

Along the Lincoln Highway



The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
Winter/Spring 2000 Volume 5 Issue 1

Celebrate Spring and the Lincoln Highway in Boone.

Boone will be the site of the Spring 2000 meeting of the Iowa LHA, to be held Saturday, April 15th (not the 8th as earlier planned). Members and non-members alike are invited to the **Boone County Historical Center**, 602 Story St., with coffee and conversation commencing at 9:00 am, and the business portion of the meeting kicking off at 9:30. Important LH sites abound in Boone County, and after lunch there will be a bus tour visiting attractions like the long abandoned Nic-O-Let amusement park, the stone pilings of the old Rose Ferry Bridge, and more. Participants in the afternoon tour are advised to wear comfortable hiking shoes for traipsing through the new spring foliage.

UPCOMING EVENTS

15 April—State General Membership Meeting. Boone. 9:00 am.

19-21 May—Lincoln Highway Bridge Festival. Tama.

14-17 June—LHA National Conference. New Jersey.

8 July—Iowa LHA Board of Directors Meeting. Marshalltown.

7 October—Iowa LHA Open Membership Meeting. Pottawattamie County. Mark your calendars now!

13-16 June 2001—LHA National Conference. Grand Island, Nebraska.

June 2002—LHA National Conference, California Here We Come!

Mitigation Measures Reached for Seedling Mile.

by Jeff Benson

After nearly two years of discussion the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, Linn County Engineer's Office, Iowa Department of Transportation and Iowa State Historic Preservation Office are in the process of finalizing measures to mitigate damage to the Seedling Mile expected from a proposed road improvement project.

The Seedling Mile is part of Mt. Vernon road in Linn County. It is one of the original concrete sections created to promote paving of the Lincoln Highway. Though eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, *changes to the width, ditches, slopes and grades of the road will render it ineligible*, according to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office.

Mitigation measures will include:

- Inclusion of design modifications to reduce grade changes and right-of-way widening in some cases.
- Concrete paving for the Seedling Mile section to help identify it by contrast with the color of the asphalt paving on the rest of the road.
- Saw cuts parallel to the edge of the roadway at a width of nineteen feet six inches to give a sense of the original pavement width.
- Signs designating the Seedling Mile at both ends.
- A publication documenting the historical resource with narrative, photographs, maps and illustrations, with 1500 copies distributed at no cost.
- Stipulations for further review should unknown archaeological artifacts be discovered during construction.

At its January meeting, the ILHA Board of Directors voted to "concur reluctantly" with these measures. In its letter to the other parties to the agreement, the ILHA stated:

"It is unnecessary and tragic to lose such a large portion of the historic asset that the Lincoln Highway represents, especially at a time when the FHWA encourages context-sensitive design to preserve cultural resources while providing for public safety. Preservation in this case is even more important in light of the recent destruction of the Happy Valley Service Station, which in August 1998 we proposed as a possible interpretive site. . . Because we were invited in to the design process and because through the Memorandum of Agreement the county agrees to some design improvement and to mitigate for the loss of the historic resource, the Board of Directors of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association on January 8 voted to concur reluctantly in the Memorandum of Agreement."

The letter went on to propose that the Iowa DOT sponsor a statewide conference for county and state engineers on design measures to preserve historic roads and roadside resources. The letter

called this conference “especially timely as the Iowa D. O. T. completes rebuilding and improving U. S. 30 across the eastern half of the state, much of which is in close proximity to or part of the historic Lincoln Highway. It is in the spirit of improving the success of such projects in the future that we concur with the Memorandum.”

In order for the road improvement project to proceed using federal funds, the Federal Highway Administration must also agree to these mitigation measures, which is now in process. The ILHA Board will keep members updated with regular reports in these pages. L

Reed/Niland’s Corner and Woodbine Receive Grants.

