zuber’s Dugout Restaurant.

7.20 Dr. Louis C. Zopf (1904–1980) is known as the “father of hospital pharmacy” because of the groundbreaking work he did as the leader of the University of Iowa pharmacy program in the 1950s. He grew up in Marengo.

7.21 Joseph Prestele (1796–1867) was a botanical artist from Bavaria who came to America with the Christian sect of Germans who became the Amana Society. He was a gifted lithographer, a fine painter, and a naturalist. He created tree illustrations for Asa Gray, the foremost American botanist of the 19th century.

7.22 George C. Foerstner (1908–2000) created the Amana Refrigeration Company with a single employee. It grew into one of the nation’s largest appliance companies. His company

introduced the upright freezer and the Radarange (microwave) oven.

7.23 Grant Wood (1891–1942) sketched and painted in the Amana Colonies on several occasions in the 1930s. According to a colleague, his *Young Corn* painting (1931) is based on the landscape north of High Amana.

7.24 Jean Adeline Morgan Wanatee (1910–1996) was an advocate for Native American and women’s rights. She was an artist who was known for her work in creating traditional woven belts. She was a Meskwaki language specialist and a resource advisor to the Smithsonian Institute. She campaigned for Native Americans to control the education of their children and contributed to educational resources by writing books and teaching the Meskwaki language.

7.25 Wakusasse was a leader of the Meskwaki when they maintained a large village near South Amana in the 1840s. The famous Swiss artist Karl Bodmer painted him in 1833.

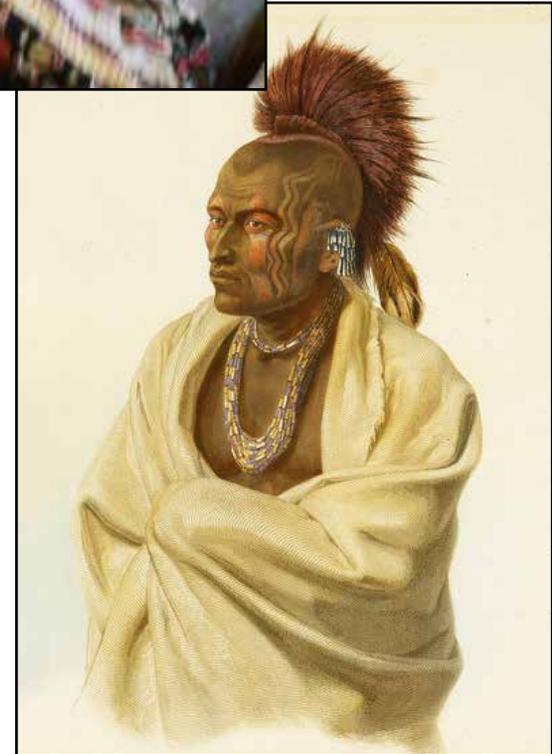
7.26 Pushetoneque (1842–1919) was the last federally recognized chief of the Meskwaki Nation after the Settlement land had been

Photo by Lewis Koch, “Woodland Indian Traditional Artist Project”



Adeline Wanatee, advocate for Native American and women’s rights, in her home on the Meskwaki Settlement, 1994

Painting of Wakusasse, leader of the Meskwaki, by Karl Bodmer, 1833



purchased in Iowa. When the State of Iowa relinquished their trust responsibilities for the tribe in 1896, the U.S. Government became the sole trustee. This made the Office of Indian Affairs the primary decision maker for the tribe, rather than chiefs or tribal councils.

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CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA



A byway Conservation Innovation Grant wayside exhibit installed in Tama



A Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) wayside exhibit installed in Tama represents a thematic style that will be replicated on all byway interpretive media.

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

Heritage interpretation is a communication process that guides visitors in their search for meanings in objects, places, and landscapes.

Travelers on this byway have an opportunity to discover the diverse communities in the valley that personify the pluralistic society that Iowa is known for. The Iowa River is a backbone connecting all of the ethnic groups and villages along the corridor. Through the years the river valley has been the preferred route for trails, rail lines, and highways. Stories, such as the remarkable 150-year relationship between the True Inspirationists and the Meskwaki Tribe, are documented, but seldom discussed even by members of the respective communities. Chapter 5: Themes and Messages chronicles some of the meanings that can be conveyed at sites along the route. The various techniques used to communicate these messages to visitors are referred to as interpretive media.

When interpretive media is well planned, it can open windows of understanding and revelation in visitors who are seeking connections and meanings of their

own as they explore the byway and its resources. It is a rewarding experience for visitors to discover for themselves new and exciting places and to feel like they have grown emotionally and intellectually in the process.

Interpretive media consists of a variety of possible choices. The spectrum of media can include wayside exhibits, signs, brochures, booklets, apps, audio tours, websites, or visitor center exhibits.



Located in the historic county jail in Toledo, the Tama County Historical Museum offers a unique perspective on the region.

EXISTING INTERPRETIVE MEDIA & PROGRAMS

A variety of interpretive opportunities are already available along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway for travelers. The recommendations presented in this chapter should supplement and enhance these existing facilities and programs.

Welcome/Visitor Centers

One active visitor information center currently exists in the byway corridor:

- **Amana Colonies Visitors Center:** Built in a restored 1942 corn crib on the Main Amana farm yard, the facility is staffed daily, year-round, and offers information about the Amana Colonies and the scenic byway.

Historical/Cultural Museums

The rich history and culture along the scenic byway is revealed through several museums and interpretive sites. See Chapter 4: Interpretive Resources for detailed descriptions of the following:

Open regular hours year-round (best for serving travelers):

- Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum

- Meskwaki Bingo Casino: Historical exhibits in lobby
- Tama County Historical Museum and Genealogical Library, Toledo

Open seasonally regular hours (closed in winter):

- Belle Plaine Area Museum
- Marengo Pioneer Heritage Museum
- Amana Heritage Museum
- Communal Kitchen and Cooper Shop Museum, Middle Amana
- Amana Community Church Museum, Homestead
- Henry Moore's Mini-Americana Barn Museum, South Amana
- Opa's Tractor Barn Museum, West Amana
- Philip Dickel Basket Museum, West Amana

Open by appointment only:

- Clutier Museum and Bohemian Village
- ZCJB Czech Museum & Meeting Hall, Clutier
- Haven Country School Museum



The Amana Colonies Visitors Center in Amana provides year-round information to travelers about this region of Iowa, including the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.



The Tama County Nature Center in Otter Creek Lake Park offers programs and newly installed exhibits.



Photo courtesy of Tama County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Nature Centers

One nature center facility in the byway corridor interprets the rich natural resources of the region:

- **Tama County Nature Center:** Located in Otter Creek Lake Park northeast of Toledo, this nature center features a habitat diorama, discovery wall, and new exhibits about Trumpeter Swans, water quality, mussels, and monarch butterflies. Environmental education programming is offered for local school districts. It is open seasonally.

Kiosks and Wayside Exhibits

Six **Iowa River Corridor Project** interpretive kiosks, developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are located within the byway corridor. See page 66 for more information about each. The parking areas for these kiosks are surfaced with rough gravel and appear to be utilized primarily by trucks and recreational SUVs. They offer the possibility of being used by casual byway travelers if the access and surface is improved slightly to accommodate cars.



An Iowa River Corridor Project kiosk installed near Marengo.

The **Otter Creek Marsh Viewing Platform** has four attached panels that interpret the Iowa River Corridor, wildlife, the Bird Conservation Area, and Meskwaki history.

The **Amana Colonies** has a historic interpretive signage program in place that is funded by the State

Historical Society of Iowa, the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, and the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. Outdoor panels are black-and-white with historic illustrations and photographs to meet the signage guidelines of the Amana Colonies. Indoor signage follows a similar design but utilizes color.

Belle Plaine has two kiosks with six interpretive signs in Beautiful Plaines Prairie Park, along with additional wayside exhibits downtown. **Marengo** has a wayside exhibit about John Brown in their city park. And **Tama** has a metal plaque that interprets the historic Lincoln Highway bridge.



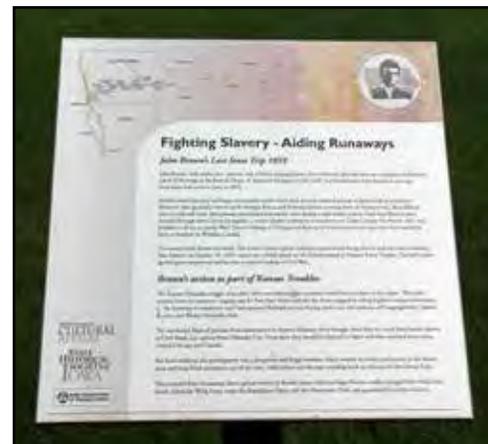
Interpretive panels on the Otter Creek Marsh Viewing Platform



Different styles of interpretive panels in the Amana Colonies



Interpretive kiosks in Prairie Park, Belle Plaine



John Brown sign, Marengo City Park



Lincoln Highway bridge sign, Tama



CIG wayside exhibit installed at the entrance to Big Bend Conservation Area.

Conservation Innovation Grant Panels

Wayside exhibits were developed in 2015 through a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) with the intent of creating a cohesive, statewide set of panels along ten of Iowa’s scenic byways. The designs for the panel and metal bases originate from standards developed by Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters for the Iowa Byways Interpretive Master Plans project.

Two CIG wayside exhibit are installed along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway:

- **Big Bend Conservation Area:** One is located north of Marengo at the entrance to the Big Bend Conservation Area and interprets wetland restoration and the Mississippi River Flyway.
- **Pollinator-Friendly Practices:** The other is located just west of the Tama-Toledo Country Club Golf Course on the South Tama Trail and interprets the importance of pollinators and pollinator-friendly practices.

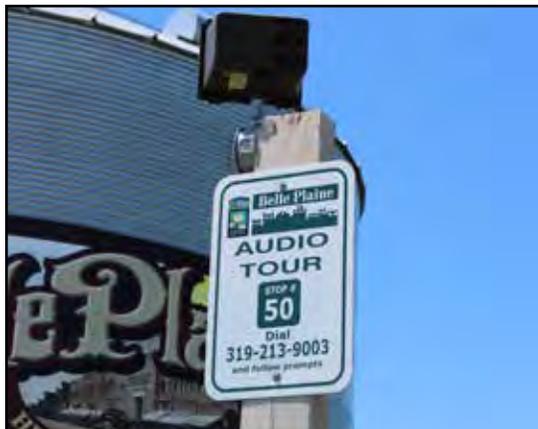


CIG wayside exhibit installed along the South Tama Trail in Tama.

Audio Tours

An Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Audio Tour interprets numerous resources along the byway, including those found in the Amana Colonies, Belle Plaine, and the Marengo area. The tour is accessed by cell phone through a company called OnCell. A total of 52 audio stops are available along the route, with 17 in the Amana Colonies, 13 in Marengo, one in Ladora, one in Koszta, and 20 in Belle Plaine. See Appendix 2 for a complete list. Additional sites are planned.

The audio tour works particularly well in the Amana Colonies where municipal statutes limit interpretive signage. The sound tracks at the Amana stops are especially effective because they utilize music, sound effects, and interviews with Amana residents.



Guided Tours

Guided tours of the Amana Colonies are offered by the Amana Visitor and Convention Bureau from May through October. The two-hour **Village Voyage Driving Tour** makes stops at some of the key historic sites. The one-hour **Village Stroll Walking Tour** interprets Amana with an expert guide. The **Guten Appetit**

walking tour takes three to four hours and offers a sampling of restaurants, wineries, brewery, and specialty food shops.

Several of the historic museums listed on page 93 also offer guided tours when open.

Photo courtesy of MidWest Truck Campers & Friends, midwesttruckcampers.wordpress.com

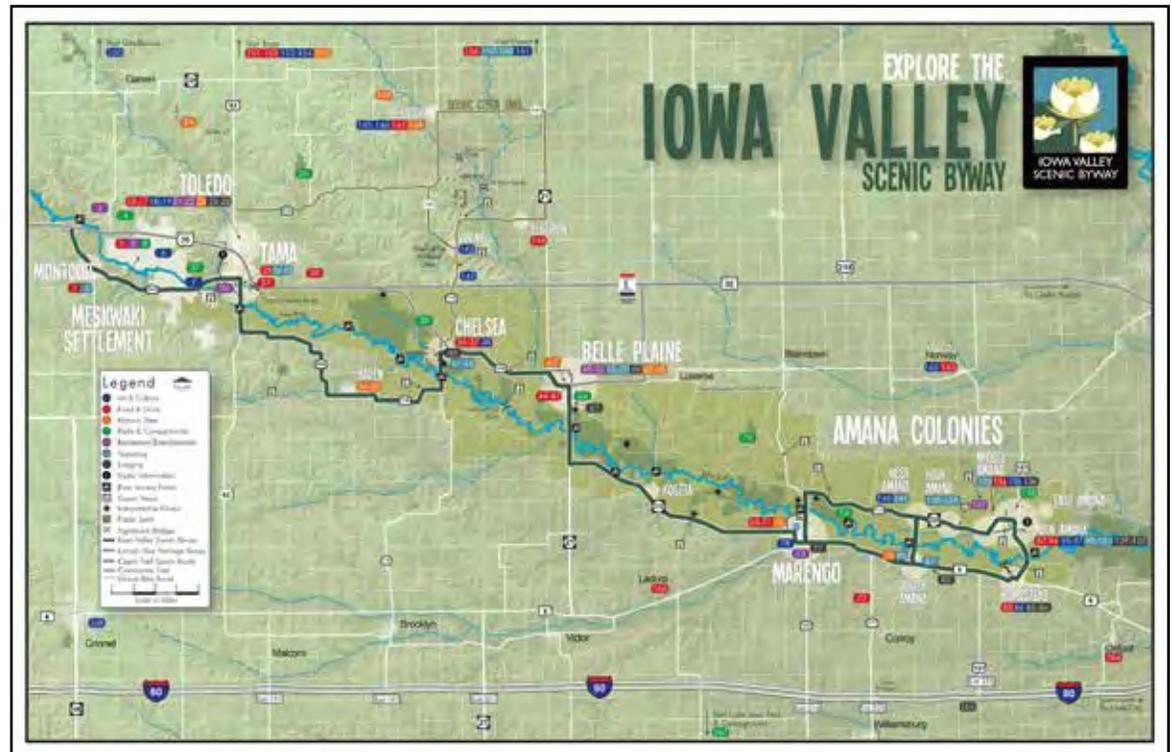


Byway Publications

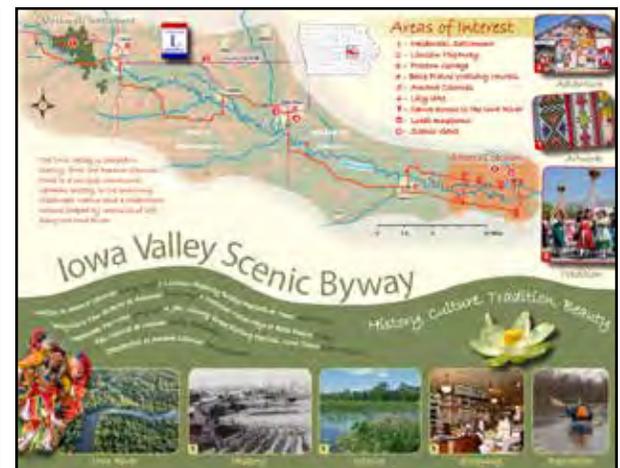
The Iowa Valley RC&D has developed several publications to market and provide information about the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. Pages 149-160 offer recommendations for additional publications.



A Business Information Sheet describes how businesses can benefit from the byway and be included in marketing efforts.



An easy-to-use tear-sheet map of the byway, with color-coded descriptions of attractions on the back side, is available at several businesses, museums, and welcome centers along the byway.



A general brochure uses colorful photos to introduce the byway and highlight areas of interest along the route.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding, the ability of travelers to negotiate a byway route and find attractions, is the basis for good visitor experiences. Without effective wayfinding, visitors can't access interpretive messages and may become frustrated with their experience.

To navigate successfully, travelers look for directional signs along the road, but also navigate by using other visual cues. Byway staff should develop a procedure for regularly analyzing the effectiveness of wayfinding and develop plans to address confusing areas.

Overall, the Iowa Valley byway is easy to follow, partly because of the rural, relatively uncluttered right-of-way, but also because of the attractive, uniform Iowa byway logo signs that are recognizable and well-placed along the route.

Finding some of the byway attractions and resources, however, can be challenging to first-time and serendipitous travelers. The following recommendations can help improve the wayfinding experience both on and off the byway.



Official Byway Attraction Signs would direct travelers to information centers, experience hubs, wayside exhibits, and other core resources of the byway.

Recommendations

- **Official Byway Attraction Signs:** Work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop a system of byway attraction signs that guide travelers to primary resources associated with the byway, such as wayside exhibits, experience hubs, information centers, scenic overlooks, and other sites. The signs

can be developed with a slightly modified version of the established DOT "Destination/Guide Signs" standards. The addition of the Iowa Byways logo marks it as an official state byway sign (to distinguish from other tourist directional signs) and provides visual unity with byway route identification signs and media.



- **Off-Byway Direction Signs:** Work with municipalities and government entities to develop off-byway directional signs to primary interpretive locations. Site-specific logo signs should be installed to guide visitors to the attraction or resource once they leave the byway route. For example, a green and red background with the Meskwaki tribal logo could direct visitors to the museum. A red, white, and blue Czech flag symbol can guide travelers along the Czech Trail. A brown sign with a “wildlife viewing” logo could

Conceptual Off-Byway Direction Signs



- direct motorists to the Otter Creek Marsh overlook from Chelsea.
- **Experience Hubs:** Place easily recognizable experience hubs in prominent locations along the corridor to serve as focal points that draw the attention of travelers and provide orientation to local interpretive resources and media (see pages 106–118).
- **Online Media:** Include directional information and interactive maps in all online media such as websites, mobile tour websites, and apps (see pages 138–148).



- **Integrate Czech Trail:** Include maps and other wayfinding techniques for integrating the Czech Trail experience into the official scenic byway.
- **Travel Guide:** Develop an interpretive travel guide that includes detailed maps and directional information regarding byway attractions (see pages 154–156).
- **Integrate Online and Traditional Media:** Place the byway website address and QR code on all traditional byway media such as experience hubs, exhibits, and publications.

PLAN MEDIA HOLISTICALLY

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway offers a continuum of immigration success stories that give visitors insight into the unique ways that cultures maintain their own identities, even as they assimilate into the fabric of the nation.

The diversity of forces that have shaped settlement can be seen along the Iowa River. The fertile farmlands and the lush wetlands hint at the richness of the soil, while the neat villages and robust halls and courthouses show that the surrounding communities have prospered. Each town has its own story, but there are sweeping patterns that set the stage for their development. Many people appreciate understanding the reasons that brought immigrants here and why they persevered hardships to make Iowa their home.

Interpretive media can help visitors to discover some of these underlying meanings and appreciate the historical reasons for the cultural landscape that surrounds them.

Connect to Universal Concepts: Media should be organized to interpret the unique personality of each community so that travelers can see the shared human

qualities of seemingly different cultures. Universal concepts such as life and death, parenthood, adolescent rebellion, freedom of speech and religion, and other humanizing commonalities help visitors make emotional and intellectual connections to the byway resources.

Brand and Unify the Experience:

Visually coordinate the color palette, type fonts, and other design elements to create immediate recognition by travelers. Media should be cross-referenced so a visitor can access information that will connect them to related stories, resources, and other media. For instance, publications should direct readers

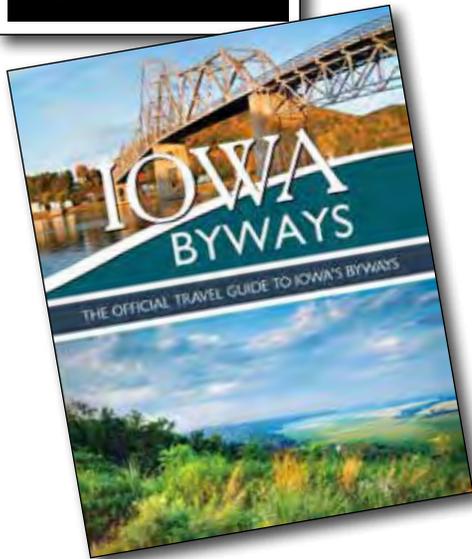
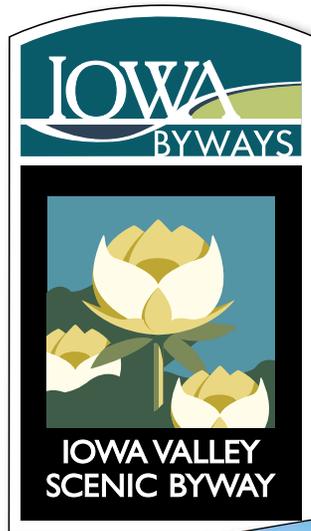
to websites, wayside exhibits, and audiovisual tours.

