

# ALONG THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

## The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association

*Volume 1, Number 3 (March 1996)*

### **A Word from the LHA**

Well, we dodged a bad weekend by moving the meeting from February 11 to March 23. We ended up going to a wedding on the 11th and it was a terrible day (for wind). It was a nice wedding.

You will soon be getting the new *Forum* with Reno Conference material. Let's make a good effort to have an enthused Iowa crowd there. I have enclosed a tentative schedule for a bus trip from Iowa. We could shorten it by not going to San Francisco, but I prefer to go to "the end."

I promised a Lincoln Highway list of books. It is going to have to wait for a later letter.

The University of California Tour Organizer just sent me information concerning their tour plans for the Lincoln Highway next October. Also, in '97 a tour from Colorado is coming to Iowa to explore the Lincoln. More on these tours at the Tama meeting. I feel that this is just the beginning of growing national interest in this first transcontinental highway.

Interpretive site planning is moving forward, and I hope to spend a good amount of time on it at the state meeting. Currently we are planning for two state entry locations and six regional sites. This concept will be introduced by Troy Seifert, a graduate student at the landscape architecture department at Iowa State University. His vision and drawing of the sites is really exciting.

Also, another noted speaker will be among us. Lyell Henry will present information and slides on the history of the King Tower and the families that made it happen.

The National LHA Board of Directors held its first annual mid-year meeting in Council Bluffs on January 27th. It was a good proactive meeting. I want to make a short report on it.

### **Election of Officers**

We have made good progress without active officers and directors. This has been accomplished by a really good set of volunteers working at various locations across the state. I think it is now necessary to become better organized and better coordinated. We need officers and directors for future guidance and direction, and hope to have three general membership meetings per year, and also have an executive board to carry on day-to-day business.

At the present time, Roger Riley is helping out at the Ogden office on a part-time basis. He will be at the Tama meeting. I want you to meet him and share with him. You can leave a message or fax the Ogden office at 515-275-4966, and we'll get back to you.

We have applied for a grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development to fund a full-time person. We may know more about the status of this application on the 23rd. Also, we have applied for a smaller grant through US West. This grant would fund a pilot project for development of techniques to get tourists to stop in our small towns and do some shopping.

Lyell Henry is also on a committee to set up a Lincoln Highway Sesquicentennial display at Mt. Mercy College. He will report on planning - we will need to help set it up in Cedar Rapids.

One of our members from Woodbine will report on their successful grant application to begin repair of their brick section of the original Lincoln Highway.

Anne Schoonover will report on the progress at Youngville, and hopefully her grant application will be successful, and she can report on that. Of course you will get to see the real thing on the tour as we visit the rehabilitation project.

The state survey of the Lincoln Highway alignments along with engineering structures and roadside features has been

funded by an ISTEA grant and the Iowa Department of Transportation. This survey will start almost immediately and continue through the summer. It is another big step forward.

Another topic to take up at the meeting at King Tower is fund-raising. I believe we have entered a new era of Lincoln Highway preservation and the subsequent ability to turn this preservation effort into an economic development opportunity, especially tourism. I also believe the two can be synergistic. That is the two working together can be greater than the efforts of each working separately. This state survey and all of the ISTEA projects, along with the sesquicentennial exposure, etc., are really moving things along at a rapid pace. It is time to bring in major players to finance coordination and development of interpretive site planning.

I'm hoping we can start the tour at 1 p.m. We'll start at the Tama Bridge. Then we'll go west on New 30 to the Montour turnoff, and proceed to Jack Kupka's gas station (canopy style) in Montour. The highway to Montour is on top of the original Lincoln highway. Also in Montour, we will try to visit the other canopy station, learn about the mansion on the southeast corner of town, and see the Burma Shave Signs on the east edge. (One of them is on an original post.)

We will stop at the scene of the Osterman accident just east of Montour, notice several right-of-way posts, and see an example of a "ridge" road, along with some nice views of the Iowa River Valley. Parts of this road between Montour and Tama will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

After driving off the ridge road into the Iowa River Valley (!), we come to the Mesqwaki Indian Settlement, the remains of a WPA souvenir stand, Weirs' Souvenirs, the place where brick markers were, and into Tama. We will stop at the architecturally curious Tama Cement School, which was also a WPA project, proceed to the mural of the Tama Bridge, and see Tama's Lincoln Highway Marker.

After leaving Tama, we follow the "bench" road to Chelsea, photograph the bridge over Otter Creek, which is scheduled for removal in 1997, see their marker, hear a report on the moving of the town, and proceed on to Belle Plaine.

We can visit the Preston Station, Lincoln Cafe, Maid-Rite, and King Theater, but I want to concentrate on a visit to Sankot Garage, and thank Bill Sankot for the effort he put forth to get his building on the National Register of Historic Places.

The highway, Iowa 131, going north from Belle Plaine to new US 30, is one of our best examples of an early paved road in Iowa. Its historic integrity remains relatively intact. That is, the workmanship, materials, feeling, association, setting, and location are very original. This stretch of highway should also be eligible for the national Register of Historic Places. Some nice sets of farm buildings are buildings are part of the original viewscape.

At Youngville, we will see first-hand some of what the station looked like at its worst, and some of the improvements that have taken place. Anne will point out future plans, and give a history of Youngville.

**State LHA President,  
Bob Ausberger**

---

*All text Copyright © Bob Ausberger, 1996.*