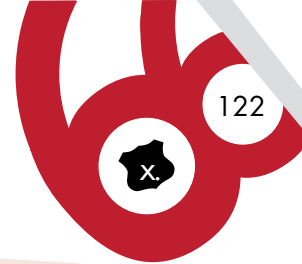


Economic Development



In recent years, many regions and states have recognized that Scenic Byway Routes like Missouri Route 66 have value not only for aesthetics and preservation, but also as a way to promote desirable forms of tourism and increase income in regions. This motivation has led to the development of state scenic byway programs and a national system of designated scenic byways. The growth of scenic byways has also led to a proliferation of a wide range of claims regarding the local economic benefits from existing scenic byways, as well as claims for potential economic benefits that can come from designation of new scenic byways. There is excellent potential to draw significant additional volumes of visitors to byway attractions and communities.

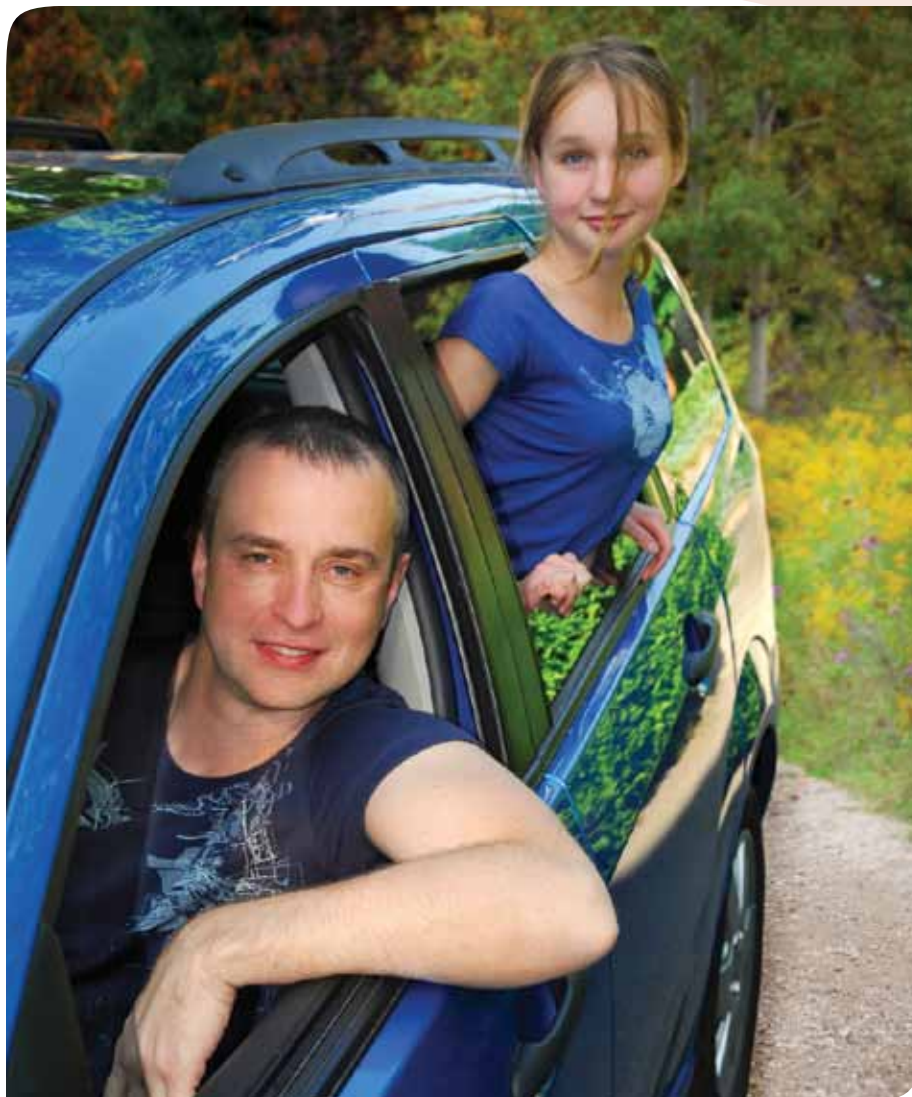


According to the Lebanon Route 66 Museum, 2,666 visitors signed the log in 2009. These visitors came from 151 Missouri cities across the state, from 46 states including Hawaii and Alaska, and from 32 foreign countries. Clearly, foreign and domestic tourists are interested in visiting the various points of interest, the natural wonders offered along the Missouri Route 66 and the physical and cultural environment.

Economic development opportunities for the communities along Route 66 based on corridor travel experience, include land uses and infill opportunities in the

various communities. While observations are generalized here, it should be noted that each community should evaluate local economic development needs and opportunities utilizing some of the tools suggested in the Toolbox of this document. The principal benefit of the corri-

dor management plan project would be to encourage access to future commercial sites, particularly those associated with facilities which would expand the opportunities for goods and services or experience for the traveler's along the Route.



Route 66 Visitors

“There is excellent potential to draw significant additional volumes of visitors to byway attractions and communities.”