Diversify Delivery Techniques: Multiple delivery approaches communicate successfully with travelers of many ages, interests, backgrounds, and motivations. Weather and seasons require that alternative forms of media be offered.

Be Accessible: To communicate with the greatest number of people, incorporate a full spectrum of learning styles such as auditory, visual, and tactile. Media should be developed to connect with a variety of travelers including tourists, bus tours, commuters, and families.



Rural scene along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway



Following a set of design guidelines, as has already been done for the Iowa Byways, creates a family of media that is instantly recognizable as belonging to the state's scenic routes.

CREATE A VISUAL IDENTITY

Although much of the landscape along the Iowa River Valley is rural, the road right-of-way can still be a complex of confusing visual distractions that may keep travelers from seeing and discovering the important stories of the byway. A primary goal is to make it easy for people to find the byway and access the significant resources that help them discover deeper meanings and develop an understanding of why these places are special.

The colors and design elements of the media graphics, the materials and construction of the supports, and even the letter styles selected for interpretive inscriptions should reflect the personality

of the byway and should create a pleasing uniformity that is reassuring to the traveler.

The Iowa Department of Transportation has already developed a strong logo that is unified with the other Iowa byways and readily identifies the route for first-time travelers. Road signs featuring the logo unify all byways across Iowa with a distinctively artistic style and color palette. An accompanying Iowa Byways guide displays a coordinated family of byway symbols. The following media recommendations are intended to build from the success of the previous Iowa design work.

Visual Identity Through Design

- The colors that were selected for the byway logo should serve as the palette for other media.
- The Iowa Valley logo should be replicated on all signs, publications, and online media to permit optimal exposure and recognition.
- Employ unified design standards for all signs, wayside exhibits, and interpretive hub supports and frames.
- Utilize consistent design elements for all media like letter size and style, uniform color palettes, and other artistic details.

Coordinated Design Standards

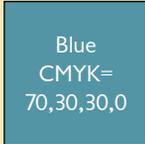
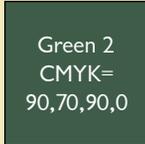
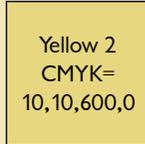
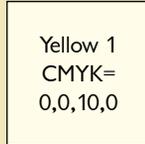
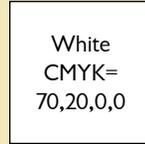
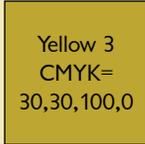
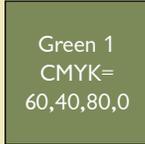
To provide a well-organized and cohesive travel experience, all media should be graphically unified. The repeated use of graphic elements like color, font, and symbols will group media into recognizable visual families on each byway. Consider the following recommendations when designing media:

Color Palette

A consistent family of colors helps to organize media and make words easier to read and understand. Color can also evoke feelings and set moods and attitudes.

In 2010, the Iowa Department of Transportation Office of Media and Marketing developed logos and color palettes for all existing scenic byways and for a comprehensive Iowa Byways brand. Descriptions, policies, and regulations are addressed in the “Iowa Byways Brand Guidelines” document for each byway. According to the document, the brand is ultimately the byway’s public identity, which is intended to create awareness of the program and its

Recommended Media Color Palette

 <p>Blue CMYK= 70,30,30,0</p>	 <p>Green 2 CMYK= 90,70,90,0</p>	 <p>Yellow 2 CMYK= 10,10,600,0</p>	 <p>Yellow 1 CMYK= 0,0,10,0</p>	 <p>Black CMYK= 70,20,0,0</p>	 <p>White CMYK= 70,20,0,0</p>
Curved headers, footers, drop caps, tint boxes	Curved header accent lines, subheadings	Curved header accent lines	Tint boxes, accents	Main text, captions, credits, borders	Text over dark colors, photo borders
 <p>Dark Blue CMYK= 90,50,40,18</p>		 <p>Yellow 3 CMYK= 30,30,100,0</p>	 <p>Green 1 CMYK= 60,40,80,0</p>	Additional family colors	
Subheadings, quotes, drop caps					

benefits and to encourage and enhance the traveler experience.

The color palette developed for use on the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway should be repeated in the design of all media forms. The palette offers a good variety of contrasting and complementary colors that result in a consistently recognizable pattern.

Maintaining a family of consistent color is especially important because of the extreme contrast of existing color schemes along the byway: from the bright green-and-red of the Meskwaki Settlement to the stark black-and-white of the Amana Colonies.

Recommended Typography

CHELTENHAM BT

Main titles and headings

BrushTip Travis

Headings and subheadings, handwriting
(quotes, photos)

Garrison Sans

Main text

Garrison Sans Italic

Photo captions

Garrison Sans Italic

Photo credits

Typography

The selection of typefaces and sizes create a personality and determine the readability of the writing on interpretive media. Each typeface expresses personality and sets a tone that reflects the organization or the message that is being interpreted.

Combinations of various styles can add an interesting hierarchy to the media design and help create specific personalities for each message. Fonts can appear lighthearted and fun, informal, businesslike, old-fashioned, rustic, or legalistic. Stylized fonts attract attention for titles and short headings but can be burdensome to read in longer texts.

On the Iowa Byways logo, the typeface for “IOWA” is a derivative of Cheltenham BT set in all caps. The original typeface was manipulated to blend with the abstract graphic representations of hills and valleys. The recommended font for main titles and headings on most byway media is **Cheltenham BT Bold**, evoking the timeless nature of the Iowa Valley region and creating consistency between media.

BrushTip Travis is an informal script font that provides contrast to the more formal fonts. It serves a similar purpose

as the “True natural beauty” font used alongside the curving line in the Iowa Byways official guide booklet. These types of fonts welcome viewers and invite them to explore interpretive media. BrushTip Travis is recommended for some titles and headings, such as on wayside exhibits, for subheadings, and to emulate handwriting. It can add an informal handwritten style to photographs or quotes.

Simple, familiar fonts work best for longer text that require more reading. **Garrison Sans** is recommended for the main text on byway media. Garrison Sans is used in the Iowa Byways publication, and it is also similar to Gill Sans, which is the font used on the byway logos. It is a sans-serif font (no decorations on the end of strokes) that is easy to read. Garrison Sans also works well for photo captions and credits.

A **hierarchy of type sizes** is also important to emphasize the relative significance of various messages. Typically, a main title is the largest size, followed by subheadings, main text, captions, and credits. These varying sizes help to create a logical visual sequence for readers to follow.

Repeating Graphic Elements

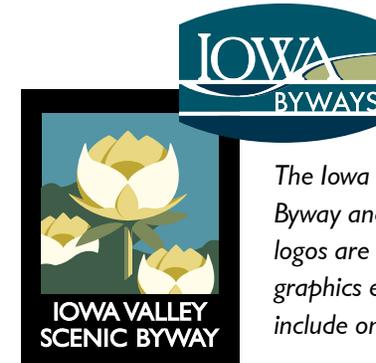
Another important factor that contributes to a unified design style is the use of repeating graphic elements. These artistic details, in combination with the color and typography schemes, develop a unique identity for the byway.

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and Iowa Byways logos are essential graphic elements that should be included on all byway media, from interpretive signs and publications to digital websites and apps. They provide a unified brand for the byway and for the Iowa Byways program.

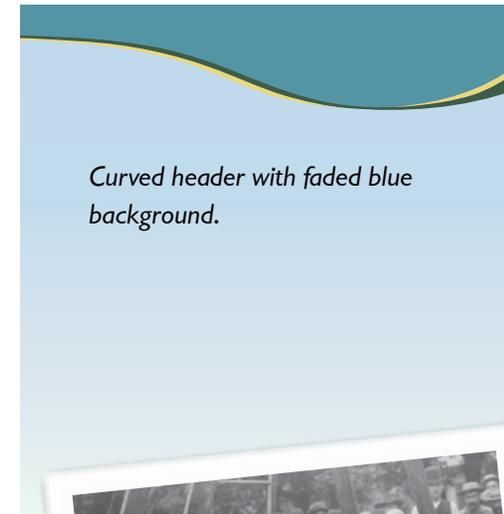
According to the Iowa DOT, “the colors and curves in the Iowa Byways logo are an abstraction of the undulating Iowa landscape. Individual logos for the individual byways in the Iowa Byways program were developed in an intentionally simple graphic style so as to appear as a recognizable and memorable graphic theme, descriptive of the character and experience of the byway, and as a safe and effective wayshowing tool when displayed on signage.”

Other repeated graphic elements on future interpretive media will reinforce the already existing design identity. These should include:

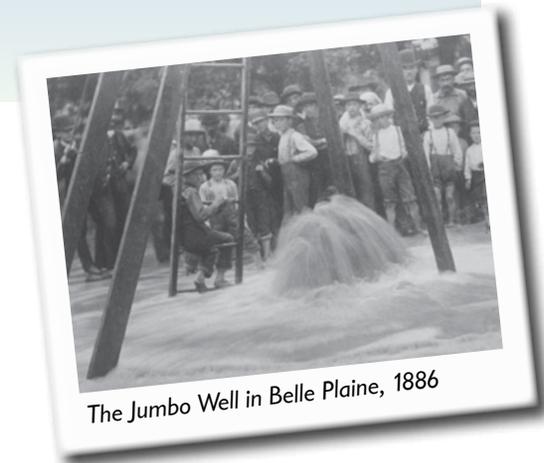
- Curving header bars comprised of gently interwoven contrasting dark, medium, and light colors from the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway color palette. The curve is reminiscent of the wave pattern in the Iowa byways logo.
- Faded light blue backgrounds with a gradient on interpretive media.
- White, snapshot-style borders for photos, tilted slightly, and with drop shadows.
- Large focal point images to draw attention.
- Byway website addresses and QR codes that link to the Iowa Byways website.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and Iowa Byways logos are essential graphics elements to include on all media.



Curved header with faded blue background.



Snapshot photo effect with white feathered borders, caption, tilt, and shadow.

INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE HUBS

Experience hubs are thematic kiosks that orient byway travelers to significant regional attractions and stories. To be effective, they must be prominently placed where motorists will see them and in public locations where travelers expect to find them. Unlike staffed welcome centers, they are on duty 24 hours a day throughout all seasons and weather. They have the ability to capture the attention of travelers who are passing through serendipitously.

Experience hubs installed at natural entry portals to the byway corridor can provide opportunities for introducing impromptu travelers to the scenic byway. The byway corridor roughly parallels the busy travel route of Interstate 80 to the south. The Amana Colonies are within ten miles of the Interstate. The byway intercepts the historic Lincoln Highway in several places, including Belle Plaine, Chelsea, and Tama. The well-traveled US Highway 30 connects with the corridor in the western half of the byway.



The most effective experience hubs are those installed in highly visible areas where visitors naturally gather, like this one designed with a maritime theme along the Door County Coastal Byway (Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters design).

Experience Hub Concept Design: Front Side (Chelsea)



Experience Hub Design

The byway identity will benefit from a consistent, recognizable pattern of design. Sign and kiosk structures present an opportunity to visually organize interpretive media into artistic repetition that can be easily identified by travelers.

The planning team proposes an experience hub design that represents the undulating ridges of the river valley and uses timber and black steel that compliments the cultural heritage and blends appropriately with the natural areas of the rural landscape. This design is also reflective of other Iowa scenic byway structures which helps travelers to associate and identify similar patterns as they travel.

Each kiosk structure should:

- Exhibit a unified design with all other interpretive media.
- Reflect regional themes through unique graphics cut into the steel frame and through the messages included on each panel.
- Be highly visible to travelers, but not overpower existing agency and site entry signs at welcome centers, parks, and attractions.

- Appear rustic and durable in rural sites, but be formal enough to fit into urban settings.
- Appear elegant, but be economically produced.
- Be easily replaced, modified, or repaired.

Interpretive Signage

Each experience hub will exhibit four interpretive panels—two panels on each side of the structure:

1. **Byway Overview:** The first panel introduces the byway and explains what makes it unique. It includes a map of the byway, photos, and brief text that reveals the character and uniqueness of the byway.
2. **Community Attractions:** The panel adjacent to the Byway Overview features a map of the community where the hub is located, including nearby byway attractions. Photos with captions describe the significant local resources.
3. **Natural Wonders:** Located on the second side of the hub, this panel describes the natural and recreation-based attractions of the byway and

includes a map and photos of key resources.

4. **Cultural Treasures:** Also located on the second side adjacent to Natural Wonders, this panel interprets the historic and cultural resources of the byway and includes a map and photos of key attractions.

The panels are sized at 36"-by-36" and would be produced with ½"-thick high-pressure laminate installed on weathering steel backing. This affordable material allows for full-color, high-resolution signs that are resistant to damage and vandalism. A 10-year warranty against fading and delaminating is standard.

Experience Hub Concept Design: Back Side (Chelsea)



IOWA VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY

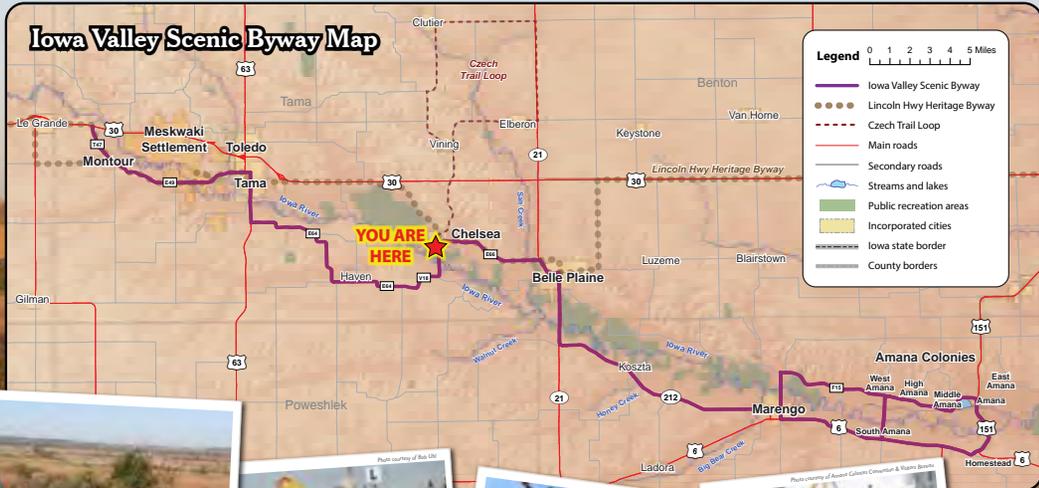


The American lotus flower is the symbol of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, linking the Amana and Meskwaki cultures. Visit Lily Lake in the Amana Colonies to experience the blooms.



Explore the Iowa River Valley

This byway meanders 77 miles through the Iowa River Valley. The Meskwaki Settlement, the only tribal community in Iowa, welcomes travelers at the western gateway. The Amana Colonies, one of the largest historic communes in America, greets eastern travelers. In between, discover natural areas brimming with wildlife and lively towns celebrating their Czech, Belgian, and German roots.



Rolling fields and wetlands cloak the Iowa River Valley.



Explore Meskwaki history and customs at the Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum.



The byway celebrates local stories through art, like the "Butter Cows" sculpture in Toledo.



Step back in time to experience the communal living traditions of the Amana Colonies.



www.iowabyways.org



Experience Hub Overview Panel Concept (Chelsea)

The main panel of each experience hub will provide an overview of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and its unique characteristics. A map displays the entire byway with an obvious "YOU ARE HERE" symbol. Major communities, roads, public recreation areas, and streams are identified. Active snapshot-style photos showcase a few of the main resources. A short message with a photo describes the significance of the American lotus flower as a symbol of the byway.

36"

Experience Hub

Community Panel Concept (Chelsea)

Adjacent to the Overview Panel, this panel will interpret the particular community in which it is located, including its unique characteristics and some of the “must-see” attractions with photos and captions. An enlarged map of the community and surrounding area shows the primary resources and uses a “YOU ARE HERE” symbol. Additional smaller roads are included on this map to aid in navigation. This panel would be unique on each experience hub.

Explore Chelsea

Gateway to the Czech Trail



Otter Creek Marsh Wildlife Area
This 3,300-acre wildlife area offers hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation. A stylized eagle-shaped platform offers scenic views of the wetlands.

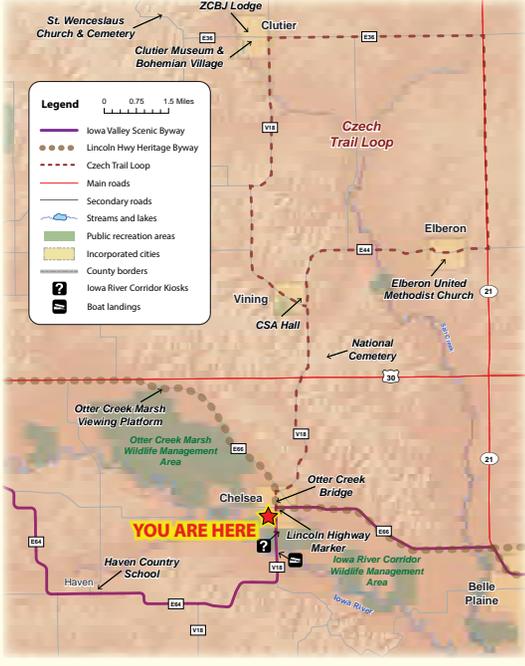
A town at many crossroads, Chelsea is where the Lincoln Highway intersects the Iowa River Scenic Byway and where the Czech Trail begins. Born as a stop on the first railroad line across Iowa, Chelsea is famous for its citizen's determination to sustain the community despite the reoccurrence of devastating floods.

Haven School
This 1872 one-room schoolhouse operated until 1968. It is now a museum open by appointment.

Otter Creek Bridge
This unique bridge in Chelsea was reconstructed in the style of the original 1929 Lincoln Highway bridge.

Lincoln Highway Marker
Located in front of the Chelsea Fire Station, this marker was one of the more than 2,000 placed along the highway in 1928.

Chelsea/Czech Trail Area Byway Attractions



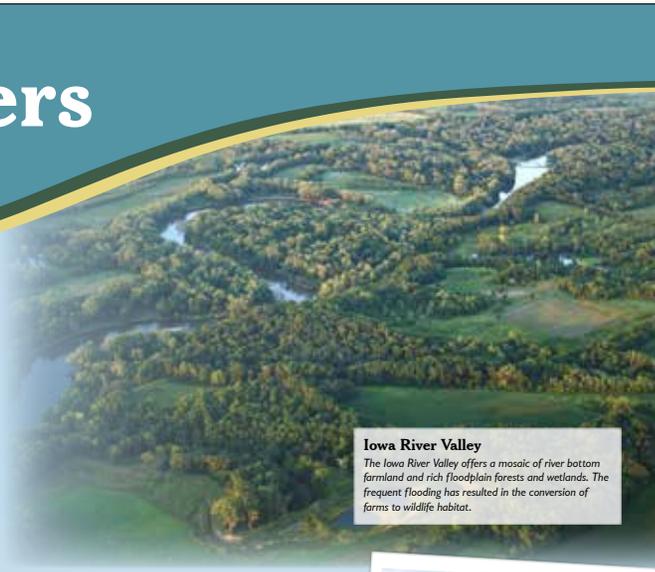
St. Wenceslaus Church and Cemetery
Experience a strong sense of Czech culture at this 1900 church and cemetery, named after the patron state of Bohemia.

Clutier Museum & Bohemian Village
Discover Czech history at the local Clutier museum and tour historic buildings, including a country school and town jail.

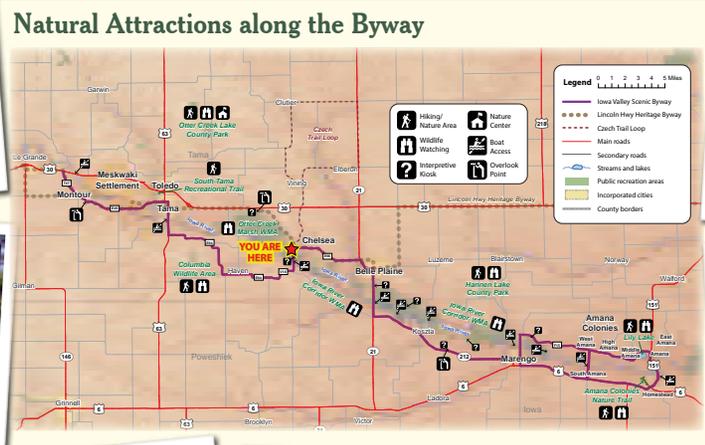
CSA Hall
Preserved in Vining, this 1913 meeting hall was part of a fraternal organization known as the Czechoslovak Society of America.

Natural Wonders

The Iowa River is the lifeblood that flows into countless river bottom wetlands, sustaining a wealth of plants and wildlife. This rich corridor is a playground for hunters, fishers, birders, and paddlers. Numerous parks and wildlife areas along the byway offer access to these wildlands.



Iowa River Valley
The Iowa River Valley offers a mosaic of river bottom farmland and rich floodplain forests and wetlands. The frequent flooding has resulted in the conversion of farms to wildlife habitat.



Experience Hub Natural Wonders Panel Concept (Chelsea)

Located on the second side of the kiosk, this natural history panel interprets the geological, ecological, and outdoor recreation themes of the byway, with a map identifying scenic overlooks, trails, streams, wildlife areas, parks, and preserves where visitors can explore the outdoors. Universal symbols indicate areas for hiking, wildlife watching, boating, scenic overlooks, nature centers, and interpretive kiosks. This panel would be repeated on each experience hub.

Experience Hub

Cultural Treasures Panel Concept (Chelsea)

Adjacent to the Natural Wonders panel on the second side of the kiosk, the cultural resources panel interprets the communities, historic sites, archaeological sites, and the sense of place experiences along the byway. The map lists the significant attractions in each community. This panel would be repeated on each experience hub.

Cultural Treasures



Aman Colonies Visitors Center
Built in a 1942 corn crib, the Aman Colonies Visitors Center located in Aman is a good place to learn about the many attractions and activities along the byway.

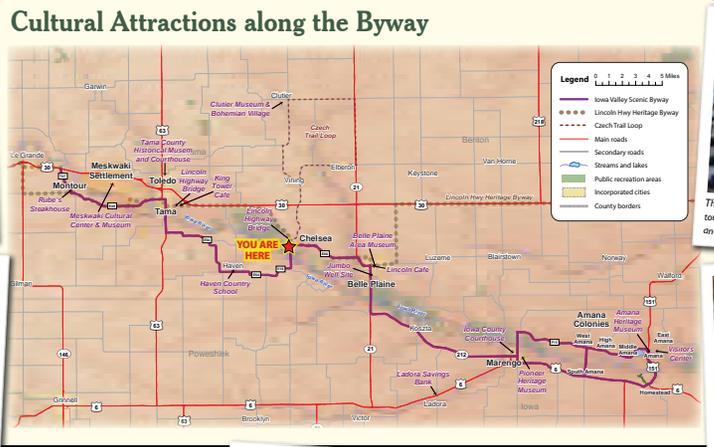
Explore the diverse cultures of the Iowa River Valley. The Meskwaki Settlement is Iowa's only Native American community. The German Aman Colonies is one of the largest and longest-lived historic communes in the country. The Czech Trail reveals Bohemian traditions. Byway towns celebrate their heritage and hospitality.



Meskwaki Settlement

Founded in 1957, this was the first tribally purchased land in the nation. Visit the Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum (above) to discover the fascinating story of these resilient people.

Cultural Attractions along the Byway



Legend

- 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
- Iowa Valley Scenic Byway
- Lincoln Hwy Heritage Byway
- Czech Trail Loop
- Main roads
- Secondary roads
- Streams and lakes
- Public recreation areas
- Incorporated cities
- County borders



Audio Tours

The history of this region comes to life with interpretive audio tours available in the Aman Colonies, Marengo, Belle Plaine, and other byway sites. Just watch for the signs!



Tama-Toledo

The historic Lincoln Highway traveled through Tama. Visit the famous 1915 bridge (above) and 1937 King Tower Cafe. Toledo has been the county seat of Tama County since 1833. Visit the Tama County Historical Museum located in the 1870 jail.



Chelsea Czech Trail

Take a scenic side trip on the Czech Trail and discover the immigrant heritage of several small communities in the rolling landscape of the "Bohemian Alps."



Belle Plaine

Belle Plaine, founded in 1862, celebrates its colorful history. Visit the Belle Plaine Area Museum, the site of a famous "Jumbo Well," and the beautiful downtown rebuilt after a devastating fire.



Marengo

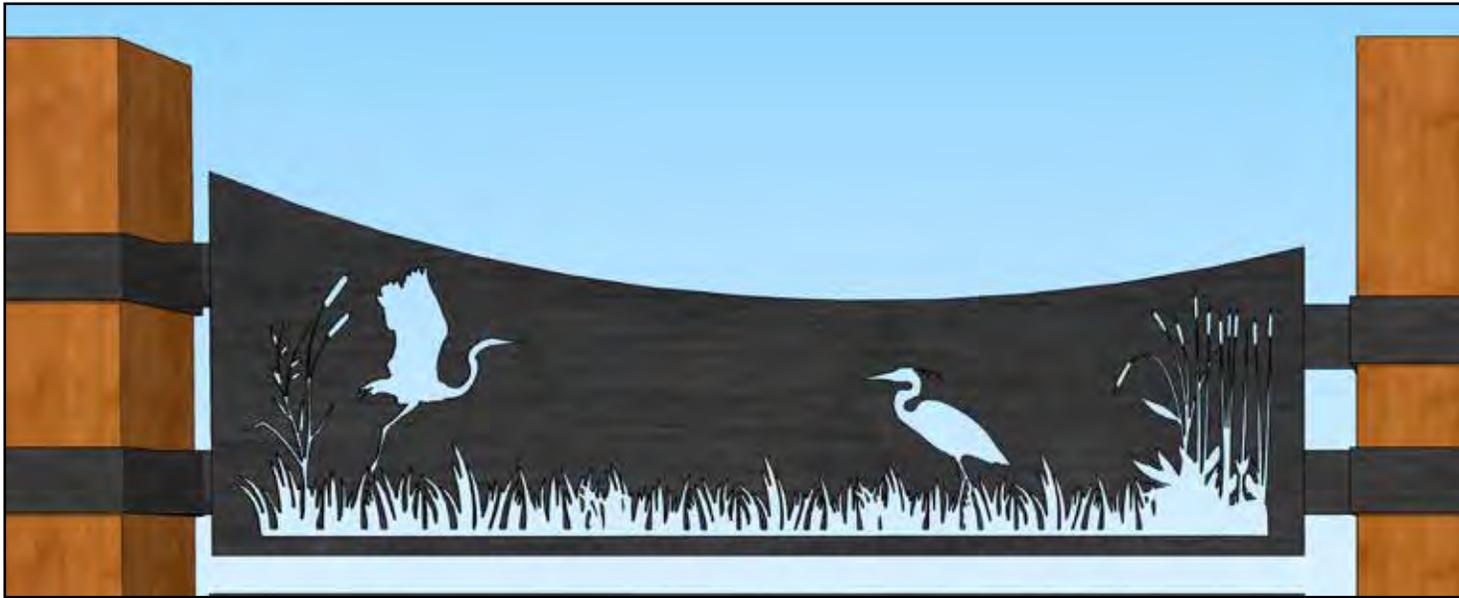
Marengo has served as the Iowa County seat since 1845. Climb the tower of the 1892 courthouse (above), and explore history at the Pioneer Heritage Museum.



Aman Colonies

Discover the fascinating history of the country's largest commune, founded in 1855. Visit the Aman Heritage Museum, view historic buildings, and browse hand-crafted goods.

Detail of Experience Hub Steel Arch Cut-outs (*Chelsea*)



One arch on the experience hub features cut-outs that represent the restored wetlands and wildlife along the Iowa River Valley corridor.



The other arch represents the unique cultures along the byway by illustrating dancers: Czech polka dancers, German children dancing around a Maypole, and Meskwaki Pow Wow dancers.

Recommended Experience Hub Sites

Since experience hubs are intended to alert travelers to nearby attractions, they should be centrally located in areas where travelers already gather—where they are searching for amenities and at sites where there are significant stories to experience. These hubs are prominent enough to draw the attention of first-time visitors and to capture the attention of new audiences that are passing by.

Several locations are recommended for experience hubs representing the major regions of the byway:

1. Montour: City Park

This is the western entry to the byway. Located on the west side of Main Street (part of the byway), the park is public and visually inviting to motorists with a playground and picnic shelter. In addition to general information about the scenic byway, some stories to be shared could include the tragic death of the Lincoln Highway Association's first Secretary and promoter Henry C. Ostermann in 1920 near this area, and the history of Rube's Steak House as a prototype "grill your own" steak restaurant.

2. Meskwaki Settlement: Cultural Center and Museum

Apart from the casino and store, the Cultural Center and Museum is one of the most inviting public areas in the Meskwaki Settlement. It is free and provides friendly orientation information to visitors. A grassy area in front of the building would provide information to byway travelers, even when the museum is closed. The museum is located about a mile south of Highway 30 (byway route) on several meandering roads. Clear direction signs from the byway to the museum will be important to travelers. The story of the tribe's immigration across Iowa and its settlement should complement other byway information on one of these panels.



Montour City Park (from Main St.)





3. Tama: South Tama Recreation Trail intersection or Tama County OHV Park

Two public sites along the byway in Tama offer possibilities for an experience hub that interprets this diverse area. On the west side of Tama, a hub could be installed adjacent to a parking area for the South Tama Recreation Trail, located on the north side of County E49 (byway route). An existing byway wayside exhibit on the south side of the road interprets pollinator-friendly practices.

On the south side of Tama, a hub could be



installed at the entrance to the Tama County OHV Park on the east side of Highway 63 (byway route). This site provides excellent visibility for the hub, a large gravel parking lot, and access to restrooms. Landscaping around the hub would make the site more aesthetically pleasing for travelers.



4. Chelsea/Czech Trail: City Hall

As a gateway to the Czech Trail and the Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area, Chelsea is a logical site for an experience hub. The City Hall and Library, located on the west side of Station St. (byway route), has open area adjacent to the building. Street parking is available and, when open, the staff at the city office can provide assistance. The south face of the city building has no windows and therefore offers an excellent opportunity to create a streetscape mural to draw the attention of motorists on the byway.

Panels would introduce the city's resilience to flooding and provide information about the Czech Trail.



5. Belle Plaine: Area Museum or Prairie Park

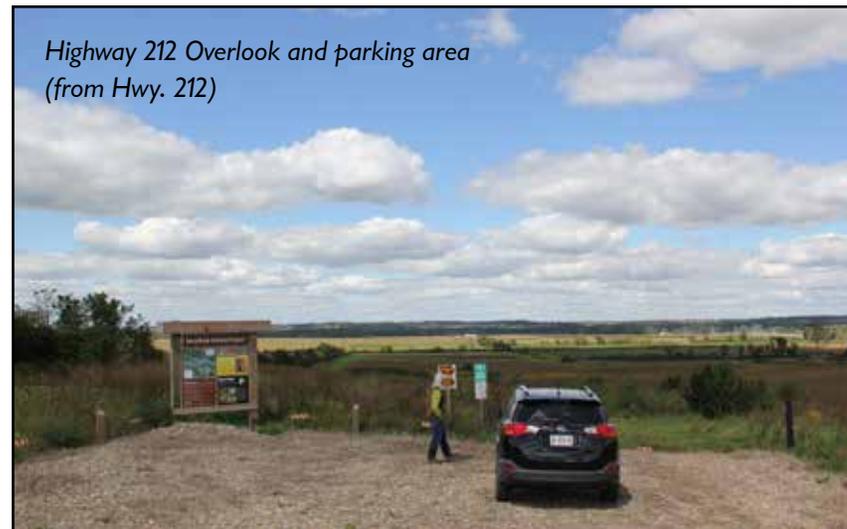
Belle Plaine is an important historic community that represents the middle region of the byway. The Belle Plaine Area Museum on Main Street is located just two blocks east of Highway 21 (byway route) with ample street parking. When open, the museum offers restrooms, helpful staff, and information about the community. A hub could be installed along the sidewalk at the edges of the building or in the public space to the east of the building.

Prairie Park is located on the east side of Highway 21 (byway route) south of town. This beautiful location includes a parking lot, picnic shelter, and access to

trails through a restored prairie. Existing signs already interpret the Iowa Valley and Lincoln Highway byways, but these could be upgraded to an experience hub.

6. Highway 212 Overlook

The Iowa River Corridor Project parking area on the north side of Highway 212 (byway route) east of Koszta showcases one of the best scenic overlooks of the Iowa River Valley



on the byway. An existing National Wildlife Refuge kiosk includes a map and interpretation of prescribed fire and Barn Owls. Improvements would need to be made on the gravel parking area to accommodate most passenger cars. A raised observation platform with byway interpretation would offer an excellent panoramic view to the valley below and highlight the significance of the site. See page 130 for overlook recommendations.

7. Marengo: Gateway Park and Preserve

This 130-acre park is located on the north side of Marengo, west of County V66 (byway route). The entrance to the park at V66/Eastern Avenue and North Street is an ideal location for a hub with excellent visibility from the byway.

Nearby trails lead around a lake to the Iowa River, offering good opportunities to interpret the natural history. While travelers can currently park along North Street, a small parking lot constructed on the north side of the road would provide a more welcoming



experience with better access. A deck or a walkway might be needed to provide access to the experience hub.

8. Amana Colonies

An outdoor experience hub in the Amana Colonies is desirable to introduce visitors to the byway. It would provide byway information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, due to the Amana policies that restrict the allowable types of signage, identifying an appropriate location for the hub is a challenge.

The front yard of the Amana Colonies Visitors Center on 220th Trail is an ideal location, as the site is already set up to provide traveler amenities with parking, information staff, and restrooms.

The Lily Lake wayside, on the south side of 220th Trail, would be another good

alternative with existing parking, access to the Kolonieweg Trail, and excellent visibility from the byway.

A third option is to locate the experience hub on the north side of 220th St., about

a half-mile west of West Amana at the site of a historic stone quarry. This area is less congested, but would still provide good visibility for byway travelers. The site would need to be developed with a parking area and other amenities.



Front yard of the Amana Colonies Visitors Center (from 220th Trail)



Lily Lake wayside and parking area (from 220th Trail)

WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Wayside exhibits are interpretive panels placed along roads and trails that assist visitors in understanding the stories and meanings associated with resources and landscapes on the byway. Photos, illustrations, and concise messages attract and hold a visitor's attention as they discover the stories and significance of a site.

Wayside exhibits are an effective way to communicate with visitors because they are always on the job regardless of weather or season. When properly placed near resources, they can quickly answer questions that visitors have about the resources. They are a direct and non-intrusive method to connect people with significant stories along the byway.

The best wayside exhibits present messages that are visual, concise, active, and multisensory. See the "Creating an Effective Message" tint box to the right for best practices when designing signs.

Wayside exhibits should tell site-specific stories that bring a resource to "life" and place it into context, connecting it to universal concepts that are relevant to everyone.

Current technologies offer numerous possibilities for enhancing interpretive panels. They can be cut into innovative shapes. Pushbutton audio devices with digital recordings can tell captivating stories using firsthand accounts and sound effects. Tactile elements, such as models and textures, can be added to provide a touch experience. QR (quick response) codes can be incorporated for quick access to websites and multimedia content.



This wayside exhibit along the Illinois Route 66 byway represents the period of significance for the road. (Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters design)

Creating an Effective Message

1. Communicate visually with photos and graphics.
2. Most visitors will look at an interpretive panel for only a few seconds. Apply the 3-30-3 Rule, a hierarchy that provides 3-second, 30-second, and 3-minute message levels.
3. Use simple words, concise sentences, and short paragraphs.
4. Describe with concrete nouns and active verbs. Avoid adverbs and adjectives.
5. Relate to the reader with familiar terms, personal pronouns, metaphors, and quotes.
6. Provide multisensory involvement with tactile and audio devices.



Wayside Exhibit Design Recommendations

Wayside exhibit panels developed for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway should incorporate the following design elements:

Unified design

Structures should match the same style as the experience hubs so they are readily identified as part of the byway's family of signs. This should include:

- Weathering steel supports with thematic cut-out graphics. The top arch should have unique images based on the theme of the panel (lotus flowers, wetland wildlife, vintage cars, river scenery). The Iowa Byways logo should be used on the vertical support to unify with the 2015 Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) wayside exhibits.
- Replication of colors, font styles, and graphic elements on the sign panels.
- Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and Iowa Byways logos prominently displayed.
- Website address and QR code to connect visitors to online content.

Wayside exhibit concept design
 (Lily Lake, Amana Colonies)

Lotus Connections

*As in the water, yet unwet
 by the water, is the lotus leaf.*
 -Ancient Maharratta poem



Pale yellow American lotus blossom (Nelumbo lutea)

American lotus flowers flourish here in Lily Lake. The blossoms are a symbol of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, weaving together the diverse communities that live along the Iowa River. Amana children once gathered bouquets of these flowers to sell to tourists. Meskwaki Indians were welcome neighbors who harvested the lotus root tubers and seeds for food, as they had done for generations.

Edible Flowers



Lotus root tuber

Lotus seedhead

Lily Lake is only 2 to 3 feet deep with a rich muck bottom, perfect for growing American lotus. While the roots are anchored in the muck, the large round leaves rise more than a foot above the water surface. Many cultures eat the mild tasting acorn-like seeds and potato-like roots. Meskwaki Indians may have planted the lotus now found in Lily Lake.



Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Society
 Women sitting next to and wading in Lily Lake collecting American lotus flowers.

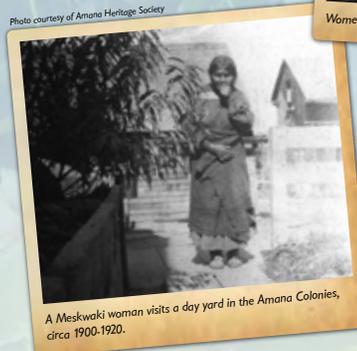


Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Society
 A Meskwaki woman visits a day yard in the Amana Colonies, circa 1900-1920.

Connecting Communities

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway connects the Amana Colonies, one of the nation's largest and longest-lived historic communes, with the Meskwaki Settlement, Iowa's only Native American community 50 miles to the northwest. Both groups chose to separate themselves from the larger American society. By doing so, they found common ground that tied them together in trade and friendship.



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Panel materials

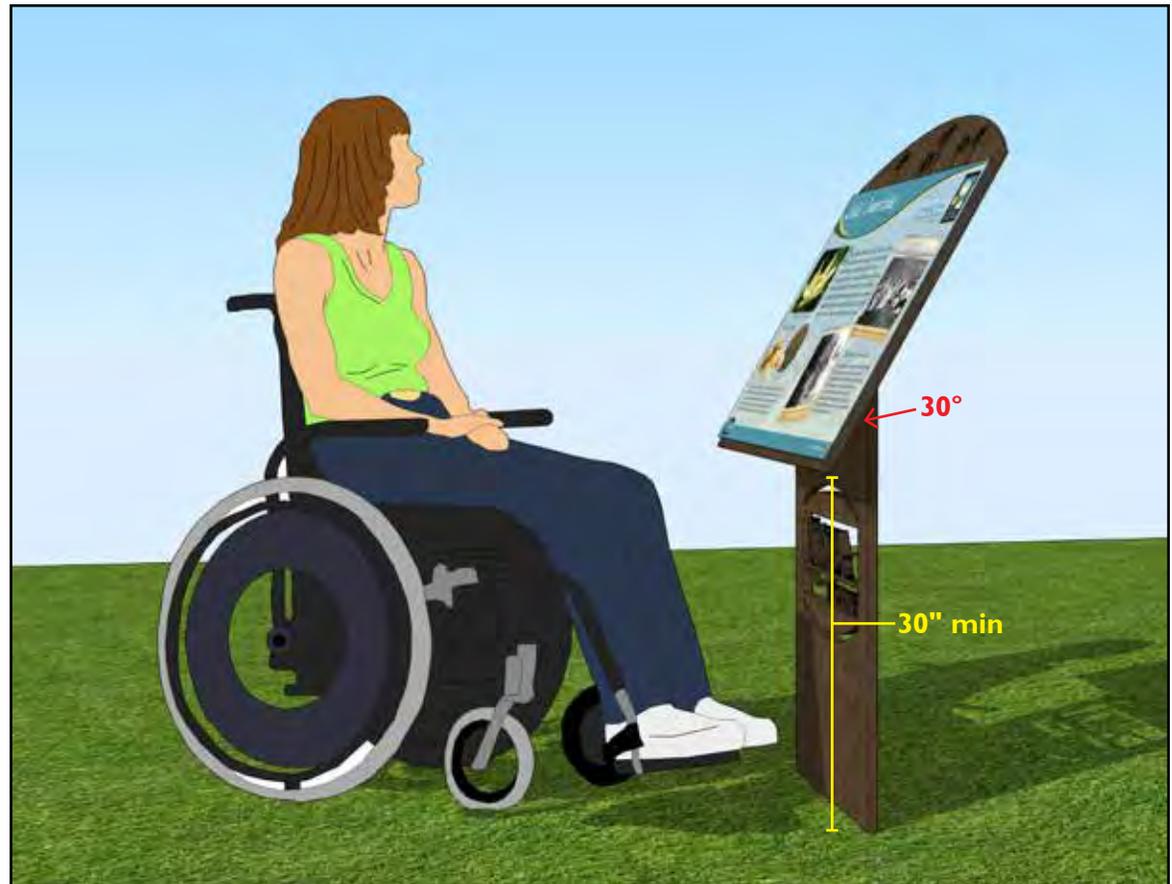
Like the recommended experience hub panels, high-pressure laminate (HPL) material is a durable plastic material that allows for full-color, high-quality images and text. It is resistant to graffiti and scratches. Fabrication companies typically offer a 10-year warranty against fading and delaminating.