The corridor can provide access to development sites that accommodate future job growth. The Missouri Route 66 Corridor does not increase the size of the labor market catchment area, but only provides ac-

cess to future sites to accommodate future job growth. To help communities prepare for this, workforce training is identified as a tool in the Toolbox of this document.



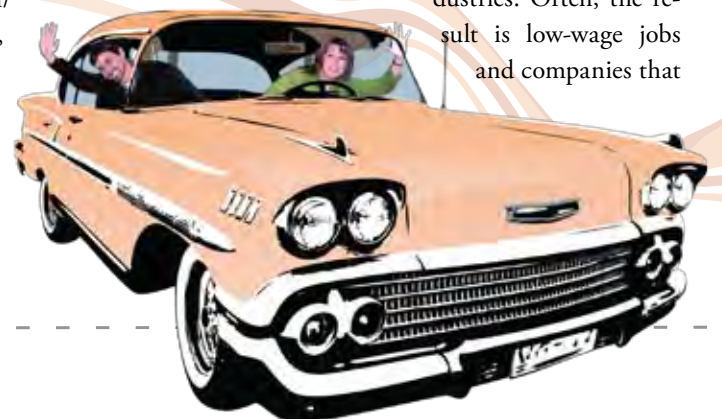
Tourism is a major source of economic vitality to the along the Missouri Route 66 corridor. Many communities rely on the economic benefits derived from tourism and travel-related activities. Tourism can represent an economic development alternative for communities in addition to agribusiness and other industries that already exist. In most places it is hard to diminish the emphasis on encouraging

growth at all costs. A powerful growth coalition exists in most metro areas. Real estate developers, Chambers of Commerce, newspapers and utilities, and economic development professionals advocate getting bigger, even if the new jobs pay little and the region is coping with the pains of growth. Increasing the economic benefits from tourism to rural communities can represent an important part of a community's economic development strategy. Tourism appeals to travelers seeking some type of experiential tourism product such as auto touring, bird watching, nature tourism and cultural and heritage tourism. While rural areas often serve as the backdrop for these types of natural resource and cultural/heritage activities, these stakeholders do

not always derive direct financial benefits. However, through careful tourism development and focused marketing strategies, rural areas can increase the traveler's length of stay and the amount traveler's spend in the corridor.

The goal for economic development should be to raise average per capita incomes through higher-wage jobs, while working to reduce poverty and expand opportunity for economically disadvantaged residents, while boosting the region's quality of life. This does not mean that regions should oppose growth and erect regulations limiting it; it does mean that most areas should not continue to pursue job creation for its own sake.

With the dynamic changes which have occurred in our economy, we are required to reflect on the successes and failures of the past to develop a new plan for future economic growth. In the old economy, places sought to get big by "getting cheap." In today's economy, the key to success is to "get better." Policy makers used to believe that a low-cost environment was the key to success and that making investments to create a high-quality physical environment just raised costs and drove away business. This is the reason that many areas focused on physical infrastructure, below market-rate financing and marketing and incentives to attract only large industries. Often, the result is low-wage jobs and companies that



were just as likely to leave after a decade for even cheaper pastures.

The path to raising wages and quality of life is to boost the skills of the region's workforce, creating fast and responsive government, ensuring a high quality of life including a high-quality physical environment that is attractive to skilled workers and developing a responsive, efficient government. This is not to say that fiscal discipline should not be a cornerstone of government. But a low-cost environment with a poor quality of life is not the ticket to success.

In today's economy, areas need to shift their focus from providing tax breaks and other subsidies to investing in the skills of the workforce, creating a solid infrastructure for technological innovation, and a better quality of life for residents.

A skilled workforce is the most important factor of production, the location of knowledge workers is a key factor determining a place's economic success. It used to be that workers moved to where companies were locating. More and more often, companies look to locate where skilled workers live. Because they are in greater demand and have some ability to be picky about who they work for and where they work, skilled workers can afford to choose locations that provide more than just a good job with a good income. There are numerous factors that go into making a region attractive to these workers, but one

of the most important is quality of life. Most areas face a number of challenges in creating a great quality of life, including public amenities, low crime rate, and a good transportation system.

Addressing the evolution in the economy not only brings enormous potential to boost the wellbeing of the residents of areas, but also introduces challenges. If communities do not invest in an education, infrastructure, training, and technology - companies will not have the skilled workers and cutting-edge tools needed to create higher-paying jobs. If they do not solve pressing quality of life issues, they will not be attractive to knowledge workers. And if local governments do not transform themselves into

governments that embrace and promote technology, they will impede, rather than advance, growth. Communities that meet the challenges of today's economy focus on innovation, education, and constant adaptation will be the ones that succeed and see the incomes of their residents grow the most.

It is important to collect information from the users of the system, the travelers of Missouri Route 66, to identify market opportunities. For communities to market those opportunities to the business world, thereby creating jobs, a tax base and economic growth is necessary. By expanding the opportunities in the corridor these economic development measures will promote long-term sustainability.



Construction And Growth

“a low-cost environment with a poor quality of life is not the ticket to success.”