Size

Wayside exhibit panels should be large enough to be noticeable and easily read, but not too large that they detract from the landscape. A recommended size of 24"-by-36" replicates the CIG panels already installed.

Installation

Wayside exhibit panels should be installed at a 30-degree angle to the vertical, which offers the best view to a standing or sitting person. They should be placed high enough above the ground, a minimum of 30 inches at the lowest edge, to allow a person in a wheelchair to get close.



Well-designed wayside exhibits provide access for everyone.

Wayside exhibit panel concept design (Lily Lake, Amana Colonies)

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by the water, is the lotus leaf.*
~Ancient Maharratta poem



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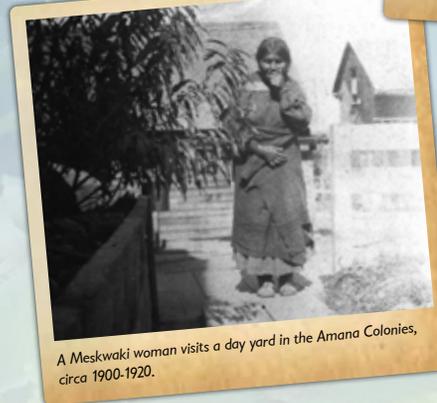
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Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Society



Women sitting next to and wading in Lily Lake collecting American lotus flowers.

Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Society



A Meskwaki woman visits a day yard in the Amana Colonies, circa 1900-1920.

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36"

24"



Historic 1941 well building still standing near the Meskwaki Stone House.

Recommended Wayside Exhibit Sites

Meskwaki Stone House and Well House

The remains of these historic stone structures are located just west of the Meskwaki Powwow Grounds on E49 (Old Highway 30). The Stone House was built as a Civilian Conservation Corps project by the Indian Labor Division in 1941. It was created to stimulate economic growth, but never realized its potential as the Settlement and eventually the highway moved north. Interpretive panels could tell numerous unique stories about the site. See page 128 for development and topic recommendations.



Meskwaki Powwow Grounds on the Iowa River.

Powwow Grounds, Meskwaki Settlement

Located at the intersection of Highway E49 and Battleground Road, this peaceful setting along the Iowa River has been the site of the annual Meskwaki Powwow since 1912. An interpretive panel would show photos from past powwows. The land is also part of the original 80 acres purchased to create the Settlement. This interpretive panel can tell the story of the precedent-setting purchase of tribal land that is unique in American history.

Wildlife Viewing Platform, Meskwaki Settlement

A proposed wildlife viewing platform along Highway E49 east of the Powwow Grounds will offer views of diverse wetland habitat east of the Meskwaki Powwow Grounds. Panels will reveal the Meskwaki perspective on the significance of wildlife species such as Bald Eagles, beaver, muskrat, mink, and turtles. See page 129 for viewing platform recommendations.

“Butter Cow” and Calf Sculpture, Toledo

A wayside exhibit installed near the sculpture would introduce visitors to Norma “Duffy” Lyon, the legendary “Butter Cow Lady” who sculpted cows

out of butter for the Iowa State Fair from 1960 to 2005. Physical access to this site is somewhat problematic; visitors are encouraged to park in the Maid Rite restaurant to the south of the sculpture.

Toledo Stoplight

A quaint red traffic light in the middle of the intersection of High and Broadway Streets was installed in 1949. It is a city icon and is celebrated annually at the Toledo Stoplight Festival. A panel would interpret the significance of the stoplight and early automobile traffic.

Wieting Theater and Opera House, Toledo

A panel installed near the historic Wieting Theater in downtown Toledo would tell the story of Ella W. Wieting, who had this opera house built in 1912 as one of three opera houses memorializing her husband.

Haven Country School, Haven

This 1872 one-room schoolhouse served as an actual school until 1968. It is open by appointment only, so a wayside exhibit would offer interpretation to passing travelers. This is an ideal location to tell the story of one-room country schools and Iowa's early commitment to public education.

CSA Hall-Karel Jonas 279 (Czech Trail), Vining

An interpretive panel installed in front of this historic 1913 building would describe the fraternal organization known as the Czechoslovak Society of America. It offered support for immigrants. Members would receive insurance for health and funeral expenses.

Clutier Museum and Bohemian Village (Czech Trail), Clutier

The museum interprets Czech immigrant culture and preserves several historic buildings, including the town jail. It is open infrequently, so a panel installed here would provide interpretation about Czech culture and immigration even when the facility is closed.

Photo by Charlie Neibergall / Associated Press



The "Butter Cow Lady," Norma Lyon, would be interpreted on a panel installed near the "Butter Cow" and Calf Sculpture in Toledo.



Interior of the restored Haven Country School.

Paul C. Juhl Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa



Historic photo of the 1886 Jumbo Well gushing in Belle Plaine.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Route 6 Tourist Association



Restored gas station at the Pioneer Heritage Museum in Marengo.

ZCJB Lodge (Czech Trail), Clutier

This is the only lodge building in Iowa still tied to its original Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, now known as Western Fraternal Life Association. An interpretive panel would describe the history of the building and focus on the social functions of fraternal organizations.

Jumbo Well, Belle Plaine

A panel with dramatic historic photos would tell the story of this internationally famous “runaway” artesian well. The exhibit could be located at either the memorial boulder that marks the spot of the well or at the commemorative fountain next to the Belle Plaine Area Museum.

Beautiful Plainses Prairie Park, Belle Plaine

The City of Belle Plaine recognizes its roots at this location. Several existing vertical panels interpret topics such as the history of Belle Plaine, plants and animals of the prairie, prairie ecology, Native Americans, the Lincoln Highway, and the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. It is recommended that these be replaced with unified byway designs as they become worn in the future.

Two byway wayside exhibits are recommended here:

1. The site includes a restored tall grass prairie, for which Belle Plaine (beautiful prairie) was named. The natural history of prairies and wildlife can be interpreted.
2. Belle Plaine has had an unusually large number of famous residents who could be interpreted, such as the McLaurry Brothers who were killed at the shootout at the OK Corral, Earl Moran the “glamour girl” artist, and philanthropist Henry Tippie.

Highway 212 Overlook

A raised observation platform is proposed for this site along Highway 212 southeast of Koszta. One or two wayside exhibits installed on the deck could interpret the restored wetlands of the Iowa Valley Corridor, and the history of farming, floods, and conservation. See page 130 for development recommendations.

Pioneer Heritage Museum, Marengo

The museum, located on South Street in Marengo, interprets Iowa County history. A wayside exhibit would tell an overview story of the region’s history, even when the museum is closed.

Gateway Park and Preserve, Marengo

Located on Highway V66 at the north side of Marengo, this park is near the 1844 Emmett expedition campsite where several of the Mormon pilgrims died and were buried. There is a lack of specific information about the actual events that took place, but it offers an opportunity to tell the story of the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois across Iowa.

Marengo City Park

The historic city park in downtown Marengo offers an ideal place to introduce the many famous people who called Marengo home. These include Clarence Whitehill, a noted opera singer, Clifford Edward Berry, who helped create the first digital electronic computer in 1939, and anthropologist Mildred Mott Wedel, a distinguished scholar of prairie-plains archaeology and ethnohistory. Photographs of these individuals would help bring their stories to life.

Lily Lake, Amana Colonies

Lily Lake, created by a break in the Mill Race and a subsequent flooding of an existing slough in 1880, is famous for the American lotus flowers that blanket it in summer. A lotus flower is also the symbol of the Iowa Valley byway. A

panel installed at the wayside park on the south side of Highway 220 can interpret the symbolic connections between the Amana and the Meskwaki cultures on each end of the byway. See pages 120-123 for a conceptual design of this exhibit.

Indian Fish Trap State Preserve / Amana Colonies Nature Trail

Accessible from the Amana Colonies Nature Trail, located at the intersection of Highway 6 and 151 just north

of Homestead, the site of a stone fishing weir is designated an Iowa Archaeological Preserve and is on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. The rare stone weir was used by Native Americans to funnel fish for harvesting. The weir has not been visible since 1999 and is likely buried in silt. A panel at the trailhead can interpret the significance of the resource and illustrate it with historic photos.

Old photo of the Native American fish weir above water.



Photo by Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret

SCENIC OVERLOOK & DEVELOPMENT SITES

Several byway overlook and observation sites could be greatly enhanced with moderate site development to provide optimal viewing opportunities. These sites would become “must-see” attractions and significant focal points for sharing the thematic stories of the byway.

Meskwaki Stone House and Roadside Park

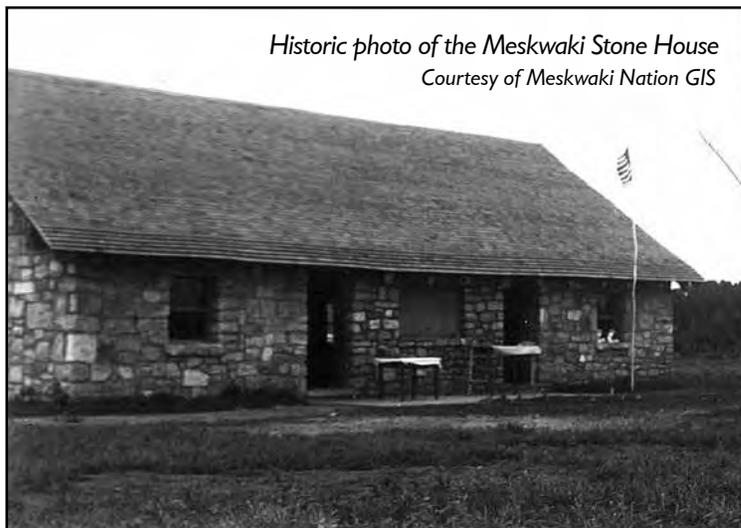
The remains of the Meskwaki Stone House and Well House are located on Highway E49 (old Lincoln Highway) west of the Iowa River crossing. They are currently hidden behind trees and thick undergrowth.

The facility was built in 1941 by 112 Meskwaki men as a Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division project that provided relief during the Great Depression. It was intended to stimulate economic growth by providing an area to sell goods to highway travelers. However, the Settlement, and eventually the highway, moved north.

Developing this interpretive site would be an ideal partnership between the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway, and the Meskwaki Nation. According to Larry Lasley, the Meskwaki Economic Development Director, the tribe is

interested in rehabilitating the stone house, adding a parking lot, and developing a public park area with access to the building. A trail would follow the original Lincoln Highway route (now abandoned) east to the riverfront where old bridge pilings can still be seen.

Wayside exhibits can interpret numerous stories, including the history of the stone house, the purchase of the original 80 acres of tribal land, a battle with the Santee Sioux, the burial of a circus elephant and giraffe, and an automobile breakdown of the infamous bank robber, John Dillinger.



*Historic photo of the Meskwaki Stone House
Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation GIS*

*The remains of
the Meskwaki
Stone House
offer a tangible
connection to the
past.*



Meskwaki Wetlands Wildlife Observation Platform

East of the Iowa River crossing, Highway E49 passes through a diverse area of floodplain wetlands and ponds on Meskwaki land. This area offers exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities, including nesting eagles.

This site should be considered for an elevated wildlife observation deck and parking area. A viewing scope mounted

on the platform could allow close-up views of the eagle nest, waterfowl, wading birds, and other wildlife.

Wayside exhibits installed on the deck would interpret the significance of wetlands and wildlife, with a special emphasis on the Meskwaki perspective of these resources and their traditional relationship to the natural world.



A viewing scope installed on an observation deck provides close-up encounters with wildlife.

Concept rendering of a wildlife viewing deck built over floodplain wetlands along the byway on the Meskwaki Settlement.



Highway 212 Overlook

An Iowa River Corridor Project parking area on Highway 212 between Koszta and Marengo offers one of the best scenic overlooks of the river valley along the byway. An existing National Wildlife Refuge kiosk provides a map and interprets prescribed fire and endangered Barn Owls.

Further development of this site would make it a true destination for byway

travelers. A platform would elevate visitors above the late summer vegetation and give them an unobstructed panoramic view of the valley's mosaic of fields, grasslands, and wetlands. The parking lot, currently covered with rough gravel and grown in with vegetation, should be surfaced with a material more suitable for casual drivers.

Located directly on the byway, this site is ideal for the installation of an experience hub that introduces the byway and provides orientation to travelers. Wayside exhibits installed on the deck would interpret the view, the restored wetlands of the Iowa River Corridor Project, and the history of farming, floods, and conservation.



The Iowa River Corridor Project parking area on Highway 212 offers a panoramic view of the Iowa River Valley.

Montour Overlook

Just east of Montour, the byway follows Highway E49 up a steep hill that offers outstanding views of the surrounding landscape back toward town. This is the hill where Henry Ostermann, Field Director of the Lincoln Highway Association, perished in a 1920 automobile accident.

An elevated wooden deck here would permit visitors unobstructed views of the surrounding landscape back toward Montour. A parking area would need to be located and developed. Wayside exhibit panels mounted on the railings could interpret the landscape and the tragedy of Henry Ostermann.



A viewing platform on Cheyenne River National Scenic Byway in North Dakota is a good model for the proposed Iowa Valley overlooks.

A view of the rolling landscape around Montour from the Highway E49 hill.





Welcome center touch-screen computer exhibits, like this one at the Great River Road Visitor Center in Prescott, Wisconsin, provide trip planning and interpretive opportunities for byway travelers.

WELCOME/VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS

Visitor information centers are important sites to display byway information. In addition to brochures and booklets, a touch-screen computer and associated display can catch the attention of travelers and help them plan trips to byway attractions.

The most active and public visitor information facility on the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway is the **Amana Colonies Visitors Center**. It is recommended that this become the **official welcome center** for the byway, and that information staff be trained to answer questions specifically for byway travelers. This is also an optimal location for an interior exhibit featuring the byway in an interactive format.

Most other locations on the byway are less desirable because they have limited hours or are not places where travelers would seek byway information (museums, restaurants, courthouses, etc.). Some busy locations, such as the Meskwaki Travel Plaza or Casino, can be considered in the future since they service a large cross-section of the traveling public.

The purpose of the byway exhibit is to:

- Make visitors aware of the byway and its attractions.
- Facilitate impromptu planning for a trip along the byway.
- Heighten people's expectations with dramatic visuals of scenic attractions and dynamic events.
- Introduce the "byway brand" through its logo and characteristic fonts and colors.

Design Recommendations

The exhibit will be designed small enough to fit inside welcome centers where space is limited, yet large enough to attract attention.

- The exhibit is topped with sculptural metalwork similar to the experience hub kiosks.
- A large map of the byway placed below the color header introduces the byway and its main attractions. The map panel will provide a short summary of the byway and show a "YOU ARE HERE" symbol. Iconic photos of landscapes and attractions encourage further discovery.

- A rack installed next to the map holds byway brochures and travel guide booklets.
- A durable touch-screen computer housing provides digital information about the byway. For a unique perspective, the byway route can be placed over an air photo, and users can press arrows to fly over the landscape and discover more each attraction as it appears.

A touch-screen computer is an ideal tool for an interior byway exhibit because:

- They take up little space in already crowded information centers.
- They are a durable, widely used technology.
- Information is presented with icons and symbols that are more universally understood than words.
- They are easy to use—reaching out and touching symbols on a screen comes naturally to many people.
- Visitors are empowered to seek their own information rather than asking staff who may be busy or simply are not informed about the entire byway.
- Information can be updated easily.





“The Legacy” mural, installed on the Belle Plaine Area Museum, is the largest brick mural in Iowa at 18-by-28 feet. It represents significant historic events in the community: the Lincoln Highway, the Jumbo Well, agriculture, and the railroad.

BYWAY ARTWORK

Art arouses our senses and appeals to our emotions in ways that words cannot. Thoughts and feelings can be conveyed to many ages and learning levels without the filter of language. Themes of the byway can be reinforced and embellished by creative artwork.

Iowa Byways Artwork

In 2015, Northeast Iowa RC&D received a \$75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the development and construction of public art in Iowa byway communities. Two locations along the Iowa Valley byway have been identified to receive artwork: one at the Amana Colonies Visitors Center (662 46th Ave., Amana), and one in a pocket park along Main Street in historic downtown Belle Plaine, just east of the byway route (711 12th St.).

Murals

Murals are media presented on a roadside scale that can be appreciated by travelers even while driving. Effective paintings can capture a visitor’s attention, present ideas, and create moods. Murals can make the past come alive or give a visitor insight into a

community’s personality.

Murals are a good method for focusing attention on events that most people may not be able to experience personally. Historic events such as a steam locomotive pulling into a station, the bustling activities at harvest time, or a prairie in bloom can be dramatically represented on a mural.

The “Walldogs” is an organization that specialize in creating murals. A community can host a “Walldog Festival,” where artists converge and paint murals reflecting the town’s history.

Along the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway, Belle Plaine has already invested in a number of outstanding murals that highlight significant events in the town’s history. Many other byway towns and villages have buildings with rough, windowless walls that were exposed when an adjacent building was razed. These blank surfaces are the perfect canvas to create artistic expressions of the community’s sense of place and pride.

Several sites are recommended for byway murals to complement those already found in Belle Plaine:

Chelsea

The south side of the Chelsea City Hall is a flat, windowless brick wall that could provide an inviting surface to introduce the story of the town's railroad roots with a locomotive, the immigration of Slovak-Czech people, the historic Lincoln Highway, and the townspeople's resilience to flooding.

Tama

Several buildings in downtown Tama with windowless brick walls facing the byway could serve as spaces for murals (for example, the northwest corner of State and Third Street). A mural might dramatically depict the city's namesake, Chief Taimah, with a portrait and lightning bolts (the name translates to "thunder"). Meskwaki artists could be



This building at the corner of State and Third Street in Tama would be ideal for a mural.

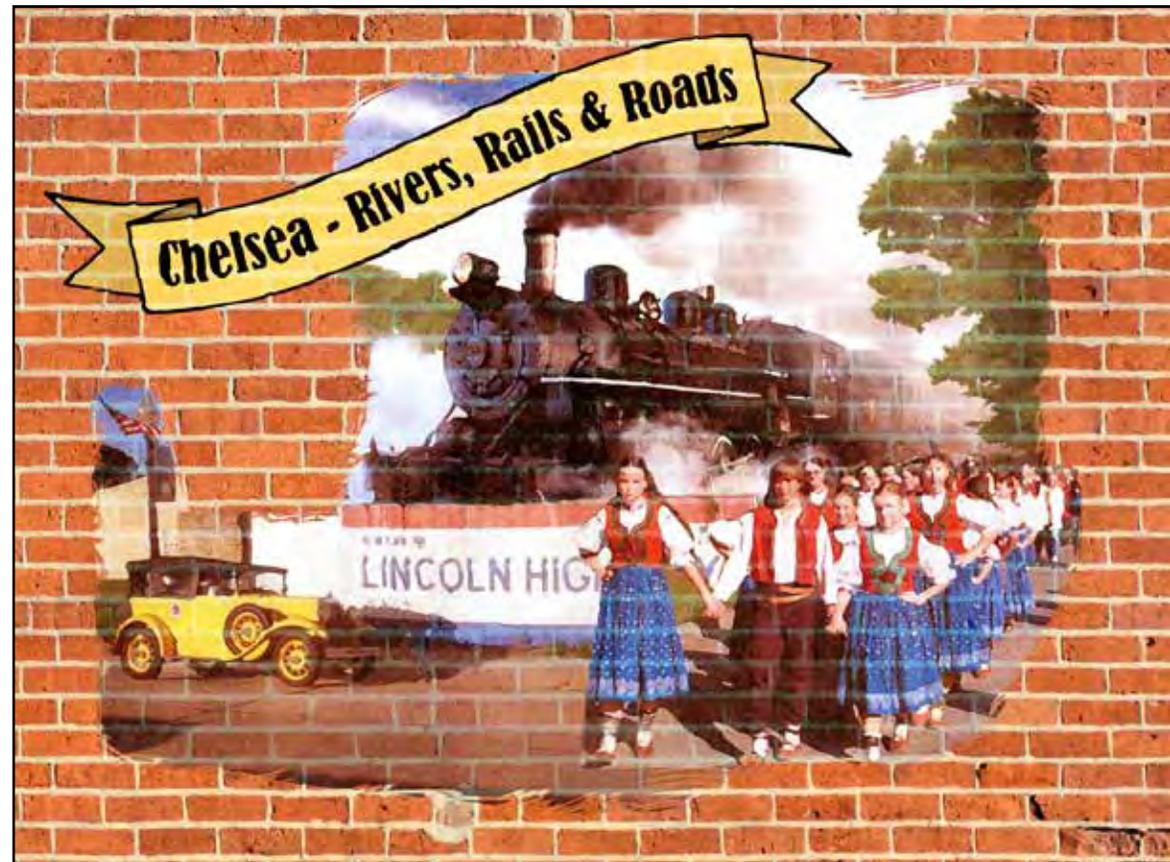
engaged in portraying symbols of the tribe and their connection to the Tama area.

Marengo

A downtown mural, perhaps on the large windowless buildings southeast of the city park or on a cooperating business

building, could feature a collage of the famous people from the city showing each engaged in their work, such as Clarence Whitehall singing opera, Dr. Zopf in a pharmacy, Mildred Mott Wedel in the field conducting an archaeological dig, and Clifford Berry programming the world's first digital computer.

Mural Concept Design: Chelsea





A weathering steel silhouette on Route 66 in Elkhart, Illinois, re-creates the day when child star Shirley Temple stopped for lunch. (Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters design)

Sculptures

Since sculptures occupy space in much the same way as humans occupy space, we interact with them in a different way than with two-dimensional art. Sculptures are tactile—one can touch them and feel their various textures and forms. Looking at sculptures is a dynamic activity—the works change as the viewer moves around them or at different seasons and times of day.

Sculptural pieces can be realistic or abstract concepts that express a community's sense of place. They can even be utilitarian, such as the unique eagle-shaped viewing platform at Otter Creek Marsh.

Sculpture Recommendations

Life-size human silhouettes made of weathering steel are unique sculptural elements that help to personalize a landscape, attract the attention of motorists, and interpret the thematic stories of a byway.

The **Haven Country School**, for example, is a unique site where visitors can learn about the importance of one-room schools in Iowa. The building is well restored, but open only by appointment. Steel silhouette figures of children

playing outside can create a sense of exuberance and liveliness to the historic site. An associated wayside exhibit would show historic photos and tell the story of the school.

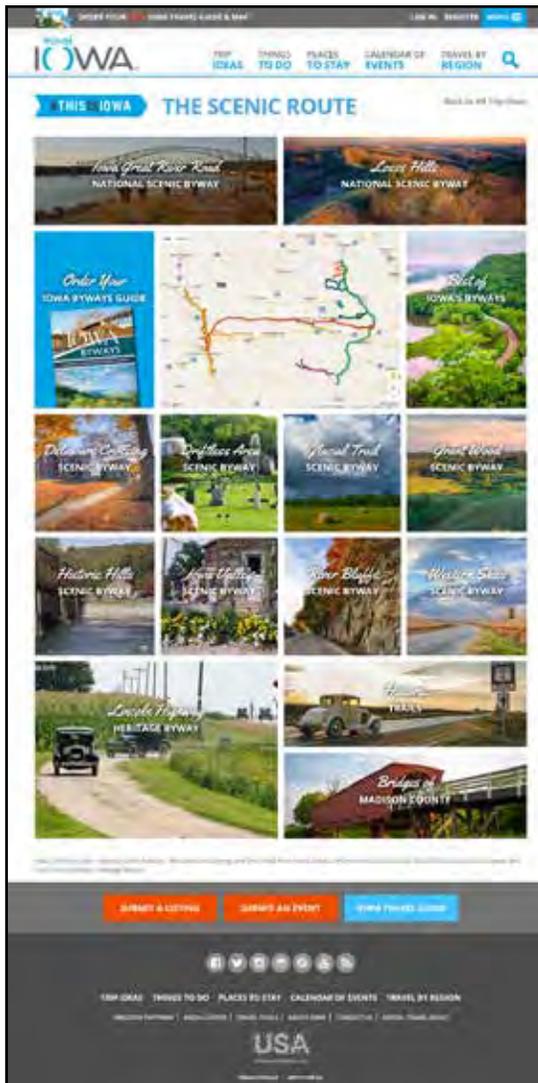
The story of the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois, can be told at **Gateway Park and Preserve** in Marengo. It is a dramatic story of life and death in a winter encampment. A wayside exhibit alone may not be visually captivating enough to gain the attention of a traveler. The addition of a sculptural element, such as the silhouettes of Mormon pilgrims gathered around a grave, is a visually powerful message that draws people into the life-and-death story.

Silhouette figures might also be considered for select sites in the **Amana Colonies** to direct a visitor's attention to stories that are easily missed or that would benefit from a human presence. For example, a figure of a blacksmith working over an anvil outside a historic blacksmith shop or of ladies carrying produce into a historic communal kitchen help place these buildings into a human context and tell the story without words.

Weathering Steel Silhouette Concept Designs



Blacksmith, Amana Colonies



Iowa Byways are featured as part of the Travel Iowa website, www.traveliowa.com/asp/getinspired.aspx?id=12

ONLINE MEDIA

Since most travelers today use online resources for planning trips, a strong, well-developed online presence is imperative for sharing information and interpretive messages about the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Website

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway has an online presence through the statewide Iowa Byways website (iowabyways.org), which now redirects to a Travel Iowa web page focused on the state's scenic byways. Clicking the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway photo square opens the byway's specific website (www.traveliowa.com/asp/trails.aspx?id=8).

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway website, shown on the page to the right, has a clean and modern design that follows the style of the overall Travel Iowa website. A concise narrative provides a summary of the byway, with a link to the PDF tear sheet map. Contact information is conspicuous at the top of the page. An online Google Map shows the byway route. Each community along the byway is featured with its own web page that includes specific contact information,

a Google Map, and links to nearby attractions in the Travel Iowa database.

From a traveler's perspective, the existing website has several limitations:

- It lacks the vibrant photos and visuals that many of the other byways use on their home page to attract attention and highlight resources.
- It does not share the unified design standards established for the byways program that would give it a sense of identity (no byway logo or colors).
- Many of the byway attractions are not included in the Travel Iowa database.
- It does not provide links to byway-specific social media sites, such as Facebook.
- It does not provide byway-specific travel options, such as thematic itineraries.

In conjunction with Iowa's other byways, the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway should consider redesigning its online presence. This would enhance the user experience and create opportunities to interpret the cultural and natural stories of the byway, using the overall theme and sub-themes in this master plan.

ORDER YOUR **2025** IOWA TRAVEL GUIDE & MAP LOG IN REGISTER MENU

travel IOWA TRIP IDEAS THINGS TO DO PLACES TO STAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS TRAVEL BY REGION

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway takes you on a 77-mile ride through the Iowa River Valley. It is anchored by two distinct cultures. At the western end of the byway is Iowa's only Native American community, the Meskwaki Settlement. Visit the Tribal Museums, attend the annual powwow, or try your luck at the Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel anytime.

At the eastern end are the seven villages of the Amana Colonies. The Amana Colonies were created as a communal society in 1855 by Germans fleeing religious persecution. There you can find Iowa's oldest microbrewery, a woolen mill, a furniture shop and a cluster of quality antique shops.

Download a PDF map and guide of the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway

ADD TO FAVORITES

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jessica@ivred.org
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COMMUNITIES

- Amana
- Amana Colonies
- Belle Plaine
- Chelsea
- High Amana
- Homestead
- Marengo
- Middle Amana
- Montour
- South Amana
- Tama
- West Amana

HOTELS

- Amana Colonies Guest House Motel - Amana
- Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel - Tama
- Sudbury Court Motel - Marengo
- Zuber's Homestead Hotel - Homestead

RENTALS

- Bikes To You - Grinnell

ATTRACTIONS

- Amana Heritage Museum - Amana
- Amana Woolen Mill and Salesroom - Amana
- Old Creamery Theatre - Amana

WINERIES & BREWERIES

- Ackerman Winery - Amana
- Fireside Winery - Marengo
- John Ernest Vineyard & Winery - Tama
- Millstream Brewing Co. - Amana

RESTAURANTS

- Ox Yoke Inn - Amana
- P.H.A.T. Daddy's - Marengo
- Rube's Steakhouse - Montour

SUBMIT A LISTING **SUBMIT AN EVENT** **IOWA TRAVEL GUIDE**

The existing Iowa Valley Scenic Byway web pages have a clean and modern design that unify with the rest of the Travel Iowa pages. However, they do not reflect the branding of the Iowa Byways program, which reduces the overall visual identity that ties byway media together.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway website should accommodate the smaller screens of mobile devices. The messages and photos are reduced to a single column. The navigation menu is hidden under the green and white icon in the upper left, which is familiar to smartphone users.

Website Design Recommendations

The **website design** should be updated to encourage discovery and reflect the unified design standards recommended in this plan. This would include:

- Unified font styles, colors, and graphic elements (like the curved header) that reinforce the visual identity of all byway media.
- Dramatic and engaging photographs of byway scenery and attractions.
- Banner images on the home page that change every few seconds to showcase the variety of byway resources during the seasons. Community brands (slogans, catch phrases, and images) should be used to reinforce existing marketing efforts and to develop continuity.
- Links to byway-specific social media options, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, on each page to encourage sharing and interaction.
- Contact information on every page so that visitors can ask questions.
- Other byway media, such as on-site experience hubs, wayside exhibits, audio tour sites, and brochures, to encourage further investigation.

- Appropriate layout and design for viewing on smart phones and other mobile devices.

Website Navigation Recommendations

The **website navigation** should be specific to the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway and include links to pages that are most important to visitors planning their trip. Main navigation links include:

- **About:** Include a general overview of the byway, a brief history of its development, a list of byway board members, and contact information for more information.
- **Explore the Byway:** Includes links to explore more about each of the byway communities and the resource categories (scenic and natural attractions, historic and archaeological attractions, cultural attractions, and recreational destinations).
- **Plan Your Trip:** Includes an interactive byway map to be used for planning and while driving the byway. Different icons would show the location of attractions and categorize them by topic—when a user clicks on an icon, they see a concise description and photo of the attraction, with a link to a

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Website Concept Design

Clear and obvious navigation categories link to the most important pages.

Dramatic, focal-point banner images change every few seconds to show different areas and seasons. Active phrases interpret the byway.

Logo, font styles, colors, and curved header replicate style of other media.

Snapshot images are informal and connect visitors to interpretive messages.

Upcoming events section highlights byway and community events.

Other printed media should be downloadable.

Provide easy access to other types of digital media.

Contact information and social media icons displayed on every page.

ABOUT EXPLORE THE BYWAY PLAN YOUR TRIP EVENTS GALLERIES

Watch for Wildlife
Otter Creek Marsh Overlook

Discover the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway

Travel the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway on a 77-mile ride along the Iowa River. The route is anchored in the west by the Meskwaki Nation and in the east by the Amana Colonies, two distinct cultures. In between, discover historic small towns, expansive vistas, and diverse wildlife viewing areas.

Visit the Amana Colonies, an 1800s German settlement

Upcoming Events

- Meskwaki Powwow, Aug. 10-13. Info: meskwaki-powwow.com
- 7th Annual Chelsea Car Show, July 29, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Oktoberfest, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, Amana Colonies. Info: festvalinamana.com

Discover the history of the Meskwaki Nation

Click to download byway travel guide | Click to download byway brochure

Contact us: 319-622-3264 or jessica@ivrtd.org

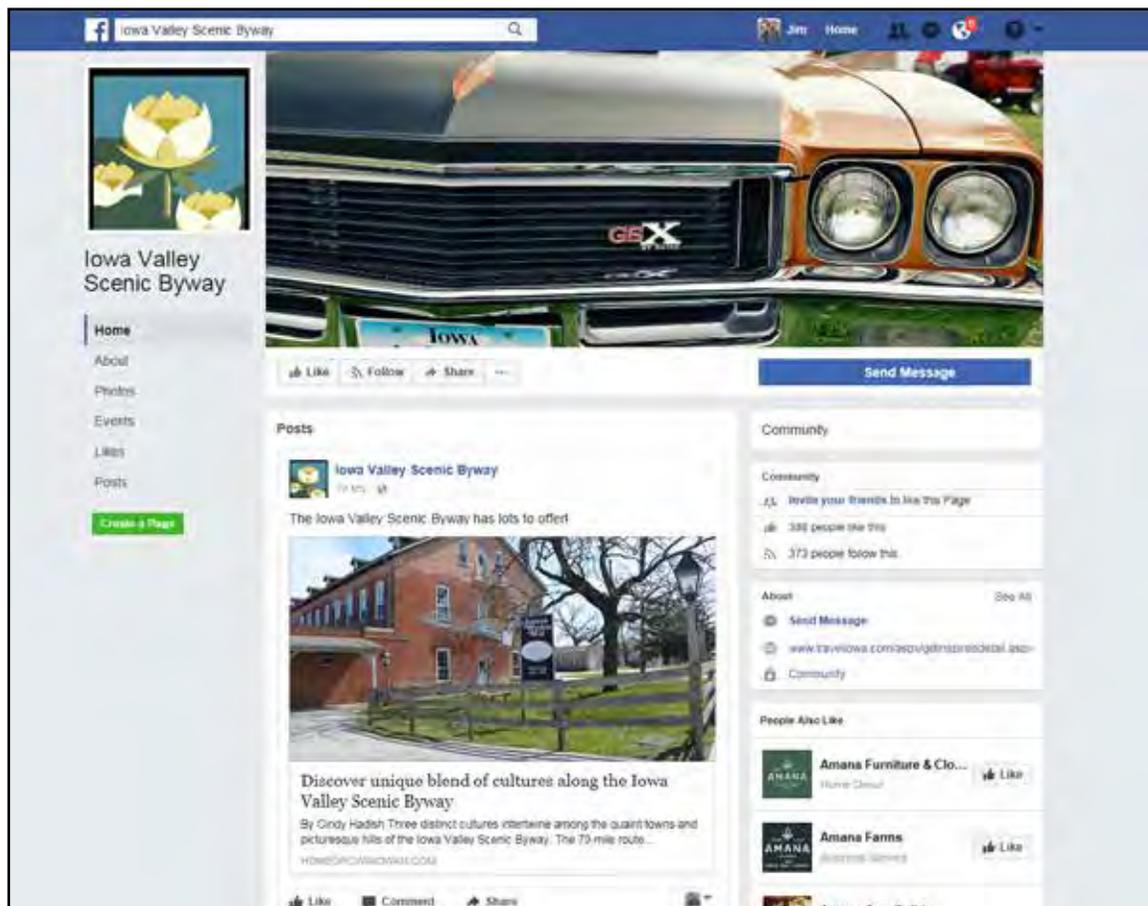
Copyright ©2017 Iowa Valley Scenic Byway

more detailed description. This section also can include suggested itineraries based on topics (attraction categories).

- **Events:** Includes news stories and events that are specific to the byway or its communities. It is important to keep this updated to show that the

byway is actively supported.

- **Gallery:** This heading links to various photo albums showcasing the byway's communities and attractions by category.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Facebook page includes regular postings and updates.

Social Media

In a Google Travel Survey of 2014, over 83% of the 3,500 respondents cited social networking as a source of inspiration in their travel planning. Since the public prefers to seek information and inspiration through these sites, it is logical that the byway should utilize them as well.

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway already uses Facebook to share information about current events such as festivals, special sales, and newsworthy happenings. Efforts should be made to increase the number of interpretive posts (highlighting significant historical and natural stories along the byway), which can help boost the number of followers on the page.

Additional social media opportunities for Iowa Valley include Twitter (text messages limited to 140 characters), YouTube (sharing videos), Instagram (sharing square photographs with filters applied), and Pinterest (“pinning” images to themed bulletin boards).

Social media sites require time and considerable effort to keep them current and pertinent. Their value is in the instantaneous communication with a large audience at a minimal expense.

MOBILE DIGITAL MEDIA

People are using smartphones and digital tablets at an accelerating rate. A survey conducted in 2015 found that 68% of American adults own a smartphone, which has increased from 35% just four years earlier (Pew Research Center). The same study reported that 45% of American adults owned a digital tablet.

Perhaps even more telling is that 86% of people between 18 and 29 own a smartphone, along with 87% of people living in households that make at least \$75,000 annually (2015 Pew Research Center).

In addition to the increased use in smartphones, it is important to note that use of other devices such as computers are remaining steady or declining especially among younger adults. Smartphones have become the all-purpose, go-to technology. The implications for communicating information about byways are staggering and the need to understand the parameters of smartphone technology is paramount to success.

Audio Tours

Audio tours have always been an effective method for interpreting messages along a scenic byway, since travelers have stretches of time driving from one point to the next. Interpretive audio provides short clips of narration, sound effects, and music themed to specific sites along the byway.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Audio Tour

An existing Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Audio Tour interprets many resources in the Amana Colonies, Belle Plaine, and Marengo area. The tour is accessed by phone through a company called OnCell. A total of 52 audio stops are currently available along the route—17 in the Amana Colonies, 20 in Belle Plaine, 13 in Marengo, one in Ladora, and one in Koszta. See Appendix 2 for a complete list.

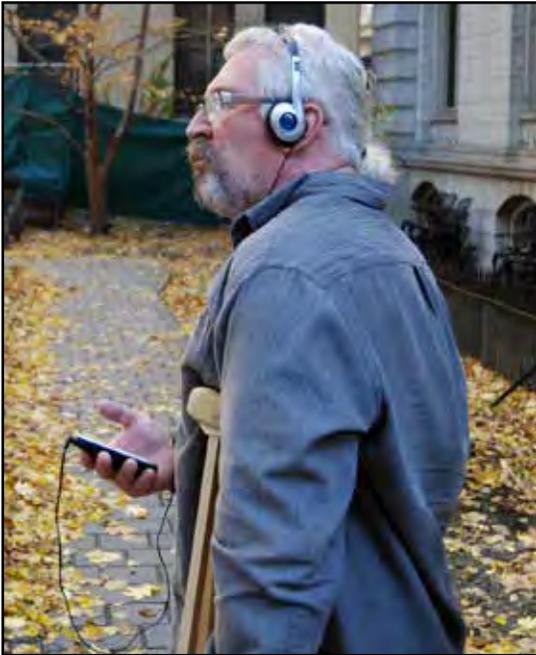
The audio tracks at the Amana stops are especially effective because they utilize music, sound effects, and authentic narrators. It is recommended that other audio messages follow a similar format to enhance the interpretive experience and encourage additional listening.



Cell phone tour for “Looking for Lincoln” sites in the Springfield, Illinois area.



Audio tour sites in the Amana Colonies feature music, sound effects, and authentic narrators.



The Freedom Trail Audio Tour in Boston, Massachusetts can be downloaded to a mobile device prior to the visit.

Cell Phone Audio Tours

A traditional cell phone tour, like the existing byway audio tour, is a system where visitors call into a centralized phone number, enter a specific tour code, and listen to the interpretive message.

Benefits of a cell phone tour:

- The vast majority of U.S. adults today own a cell phone, 92% according to the 2015 Pew Research Center survey. The technology is very accessible to most people.
- It is easy to update audio messages in a centralized database as resources and events along the byway change.
- It allows for tracking visitors for marketing purposes. How many people are accessing messages? Which messages are they accessing? Where are they accessing them from?

Limitations of a cell phone tour:

- It requires a cell phone signal in order to work. Rural areas away from cell towers are not the best places for inclusion in the tour.
- Requires monthly hosting fees.
- May cost the user minutes depending on their cell phone plan.

Podcasting/Downloadable Tours

Another method for distributing audio tour files is offering them online for users to download. This can be done through a podcasting feed (a user subscribes for automatic downloads) or posted on a website. Once downloaded, the audio files are transferred to a personal audio device, like an iPod, MP3 player, smartphone, or tablet.

Benefits of a downloadable audio tour:

- Messages can be downloaded before the trip for planning purposes.
- Depending on the size, files can usually be provided on an existing website for free.
- Messages can be recorded in-house and easily updated on the website.

Limitations of a downloadable tour:

- Users must be knowledgeable about how to download and transfer files from a computer to the device.
- Audio and video files can take up large amounts of precious space on a mobile device.
- Users typically will need advance planning to download the files prior to the trip; not a good choice for serendipitous travelers.

Audiovisual Tour Apps

Using the power of personal smartphone and tablet devices, audiovisual tours combine sound, images, video, text, and interactive components to create rich and diverse interpretive experiences. They are ideally suited to byways, providing directions to nearby attractions and offering interpretation during long drives.

Mobile Tour Websites

These websites specifically incorporate design that is more functional on the smaller touch screens of smartphones and tablets. When used for guided tours, they can blend text, photos, sound, and interactive buttons and links to other sites.

Benefits of a mobile tour website:

- Provides an interactive experience.
- Functions with all types and makes of web-enabled mobile devices; just requires an Internet browser.
- Does not entail downloading of files as everything is streamed directly through the Internet as it is viewed.
- Can be relatively easy to create and update using standard website editing tools.

- Services can be added to the website to track visitor usage.

Limitations of a mobile website tour:

- Necessitates access to the Internet via a strong cellular signal or Wi-Fi connection.
- Website programming is sometimes limited by visual layout, responsiveness, and tools. They don't always appear as polished or react as efficiently as apps.
- Design must be developed for a variety of Internet browsers, since some display content differently.

Native Tour Apps

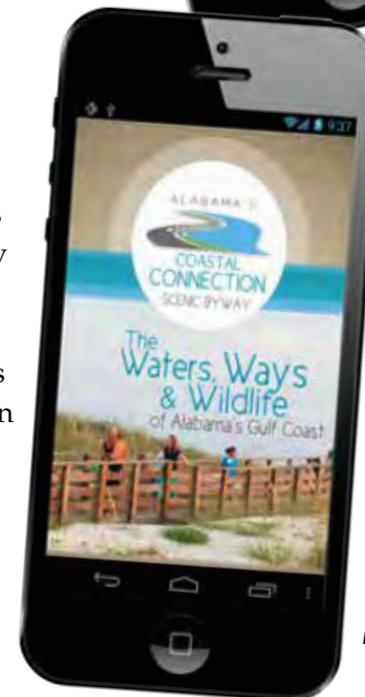
Native device apps are small digital programs provided through online stores like the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. An app is downloaded to a mobile device, providing quick and easy access to content. Just like mobile websites, apps use text, photos, and audio components in engagingly interactive ways.

Benefits of a native tour app:

- Encourages interaction.
- Provides almost limitless options for design and techniques.



The Illinois River Road mobile tour website at illinoisriverroad.org/mobile includes customizable searches for interests by community and a GPS-enabled “What’s Near Me?” feature.



Alabama's Coastal Connection Scenic Byway has a free app that includes videos, events, a list of attractions, and a byway map.



Young visitors at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge scan QR codes on signs to view videos along an innovative “iNature Trail.”



Trail users on a bike trail in Rapid City, South Dakota use smartphones to scan QR codes on interpretive panels.

- Is able to use the GPS feature of a mobile device to instantly trigger site-specific messages or to display attractions near the user’s location.
- Generally, much faster and more responsive than web-based media.
- Does not require Internet access (although some specific features may require the Internet).

Limitations of a native tour app:

- Apps must be downloaded onto a mobile device which can be time consuming and take up space.
- Multiple apps must be developed since they are specific to each mobile device’s operating system.
- Apps must be updated each time a mobile device’s operating system is updated.

QR Codes

Quick Response (QR) codes consist of matrix bars that connect mobile devices directly to online media such as websites, audio messages, or videos. They can be added to publications, interpretive panels, or even objects and artifacts. A byway traveler uses the camera on their mobile device to scan a code with a QR reader app, which decodes

the information and shows the online content.

Benefits of QR Codes:

- Quickly connects mobile devices to online resources without needing a URL.
- Can be created and printed on media for free.
- Online resources can easily be developed, changed, or updated at minimal cost.
- Different QR codes can be generated to link to different messages. A wayside exhibit might have one QR code for adults and one for children.

Limitations of QR Codes:

- Necessitates access to the Internet via a cellular signal or Wi-Fi connection.
- Traditional black-and-white QR codes may not fit the media design.
- Once created, a QR code will always link to the URL address that it is encoded with. If the online address changes, the QR code on all media will also need to be changed.

Mobile Digital Media Recommendations

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway has great potential for tapping into mobile devices that most travelers bring with them on their byway journey. Cellular coverage can be spotty in some rural areas along the byway. Fortunately, there are digital media options that can be downloaded prior to the trip that do not require on-demand Internet access.

1. Create an audiovisual byway tour

An audiovisual tour is a great way to involve travelers in the stories of the byway. Once developed, it can be distributed in many ways to reach the largest audience possible. Some development ideas include:

- **Set a clear theme for the tour**, which helps in the collection of stories and interviews. A theme such as, “The diverse cultures of the Iowa River Valley,” allows for the exploration of similarities and differences among the byway towns and gives insights into their unique cultural identities.
- **Edit the messages down to their essence.** Choose messages that relate to universal concepts, those beliefs and ideas that mean something to everyone (such as love, family,

tragedy, survival, etc.). These are the most interesting and engaging stories for visitors. Our fear of fires and floods is a universal feeling. The story of the Great Fire that destroyed Belle Plaine or the 1993 flood that inundated Chelsea captivate byway travelers.

- **Keep the messages short.** Leave the listener wanting more. Travelers will seldom listen to a story that takes more than three minutes to unfold. Short intriguing accounts will motivate visitors to listen to more stories. Listeners are distracted by sun, wind, traffic, and by their companions, so short and dramatic messages are essential.
- **Record oral histories and interviews** with people who live and work along the byway, and who have a special expertise related to your theme. A historian with a local Meskwaki inflection or an Amana elder with a German accent speaks with more authority and authenticity than the impartial voice of a news commentator. An 80-year-old who remembers what it was like to clean the chalk erasers and pump drinking



Conceptual rendering of a “Legends of Iowa Valley” tour app that would provide a flexible way of sharing audio and visual interpretive messages with byway travelers.

water at a one-room country school is a credible voice.

- **Find music and sounds that add to the ambiance of the story.**

Background sounds and music add to the authenticity of a narration. The rushing of water, the drumming and singing at a Meskwaki powwow, or the babble of a large crowd creates a sense of realism and places listeners into the story.

- **Create a narrative storyline.**

Narrators are able to recite a story in a concise way and to introduce and connect the various oral histories and interviews. Having more than one narrator speaking, such as a male and female voice, reduces monotony and better holds the attention of listeners.

2. Develop a Native Tour App

A native tour app allows a great deal of flexibility for presenting the audiovisual tour. Messages can be offered in an audio or visual format. The existing Iowa Valley Scenic Byway audio tour can be supplemented with text, photos, and video footage that help bring events to life. For example, news footage of the epic 1993 Iowa River flood authenticates the historic event. A video of Meskwaki powwow dancers brings the usually

quiet powwow grounds to life. Historic photos of Amana families working and playing together in the commune create a personal connection. The app should provide a map with tour attractions and be linked to the user's GPS location. It can also be programmed to read a GPS location and automatically deliver site-specific interpretation.

3. Develop a Mobile Tour Website

To maximize the audience base, a mobile tour website should also be created. Once an app is developed, it will be easy to take the text, audio, photos, and video from specific messages and make them available in other formats. A web page with links to the audio or video files provides options for users to either download the tour before their trip onto a mobile device or stream the messages while traveling (as long as a cellular signal is available).

4. Add QR Codes to media

Once a mobile tour website is up and running, QR codes can link directly to specific online attraction web pages and audiovisual tour files. A user simply scans a QR code with their mobile device, and interpretation will be streamed automatically. QR codes can be added to experience hub or

wayside exhibit panels, travel guide and map publications, or welcome center exhibits to provide a more in-depth and interactive experience.

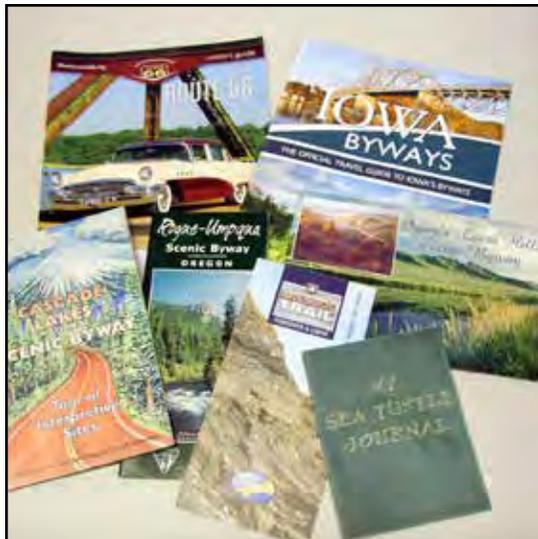


QR codes, like the sample above, can be added to existing media or made into separate signs. They link directly to the byway tour website.

PUBLICATIONS

Despite the rise in Internet and mobile device use, printed publications are still a core form of information and interpretation for byway travelers.

Many people prefer to use publications to navigate the byway and discover attractions. They are not limited by spotty cell phone coverage or low batteries. They have take-home value and serve as keepsakes of an adventure. And they are often shared with others and have a longer life than digital media that pass fleetingly over a screen.



Interpretive publications can take many different formats, including brochures, maps, travel guides, and kids' activity booklets.

General Byway Brochure

Brochures are a cost-effective marketing tool for byways because they reach casual travelers who are unaware of the byway. There are many travelers who do not plan a road trip in advance but look forward to a serendipitous adventure as they travel a new route.

A basic byway brochure should not attempt to do more than stimulate people to access more in-depth information online or at welcome centers. It should be bold and concise with a simple, clean design and dramatic images that highlight significant attractions and other byway media.

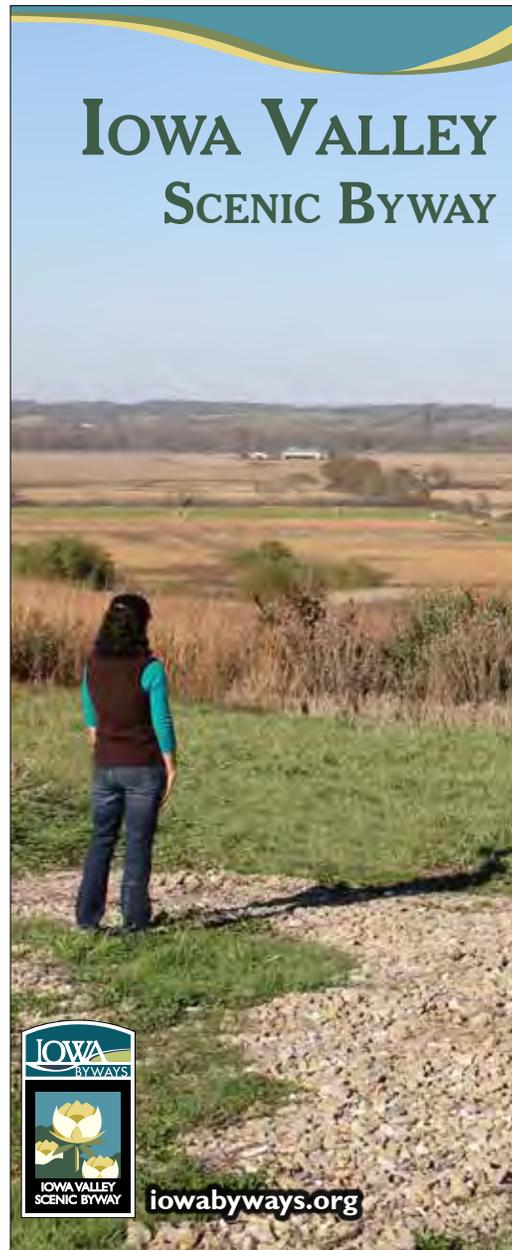
The existing Iowa Valley Scenic Byway brochure already meets many of the goals of a basic byway brochure. As future printings are needed, the byway should consider updating the design with the following recommendations:



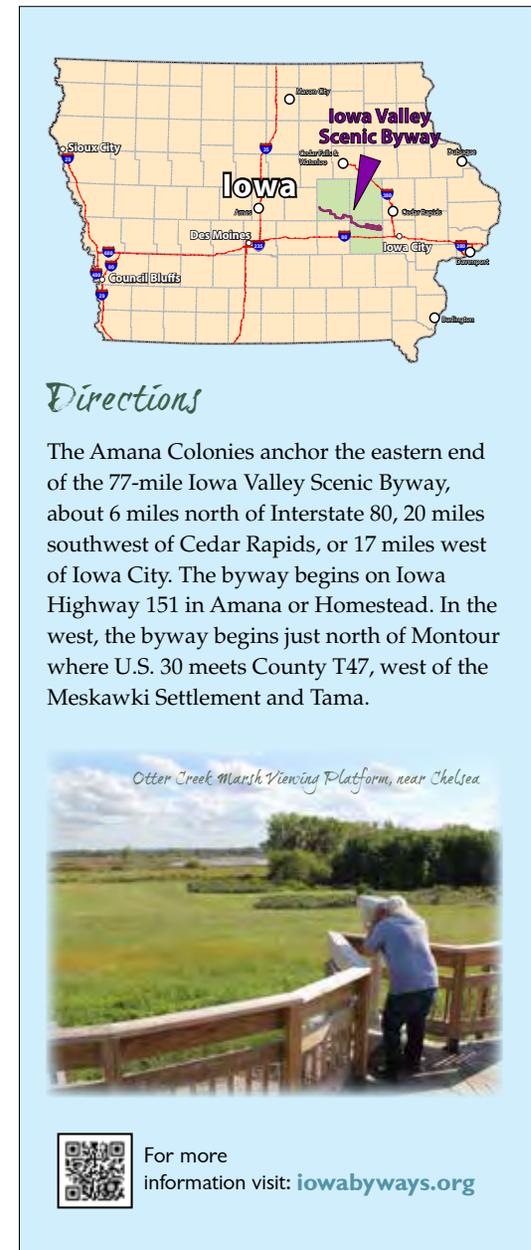
Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Brochure Concept Design

Design Recommendations:

- **Size and folds:** a 14"-by-17" leaflet brochure with 8 panels per side (16 total) is an effective layout for introducing the byway and its resources. A double gate-fold will reveal the content sequentially as the brochure is opened.
- **Design elements:** Colors, font styles, and graphic styles should be unified with other byway media (see page 103).
- **Front Cover:** Needs to be designed to be noticed in a rack with other brochures. An obvious "Iowa Valley Scenic Byway" title should be visible above the rack holder. A dramatic focal-point photograph that represents the byway encourages readers to open the brochure. The byway logo unifies with other media.
- **Back Cover:** The back cover is an ideal place to include a map of Iowa showing the general location of the byway. Directions and contact information are also important elements.

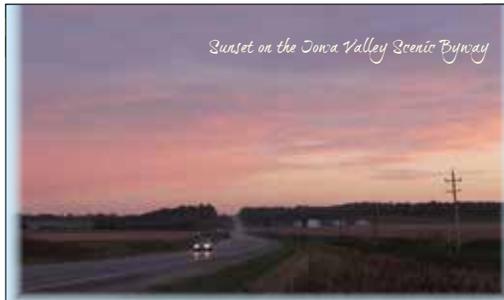


Front Cover



Back Cover

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Brochure Concept Design



Explore Nature and Culture

Explore the rich cultural heritage of diverse ethnic communities. Anchored by the Meskwaki Nation to the west and the Amana Colonies to the east, the byway meanders 77 miles through the scenic Iowa River valley.

Take a side trip on the Czech Trail that loops through the rolling landscape known as the Bohemian Alps. Along the way, stop in the villages that celebrate their Czech heritage.

Abundant parks and natural areas along the Iowa River Corridor between Tama and Marengo invite wildlife watching, paddling and hiking. Enjoy grand views of the Iowa River valley on the byway between Belle Plaine and Marengo.



Amana Colonies Visitors Center

Start your Iowa Valley Scenic Byway journey at the Amana Colonies Visitors Center, the official welcome center of the byway. Built in a restored 1942 corn crib on the Amana farm yard, the center offers traveler information year-round. While at the center, climb to the cupola of the building for a bird's-eye view of Amana. Guided walking and van tours of the Colonies leave from here.

Hours: Open 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

Web: www.amanacolonies.com

Phone: 319-622-7622

Address: 622 46th Ave., Amana, IA 52203

Directions:

From Interstate 80, take Exit 225, turning north on Hwy 151. Travel Hwy 151 for 11 miles until you reach Amana. Turn right on 220th Trail. The Visitors Center is located at the intersection of 220th Trail and 46th Avenue.

- **First Reveal (2 panels):** When a reader first opens the brochure, the double-gate fold will reveal two panels side-by-side.

On the left, dramatic images draw the eye to a concise and active overview of the byway experience.

On the right, the reader is introduced to the Amana Colonies Visitors Center, the official welcome center for the byway. Contact information and directions help guide the traveler.

First Reveal: Byway Overview and Welcome Center



Tama-Meskwaki Region

The Meskwaki Settlement began in 1857 as the first tribe in American history to buy their own tribal land. The Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum has colorful exhibits and artifacts that tell the tribe's story. Other exhibits in the Meskwaki Bingo Casino provide insight into their culture.



Lincoln Highway Bridge, Tama

Meskwaki Bingo Casino provide insight into their culture.

Toledo features the beautiful 1866 Tama County

Courthouse, with its original clock tower. While in town, visit the Tama County Historical Museum, housed in the old county jail. Exhibits include a furnished Czech pioneer log cabin.

Tama began as a railroad town in 1862. In 1915, the transcontinental Lincoln Highway came through town. The railing on one of the route's original bridges spells out "Lincoln Highway."



Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum

Czech Trail Region



Jail cell at the Clutier Museum

Chelsea is the entry point for the Czech Trail, a driving tour of the "Bohemian Alps," a rolling landscape settled by Czech

immigrants. It is also a crossroads for the Lincoln Highway. A short drive northwest leads to the Otter Creek Marsh wildlife-viewing platform.

The Czech Trail loops through Vining, Clutier, and Elberon. Visit the Clutier Museum and Bohemian Village and explore artifacts and exhibits interpreting Czech immigrants. The village includes a country school and a two-cell jail.



Bohemian Alps on the Czech Trail

Belle Plaine-Marengo Region



Concordance Belle Plaine

This region is anchored by Belle Plaine in the west and Marengo in the east. Highway 212 between them overlooks the Iowa River valley.

Belle Plaine offers historic attractions including the Belle Plaine Area Museum and the Main Street Historic District. Other sites, such as the Lincoln Cafe and Preston Station, are relics of the Lincoln Highway.

Marengo features the Iowa County Courthouse, noted for its Romanesque Revival architecture. History comes to life at the Pioneer Heritage Museum.



Iowa County Courthouse, Marengo

Amana Colonies Region

Seven historic villages of the Amana Colonies welcome visitors seeking an authentic German dining and craft-shop experience. The Amana Historic District encompasses almost 1,000 buildings and sites associated with this 1850s communal settlement. The 26,000 acres of Amana Society farmland stand in contrast to typical Iowa single-family farm landscapes.

Main Amana serves as the hub of tourist activities. The Amana Colonies Visitor Center, housed in a retrofitted corncrib, is the starting point for walking and van tours. The Amana Heritage Museum tells the community's story through a video and exhibitions housed in a former residence. Purchase handcrafted products at the Amana Woolen Mill, Amana Furniture Shop, and Amana Meat Shop and Smokehouse.



Shopping in the Amana Colonies

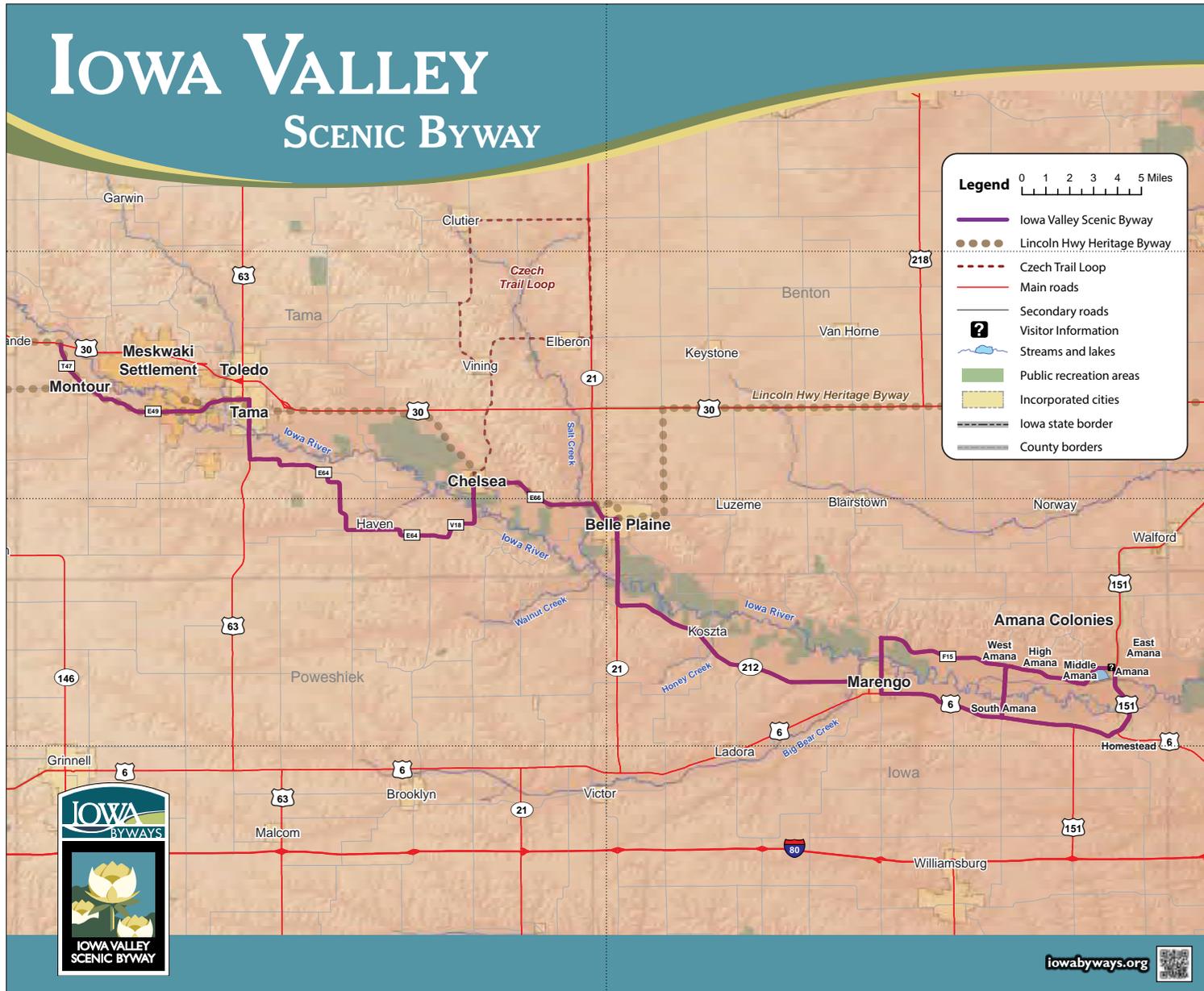
- **Second Reveal (4 panels):** As the reader continues to open the brochure, four adjacent panels will

highlight the different regions of the byway. The uniqueness of each region is interpreted with some key

attractions to pique the visitor's interest.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Brochure Concept Design

- Full Reveal Inside (8 panels):**
 The inside of the brochure features a map of the byway corridor with the route clearly marked. The intent is to show a broad overview of the byway route, information centers, byway communities, and major roads for accessing the byway.



Full Reveal Inside: Byway Map

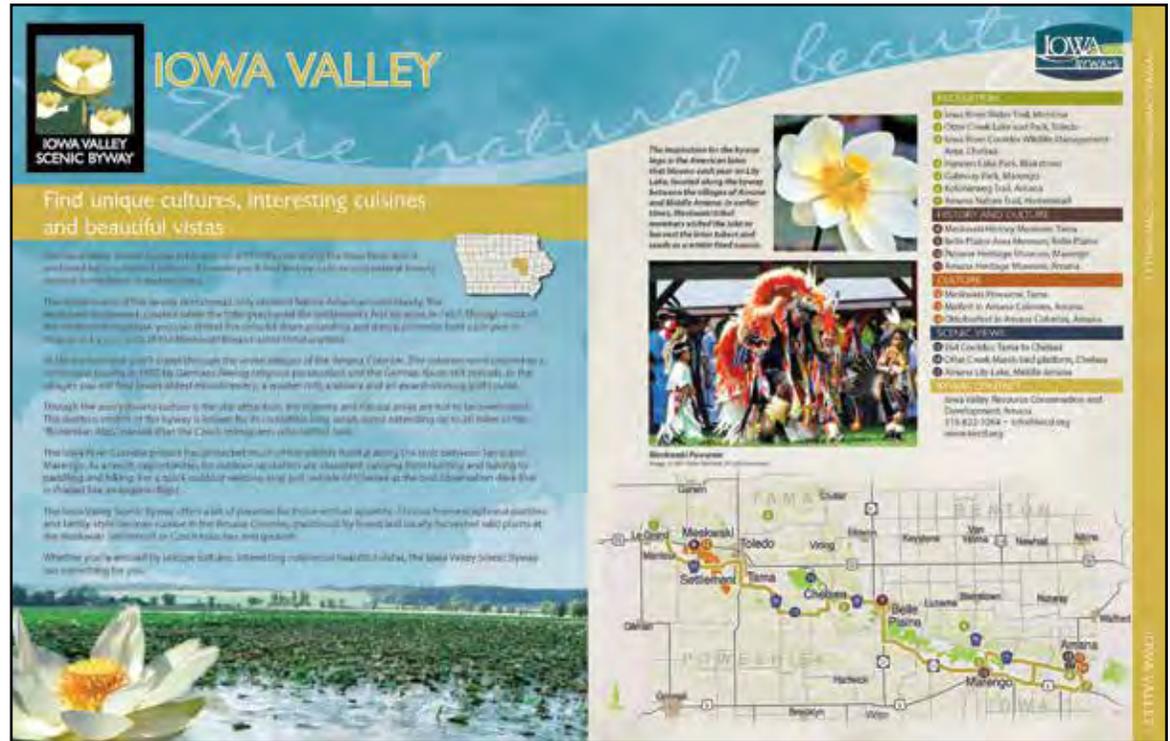
Byway Travel Guide

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway is included in “Iowa Byways: The Official Travel Guide to Iowa’s Byways,” a full-color, 32-page booklet that measures 8.5"-by-11". The guide is organized by byway in a user-friendly format. The two pages devoted to the Iowa Valley byway (shown at right) feature a concise description of the route, photos, a general map, and a brief list of attractions.

Recommendations

While the existing travel guide is well-designed and easy to use, an updated and expanded interpretive travel guide specific to the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway would add greater depth to a traveler’s understanding of the byway and enhance wayfinding.

1. Organize the guide by community region: Byway visitors may have limited time, with perhaps only a few hours or a day to explore the route. Organizing the byway guide by major communities and their surrounding regions will allow visitors to quickly and easily determine where to spend their time or to better understand the location where they have serendipitously arrived.



The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway is featured in the “Iowa Byways: The Official Guide to Iowa’s Byways” booklet.

2. Theme the attractions within the region: Many visitors have specific interests. Byway attractions within each region can be further grouped into the categories developed in this plan: Scenic and Natural; Historic and Archaeological; Cultural; and Recreational. Themed itineraries that address visitor interests would provide focus to their trip-planning.

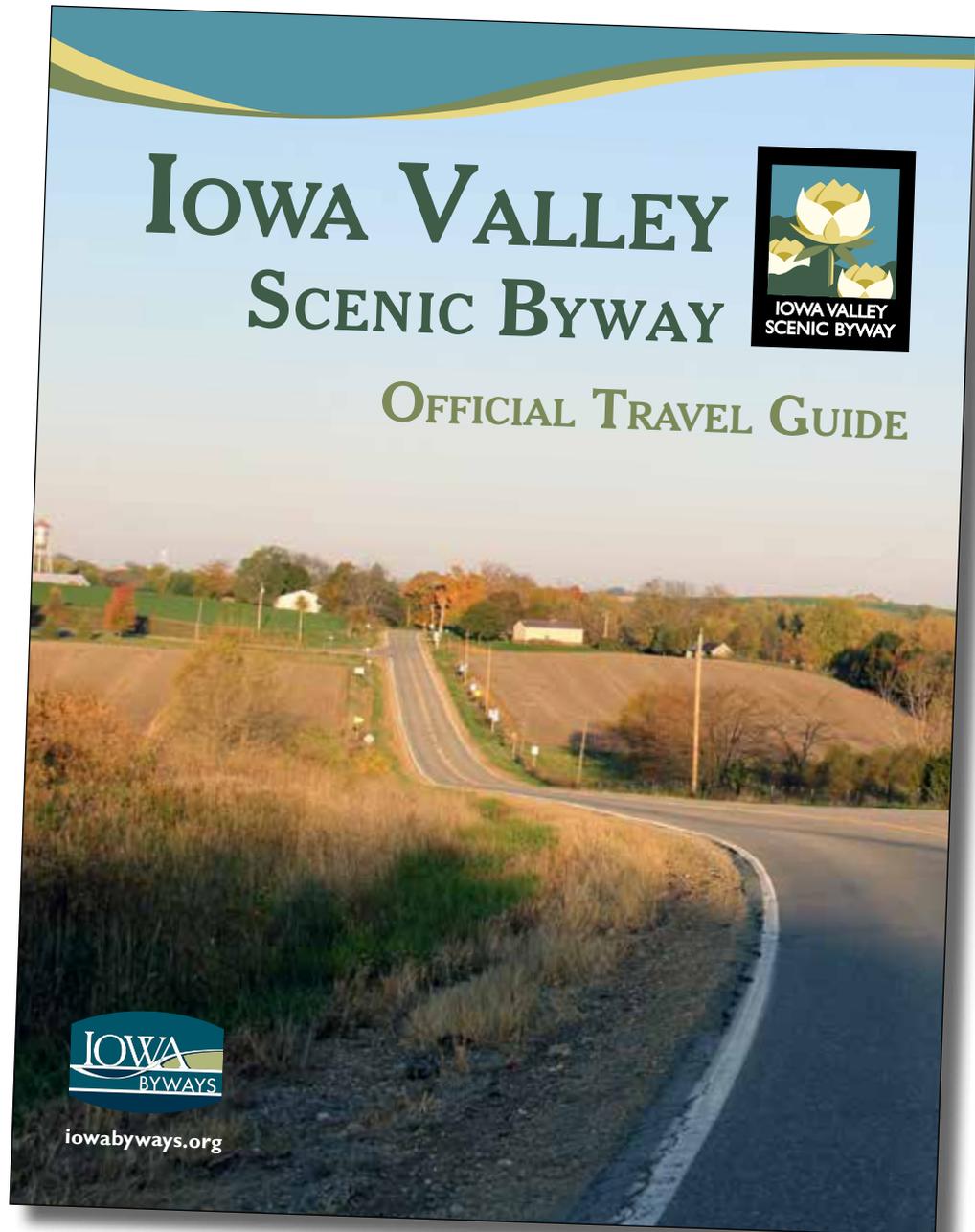
3. Design the guide to be consistent with Iowa Byways design standards: The design should use the logos, fonts, and colors consistent with those described in this plan and with other interpretive media.

4. Include maps of attractions that are more than approximations of their locations: This would require adding specific roads that lead to each attraction. Currently, travelers must use an Iowa road map or GPS in addition to the guide or tear sheet to locate many of the attractions, and even then it can be difficult.

In the revised guide, each community region should be developed in the following format:

- An introduction to the community region that expresses its unique natural and cultural character.
- Highlight visitor centers, experience hub kiosks, wayside exhibits, audio tours, and other interpretive media.
- Two or more pages (as many as needed) for maps and descriptions of that region's attractions in each of the themed categories: Scenic and Natural; Historic and Archaeological; Cultural; and Recreational
- Concise, lively descriptions of each attraction, with websites and phone numbers where visitors can find more information.
- Strong, focal point photos of key attractions and informal snapshot-type photos of other attractions.

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Travel Guide Concept Design (front cover)



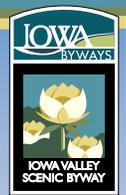
Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Travel Guide Concept Design (Belle Plaine historic attractions)

Historical Treasures

Belle Plaine Historic Attractions



Belle Plaine



Explore Belle Plaine's historic legacy

Belle Plaine's historic attractions connect you to the era of pioneer settlement, to the arrival of the coast-to-coast Lincoln Highway, and to the impact that notable residents have had on the community.

🎧 For audio tour messages, dial 319-213-9003 and enter the stop number.

- 1 Main Street Historic District and Downtown Murals:** Stroll Main Street to see murals that depict Belle Plaine's most dramatic historic moments. The beautiful brick buildings were built after a devastating fire in 1894. Info: belleplaineiowa.us 🎧 Stops #57, #58, #59, #60, #61, #62
- 2 Belle Plaine Area Museum and Legacy Mural:** Uncover the area's history through Lincoln Highway artifacts and a special wing dedicated to hometown benefactor Henry Tipple. Info: bplwahistory.com or 319-434-6093. 🎧 Stop #63
- 3 Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway:** Relive the excitement of the nation's first coast-to-coast highway. Info: iowalincolnhighway.org
- 4 Sankot Motor Company Garage:** The same family has continuously run this garage since it opened in 1914. 🎧 Stop #54
- 5 Lincoln Cafe:** Dine at this classic 1928 restaurant on the transcontinental route. 🎧 Stop #65
- 6 Preston Station:** A collage of road signs decorate this now-shuttered 1923 gas station. 🎧 Stop #69
- 7 Frank & Katie Zalesky House:** This national historic home symbolizes the rich Bohemian history of the area, having served as the final home of Bohemian philosopher František Klácel. 🎧 Stop #66
- 8 Jumbo Artesian Well Site Marker:** An artesian well gushed for 14 months in 1886-87, threatening to flood the town. See the stone and plaque commemorating the well's location. Belle Plaine celebrates this event with an annual festival. 🎧 Stop #67
- 9 Chicago & Northwestern Depot:** Built in 1894, this privately owned depot can be viewed from the Belle Plaine Area Museum's railroad viewing room. 🎧 Stop #64



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

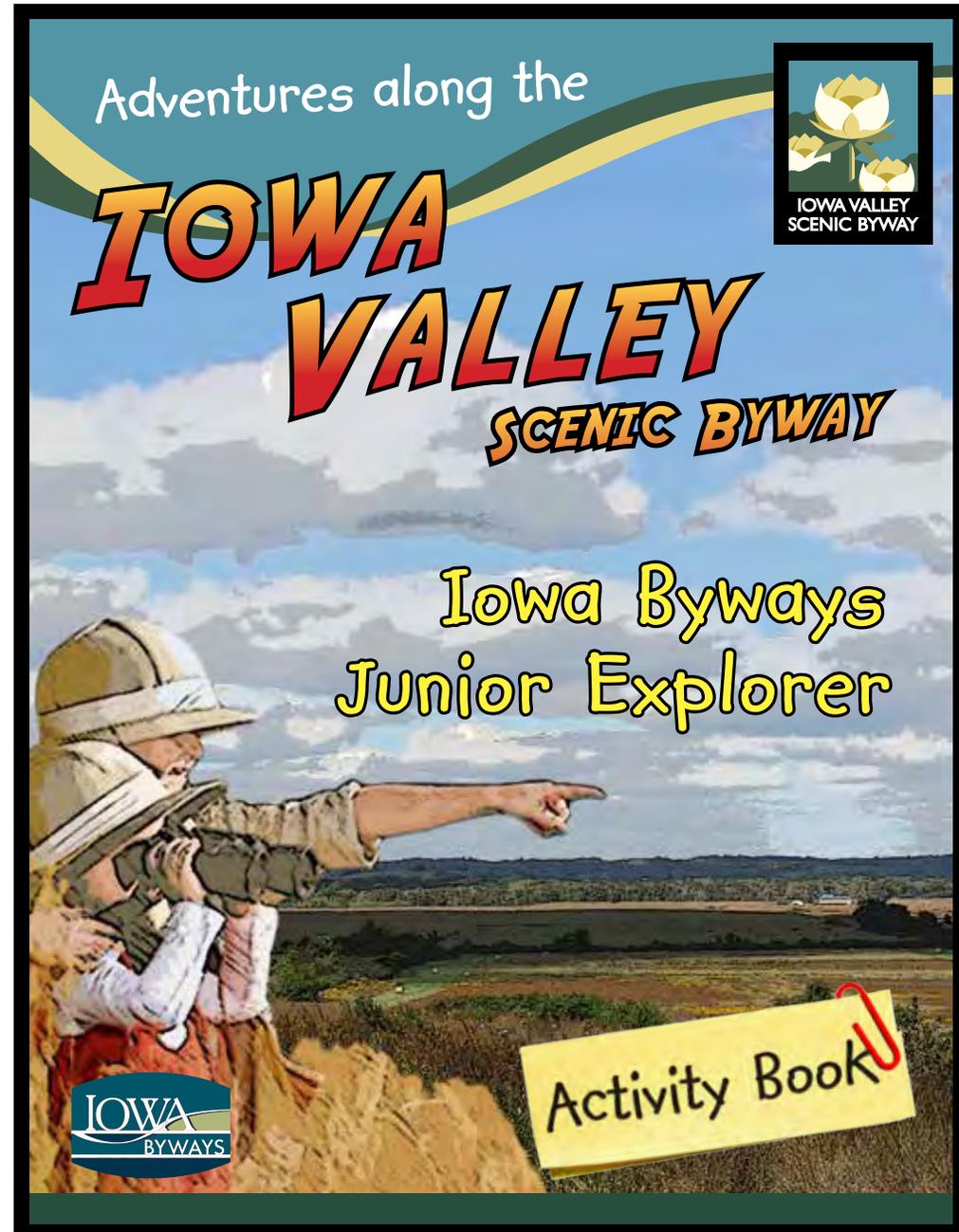
Families and multi-generational groups are a significant potential audience for the Iowa Valley Scenic Byway. Activities that encourage parents and children to engage in meaningful experiences together will create lifetime memories.

Iowa Byways Junior Explorer Program

Similar to the Junior Ranger programs found in many parks, an Iowa Byways Junior Explorer program would be an activity-based experience with the purpose of encouraging families to explore the state's scenic byways.

Each byway would develop a kid-friendly activity guide that reveals the specific natural and cultural resources along its route. The activities would be completed while traveling the byway. The guides would be made available at key locations along the byway, such as information centers and major attractions.

When children—with the help of parents or guardians—complete a certain number of activities, they would turn in their book at designated information centers, where a byway representative would





Iowa Byways Junior Explorers would be awarded a patch for successfully completing the activities.

A Discovery Pack, filled with hands-on tools and resources, encourage families to explore the byway.



look over the activities and talk to the children about what they learned.

The children would then take an oath, promising to continue exploring the state's scenic byways, respect and protect the resources, and share their experience with others. The children would receive a patch (or other item) declaring them an official Iowa Byways Junior Explorer.

The guides would be filled with fun games, puzzles, and coloring pages that entice families to discover the Iowa River Valley. Some ideas include:

- A byway bingo game that encourages families to look for iconic features along the byway, like an eagle, murals, one-room schoolhouse, river crossing, wooden barn, and courthouses.
- A nature scavenger hunt that encourages the family to explore a trail or natural area.
- Stories and artwork created by children who live along the byway that describe their daily experiences (for example, boating on the river).
- Coloring pages depicting scenes from the Iowa Valley byway.
- Crossword puzzles with Iowa Valley byway terms they may learn, like "Jumbo Well," "Otter Creek," "Amana," and "Meskwaki."
- Dot-to-dot puzzles of resources they may see.
- A maze that follows the twisting curves of the Iowa River.

Family Discovery Packs

In association with the Iowa Byways Junior Explorer program, "Discovery Packs" filled with equipment and resources for young explorers could be made available to encourage more in-depth discovery along the byway. The packs could be borrowed from and returned to designated information centers.

Items in the packs could include: binoculars, hand lens, bug magnifying box, bug net, field guides, regional music CD, stargazing chart, field journal, and other essential exploration tools.

Children's Byway Audio Tour

Develop an audio tour that appeals to the interests of families by sharing children's perspectives. When children speak to other kids in a lively voice, it creates a level of personal interest. A twelve-year-old farm girl, for example, can relate in vivid description what it was like to attend Haven Country School, where all eight grades shared the same room, a pump was used for water, and an outhouse served as the bathroom. A Meskwaki boy can welcome kids to the

Settlement with a few words from his native language, and explain that he has been learning the language and traditions in his tribal school. His grandfather had to attend a government school, live away from home, and was forbidden to speak Meskwaki. In the Amana Colonies, a girl from the past can describe how she helped in the communal gardens and kitchens and what it was like to live in the Colonies.

Photo courtesy of Amana Heritage Museum



Hearing stories from a child's perspective, such as Meskwaki children describing a traditional wickiup, engages families along the byway.



An audio tour targeted specifically to children can help them connect with their byway's stories.

Music of the byway can be included on this children's tour—polkas, Meskwaki flute and drum music, Meskwaki singers (such as Everett Kapayou singing his mood songs), and even operas add to each community's sense of place. Singer-songwriters could be recruited to create a CD or downloadable songs about the Jumbo Well, the Lincoln Highway, a day at a one-room country school, or fishing on the Iowa River.

Family Passport Book

A Family Passport booklet would encourage exploration of family-friendly attractions along the Iowa Valley byway. This could include places such as thematic restaurants (Rube's Steakhouse in Montour, Czech Point Restaurant & Pub in Clutier, Lincoln Cafe in Belle Plaine, family-style restaurants in the Amana Colonies), historic museums (Amana Heritage Museum, Mini-Americana Barn Museum in South Amana, Pioneer Heritage Museum in Marengo, Belle Plaine Area Museum), overlooks, and wayside exhibits.

A passport book provides motivation to visit places that may otherwise be passed by or overlooked. Locations like the Broom and Basket Shop in the Amana Colonies does not necessarily sound like a family attraction, but the eleven-foot tall walnut rocking chair and interactive games appeal to all ages. A climb up the cupola in the Amana Colonies Visitors Center offers a unique bird's-eye view of the town. The historic two-cell jail in Clutier provides a fun and hands-on photo opportunity.

The incentive to fill up the passport with stamps creates a goal for the family. Adults and children alike are engaged

in the scavenger hunt to find the next stamping location. The booklet has take-home value, and each stamp represents a memory from the trip, an important connection to the byway experience.

The passport booklet is itself an interpretive opportunity. It should be written in concise, personal, kid-friendly language that reveals the stories of the byway resources.

A unique stamp design should be developed for each attraction that rewards travelers for their effort. Ideally, stamps would be located at attractions where staff or volunteers are available to answer questions and watch over the passport stations. However, self-service passport stations could also be developed for unstaffed areas or sites with limited hours.

Family Passport Book: Concept Design (*Mini-Americana Barn Museum page*)



Mini-Americana Barn Museum

Explore the incredible detail of miniature barns and rural towns at this kid-sized museum. Henry Moore, a retired farmer, built over 200 buildings that preserve the nostalgia of rural America, including an Amana village. It is the largest known collection of miniature replicas built by one man.

Address: 413 P St.
South Amana, IA 52334
Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily,
April through October
Cost: Adults, \$3.50; Teens, \$1.75
Children, \$1.25; Under 5, free
Phone: (319) 622-3058
Web: www.barnmuseum.com



Thematic Play Areas

As any parent knows, finding play areas during a long drive is essential. Byway travel often involves long periods of sitting in a vehicle. Kids need breaks from the car ride to run and play. For families, play areas serve as focal points for stretching legs, eating snacks and meals, and using restrooms.

Play areas along byways are typically serendipitous, standard playground equipment associated with municipal parks. These are untapped resources for engaging families with byway stories. An experience hub has been proposed for the Montour City Park, for example, which has an existing playground and picnic tables.

Other potential sites along the byway for play areas include the Lily Lake wayside in Amana, Beautiful Plainses Prairie Park in Belle Plaine, Gateway Park in Marengo, and the green space next to the City Hall in Chelsea.

Consider creating byway play and rest areas that reinforce stories of the byway:

- Develop natural playscapes, places where children can play with native materials like logs, boulders, sand, and water. A slide placed on a slope

can be likened to an otter slide (found on Iowa River banks), a concrete culvert embedded in a mound becomes a badger burrow, and a big stick ground nest is home to nesting cranes. Pictures and statues connect the play features to real habitats.

- A concrete and tile map of the Iowa Valley with labeled byway, towns, and landmarks could provide orientation for families. A meandering channel could represent the Iowa River and provide a fun water feature.

- Areas could be created with thematic transportation play equipment, where wooden locomotives, old cars, or horse-drawn wagons invite kids to climb and explore.
- Communities should consider themes that help tell the story of their own history—slides resemble grain elevators, kid-sized log cabins tell the story of the first immigrants.
- Exposed walls of surrounding buildings can be decorated with playful murals of historic events and famous people from the community.



Natural playscapes, like at the Osborne Welcome Center on the River Bluffs Scenic Byway, can be designed to reinforce the themes of a byway, while providing a natural outlet for children's creativity and energy.

MEDIA COST ESTIMATES

These cost estimates were developed in May 2017 based on quotes from multiple companies. They include research,

design, and fabrication/printing. The estimates are listed as broad ranges and should be used only for the purposes of

planning and fundraising. Actual prices will vary considerably based on the specifics of each project.

Media Type	Info	Rationale	Cost Estimate
Experience hubs	pp. 106–118	Highly visible way to orient travelers to regional attractions. Cost-effective where attractions are not routinely staffed.	\$10,000–\$15,000 each (Metalwork, timbers, 4 HPL panels)
Wayside exhibits	pp. 119–127	Best way to communicate must-tell stories at significant sites along the byway where no other tools are available.	\$2,500–\$3,000 each (metal base with cut-out, 1 HPL panel)
Welcome/visitor center touch-screen computer kiosk exhibits	pp. 132–133	Valuable in alerting travelers to the byway’s existence and for trip-planning; small size appropriate for existing centers.	\$15,000–\$25,000 each
Byway artwork	pp. 134–137	Highly visible way to focus attention on a significant story or event on a roadside scale.	Highly variable based on type and artist. Steel silhouette statue: \$1,500 average Wall mural: \$10–\$35/sq. ft. average
Website design and social media development	pp. 138–142	Essential planning tool that reaches a large audience; is easily updated.	\$10,000–\$25,000 for development plus monthly hosting/maintenance.
Byway mobile tour website or native tour app	pp. 143–148	Ideal tools for incorporating sound and visuals to make stories come alive; convenient, easy to use, and encourage interaction.	\$8,000–\$50,000 for development plus monthly hosting/maintenance (\$200–\$500/month)
General byway brochure	pp. 149–153	Small publication that can be widely distributed to promote awareness of the byway.	\$2,500–\$3,000 per 10,000 copies (14"x17" size, full-color)
Travel guide booklet	pp. 154–156	A physical method for visitors to navigate the byway and discover its stories; not dependent on cellular service.	\$12,000–\$15,000 per 10,000 booklets (32 pages, 8.5"x11" size, full-color)
Iowa Byways Junior Explorer booklets	pp. 157–158	Keeps families engaged in the byway’s interpretive themes and encourages discovery.	\$8,000–\$12,000 per 10,000 booklets (20 pages, 8.5"x11" size, full-color)
Family passport books	p. 160	Provides motivation to visit specific sites along the byway and has take-home value.	\$5,000–\$8,000 per 10,000 booklets (20 pages, 6"x6" size, full-color) Stamps (1.25"-diameter): \$25–\$40/each

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APPENDICES



Downtown Belle Plaine

APPENDIX 1: VISIONING MEETING RESULTS

On June 25, 2015, Schmeeckle Reserve Interpreters conducted a visioning meeting with the Iowa Valley RC&D staff and Iowa Valley Scenic Byway board members at the RC&D office in Amana. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information about the places, activities, and stories that should be interpreted along the byway.

During this meeting, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. **Attractions:** What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?
2. **Stories and Messages:** What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?
3. **Audience:** Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?
4. **Vision:** What is your vision of success for improving the visitor experience on your scenic byway?
5. **Research Recommendations:** Who are some key people we should

interview and what are some documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

The responses were recorded, organized, and sent to Iowa Valley RC&D for review and dissemination. The final results are included below.

Attractions

What are some important attractions along this byway that visitors should experience?

- Belle Plaine has 16-stop audio tour
- Clutier: Authentic railroad boomtown; bike or drive wildflower tour, two bridges from Clutier to Vining and Elberon; historic heritage cemeteries; 115 year old St. Wenceslaus Church and three chapels around the St. Vaclav Cemetery; Corpus Christi is a 115 year old tradition that began in the 9th century Europe—only three left in eastern Iowa
- Belle Plaine Area Museum and Henry B. Tippie Annex: telling the history of the town and the area exhibits, history on Native Americans, the Chicago Northwestern Railroad, the

Lincoln Highway, and other local stories of the Great Fire in 1894 and the Jumbo Well in 1886

- Belle Plaine is a Main Street Iowa community and realized a complete makeover of the main business district in 2012. The facade and streetscape was done at the same time, bringing back the look of Main Street when it was rebuilt after the great fire of 1894.
- Preston's Station (George Preston and the Lincoln Highway). At one time it was the oldest operating gas station on the Lincoln Highway. The station is covered with automobile advertising. George Preston became well know by telling stories of the Lincoln Highway and he was a guest on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson in 1990. His granddaughter Mary is now the owner of the property and is the process of restoring the station as a tourist attraction.
- Beautiful Plainses Prairie Park on Highway 21, south side of Belle Plaine. Stop by and see how the prairie would have appeared to the early settlers of Iowa. See the newly

installed panels on the type of plants and wildflowers that are in the area as well as the local history of Belle Plaine.

- Marengo: Pioneer Heritage Museum and Resource Library, Iowa County Courthouse, Marengo Public Library (Carnegie Library), Gateway Park and Preserve

Stories and Messages

What compelling stories and messages can visitors experience that make your byway unique?

- The beautiful Iowa Valley drew the early pioneers to make it their home. The wildlife and farmland tell a great story of Native Americans to the early immigrants to the modern small towns working hard to continue to enjoy a good quality of life.
- Trails: planning wildflower/nature trail from Clutier, will go over Old Salt Creek, Watham Creek iron bridges
- Agriculture part of scenic landscape: river bottom (artists from Grant Wood to recent rolling hills in background)
- Cemeteries: Vining, Oak Hill (famous philosopher)—beautiful view from pioneer cemeteries. Tama County Pioneer Cemetery has been restored; take tours
- Culture: Amanas, Meskwaki, Czech
- Chelsea hub of Czech Trail
- Little Switzerland (Vining, Chelsea, Clutier)
- Outdoor recreation: Get people out of their cars
- Iowa Valley has been settled by many ethnic groups: need to focus on valley/river not just hubs (last year Iowa County focused on cultural diversity)
- Music: Powwows, polka, Civil War band, Czech/German
- Belle Plaine hub of diverse immigrants in nearby communities
- Belle Plaine had a railroad that ran to Blue Earth, Minnesota
- Legendary Charging Czechs, 1942 girls basketball team. Won the championship; white ball that's still on display
- Architecture: Amana Colonies and small town downtowns, barns—a reflection of the culture
- Belle Plaine Depot: last one of its kind in Iowa; privately owned but museum would like to buy it
- Belle Plaine downtown redone in 2012, Main Street Iowa
- Food of different cultures: Czech baked goods, Chelsea bakery items, Soghamie from sorghum (Czech), kalaches
- Beautiful Iowa Valley: drew pioneers to make it their home, from Native Americans to immigrants, to modern small towns
- The River and the people who lived along it—Chelsea a casualty of the reservoir
- Charm of Czech towns: Clutier's dance hall and museum, food, heritage, and traditions. Dance halls have original drop curtains. 3 or 4 movies made in Clutier
- Scenic landscapes and small-town charm
- Silos and Smokestacks themes: fertile land and natural areas
- Flooding: Restricts idea of turning old railroad into bike path

Audience

Who are the primary target audiences for interpretive media on this byway?

- All ages
- Those traveling off the beaten path. Various tour groups (Lincoln Highway or railroad enthusiasts). Letting them know the unique stories of each town or area along the way.

Vision

What is your vision of success for improving the visitor experience on your scenic byway?

- More personal stories of people and how they lived and succeeded. There are several stories of people that were raised in the area and went on to great works. There are a lot of people that stayed and created jobs and business for those who stayed.
- Telling stories of the steam locomotive days and the days of early travel. It is amazing to imagine the dirt roads that would be total mud paths and cars that would try to navigate.
- Capture people on the Lincoln Highway

- One-room schools and barns that are disappearing; document them with photos
- Get the information out
- Visitors need to find us; need to be able to find the byway after turning off Highway 30
- Visitors need the three E's: experience, explore, enjoy
- Appeal to passive and active visitors
- Interpretive signs in places without focal point businesses
- Capitalize on biking and hiking interest
- Cross-marketing: town residents share other attractions that visitors may like along the byway
- Cross-market on social media
- Signage that visitors can read and experience
- Identify resources that lend themselves to panels
- Trail: make landscape unique
- All attractions will have hours posted
- Local residents are tuned into the byway so a visitor can interact with people who are informed; helps locals take pride

- Foster ownership in all of the Iowa byways
- Want to keep the vibrant oral stories that will be passed on

Research Recommendations

Who are some key people we should interview and what are some documents we should acquire to learn about your byway?

- Belle Plaine Museum: several audio and video interviews of past residents that tell some interesting stories
- Dick Schild: now lives in Grinnell, but knows so much
- Dave Johnson: family owned the Chrysler dealership and remembers some great early stories

APPENDIX 2: IOWA VALLEY AUDIO TOUR STOPS

The Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Audio Tour interprets many resources in the Amana Colonies, Belle Plaine, and Marengo area. A total of 52 audio stops are currently available along the route—17 in the Amana Colonies, 13 in Marengo, one in Ladora, one in Koszta, and 20 in Belle Plaine.

The tour is accessed by dialing **319-213-9003** and entering the stop number. The stops (as of May 2017) are listed below along with a description of the audio message.

Amana Colonies

1. **Homestead Amana Train Depot:** Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad built Amana depot in 1883. Sacks of mail. Meeting place for the young people. Recently undergone renovation. Serves as the trailhead for the Kolonieweg Trail.
2. **The Millrace:** Describes the construction of the canal.
3. **The Woolen Mill:** Interprets the history of the woolen mill (sound effects)
4. **Furniture Store:** Interprets the history of the calico mill
5. **East Amana:** Smallest of villages, started as a sheep herding outpost. Describes layout of village, kitchen houses, and livestock barns.
6. **Main Amana:** Amana Heritage Museum. Interprets the schoolhouse.
7. **Lily Lake and Appliance Plant:** Describes the formation and uses of Lily Lake.
8. **Middle Amana/Communal Kitchen Museum:** Last of the villages to be settled. Originally known as Amana in the corner (bend in the road). Site of the Society's second woolen mill. Quotes from kitchen masters.
9. **High Amana Farm:** Describes High Amana and name. Important role in the community as the first sawmill. Agriculture still important aspect of life. Famous for their onions. Farming is the Amanas' biggest business.
10. **West Amana:** Describes the sandstone buildings, wagon shop/blacksmith shop
11. **South Amana Barns:** Describes Amana barns and construction. Horse barn burned down in 1912 by lightning-set fire (sound effects of storm).
12. **Homestead Church:** Homestead settled as a stagecoach stop. Amana Colony became aware that this would be a train stop. Interprets Amana churches.
13. **Homestead Store:** Interprets general store in Homestead.
14. **Wash House:** General information about washing clothes and soap making
15. **Cooper Shop:** General information about the skills of coopers.
16. **Wagon Shop:** General information about the wagon shop. Made more than just wagons... ironing boards, toys for kids at Christmas (sleds)
17. **Wood Cutting:** Quotes about cutting wood, horses hauling logs, cross cut saw

Marengo

31. **Clarence Whitehill** (Marengo/ IOOF Cemetery): Clarence Whitehill, renowned opera singer
32. **Iowa Valley Canning Company** (South edge of Marengo, brick building rented as a storage unit): Part of the Iowa Valley Canning Company, 1903 at north side of railroad tracks, 1912-1949 at this site
33. **Victor Depot** (Pioneer Heritage Museum and Resource Library): Description of 1861 Depot, Rock Island line
34. **Pioneer Heritage Museum and Resource Library:** Description of museum
35. **Emmett Company Campsite** (Gateway Park): Description of Mormon James Emmett expedition, 1844, several died and buried; Iowa River had a bend known as “Mormon bend”
36. **Gateway Park and Preserve:** Description of park
37. **Marengo Public Library:** History of Carnegie libraries; one of the smallest communities to receive Carnegie funding, finished in 1905, major renovation in 2007 to harmonize with original building
38. **Clifford Berry** (Marengo City Park): Helped John Atanasoff to create the first digital electronic computer in 1939, the Atanasoff-Berry computer
39. **The Zopf Family** (Marengo City Park): Louis Zopf led the development of the Drug Service Department at the College of Pharmacy at the University of Iowa
40. **The Mott Family** (Marengo City Park): Frank Luther Mott served as editor of *Marengo Republican*, became leading figure in journalism education; Mildrid Mott Wedel, daughter, became one of the first women archaeologists and studied Iowa tribes
41. **John Brown** (Marengo City Park): Abolitionist best known for raid on federal arsenal on Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; in 1859, he stopped at Draper Reynolds farm near Marengo
42. **James E. Freeze** (Iowa County Courthouse): Retired Major General, served 32 years, involved in intelligence
43. **Iowa County Courthouse:** Description of 1892 courthouse, fourth built in Marengo; tower offers a panoramic view and can be accessed by visitors

Ladora

44. **Mildred Augustine** (birthplace home): First person to obtain Masters degree in journalism (U of I); wrote the first Nancy Drew books under her pen name, Carolyn Keene; wrote 135 books

Koszta

45. **Koszta Cemetery:** Burial place of Elizabeth Wright Heller, half-sister of architect Frank Lloyd Wright; lived in Marengo as a milliner, printer, and teacher.

Belle Plaine

50. **Belle Plaine Entrance Mural on Grain Bin:** Description of first panel mural installed on grain bin by wall dogs
51. **Oak Hill Cemetery:** Describes history of cemetery and people buried there
52. **Box Park 4 County Fair:** Named after Box family that originally owned the land
53. **Hart Memorial Library:** Samuel Hart donated \$10,000 for library in will; built in 1931, now the Tippiemansfield Center
54. **Sankot Garage:** Describes history of Sankot Garage, opened in 1914

55. **Lincoln Café** (message not working)
56. **Williams Park:** Describes history of park, originally owned by J.P. Henry
57. **Railroad Mural on Country Foods:** Description of railroads; only mural with a local artisan helping; Belle Plaine 1883 canning company label
58. **King Theater:** Opened in 1930; movies changed 4 times per week; Blackbird Grill
59. **Patriot Mural on Barron Motor:** Wall dog artist to honor veterans and the 150th anniversary, 2012, marked ribbon cutting for downtown renovation
60. **Jumbo Well Mural on Cornerstone Apothecary:** Description of mural, Wall Dog event in 2009, history of Jumbo Well
61. **Main Street Great Fire, Guthrie Building** (message incorrectly linked to #51: Oak Hill Cemetery)
62. **Lincoln Highway Mural on True Value Building:** Another Wall Dog mural in 2009, history of Lincoln Highway
63. **Legacy Mural and the Belle Plaine Area Museum:** Describes brick Legacy Mural; depicts 150 years of Belle Plaine history and the largest brick mural in Iowa (features: Jumbo Well, Lincoln Highway, agriculture, railroad); also describes 2004 museum and 2012 Henry B. Tippie annex
64. **Chicago Northwestern Depot:** Description of Chicago Northwestern railroad, original depot burned in great fire
65. **Franklin Park:** Description of largest park in Belle Plaine; John Franklin, interest in semi-pro baseball; some work done by CCC and WPA, lights installed in late 1940s
66. **Frank Zalesky House:** National Register of Historic Places; Second Empire style of residential architecture; circa 1872; immigrated in 1868 from Czech Republic; opened a meat market
67. **Jumbo Well:** History of well
68. **Beautiful Plaines Prairie Park:** Description of Iowa River Valley, Bird Conservation Area, byway, Meskwaki, prairie, settlement, naming of town, park as environmental education area
69. **Preston's Station, Lincoln Highway:** Description of Preston's Station