On January 11, 2000, the Iowa Department of Transportation Commission awarded the Reed/Niland’s Corner of the Colo Development Group \$252,000 to continue the preservation and restoration of this historic roadside “one-stop” on the Lincoln Highway in Colo. Although the Commission turned down the request of the City of Woodbine for \$980,000 to assist with rebuilding the longest remaining original brick section of the Lincoln Highway in Iowa, in December the Region 18 Planning Affiliation awarded Woodbine \$300,000 toward the project.

The funding for the Reed/Niland’s Corner project came from the portion of federal transportation funding (commonly called “TEA-21”) designated for transportation enhancement projects, such as scenic preservation, trail development, landscaping and historic resource preservation. This project is funded from a \$4 million pool of funds for projects in Iowa of statewide significance for the fiscal year beginning in October 2000.



This grant will go toward restoring the service station to its appearance in the early 1930s. The one-stop operated from 1923 until the 1960s and also includes a café, tourist cabins and a motel, all of which will be preserved in future projects. The Committee will also be raising \$108,000 for matching funds for the current project. Those who wish to help can write, phone, or email:

Colo Development Group
PO Box 294
Colo, IA 50056
(515) 377-2238; colocity@netins.net

The funding for the Woodbine project comes from the TEA-21 federal transportation funding designated for projects of regional significance. The Woodbine brick section is 3600 feet long and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, according to Iowa State Historic Preservation

Office staff. The project will include rehabilitation of some utilities under the street and removal and relaying of existing brick pavers on a new subgrade and paver base, as well as historic lighting and other related work.



The total budget is \$3.3 million. The City and the committee working on this project are now seeking alternative funding for the project. The City has already committed \$400,000 to the project and the committee has agreed to raise an additional \$400,000. Those who wish to help can contact:

City of Woodbine
515 Walker Street
Woodbine, Iowa 51579-1262

Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

*Minutes of the Winter 2000 Iowa LHA
General Membership Meeting
Ames, Iowa.
8 January 2000.*

Submitted by Norma Berns, Secretary.

President **Jeff Benson** welcomed the LHA members and guests. Three new members were introduced: **Bill Paeth** from Cedar Rapids, **Bob Stinson** from Des Moines, and **Larry Forney** from Colo.

Joyce Ausberger gave a report on Grants in Bob's absence. Woodbine got \$225,000 from Regional IST Grant for their brick streets. City is going to pay one third of it. Total project cost is \$3,317,000.

DOT is going to be doing work in the next five years on U.S. 30 from Carroll to Clinton, which could have a large negative or positive impact on the LH. The importance of the LH could be threatened by the DOT projects.

In fall 2000, we will be electing new officers, a president and president-elect. All members are eligible to nominate and to serve.

Purpose of discussion today is to find out what projects are most important, who wants to be involved, and how to support each other and the LH. Jeff provided papers on "Issues for the ILHA." Issues are as follows:

POLITICS

Road Improvements and Preserving the Lincoln. Members should review and get involved in the county planning sessions. Meet with the DOT and Co. Supervisors. Go to public meetings. Find out what's going on and express opinions.

Bridge in Clinton Co.: how much integrity does bridge have? Is it urgent? Who's willing to work on it? Meet with them before controversy gets rolling.

It would be nice to have green historic signs along LH.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Ann Schoonover, Youngville Station project leader, has asked for help from 3 State Power Co. Lyell Henry, Linn County Director, will help Ann in her Youngville exhibit.

Preserving LH through Scranton discussed.

Youngville Station will open this spring.

Lion's Club Tree Park in Greene County will get rolling this spring.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Select special projects for specific funding support.

Get more local support from Supervisors, City Councils and newspapers.

Pole painting.

MEMBERSHIP

Cecil Stewart will send 1998 dropout members to each director. He will investigate postage and e-mail addresses.

Paul Walker should headline Iowa projects on the ILHA website.

Members should send Paul stories for newsletter.: clippings and current news.

PUBLICATIONS

Map packs are \$10, mailed out or in shop.

Should we sell publications of historic places, etc? The Cedar County Historical Society has published a book of stories pertinent to Cedar County. \$10.00

Banners need replacing with better color preservation. [See page 5]

COLLECTIONS

Where should the Iowa LHA keep and store LH memorabilia and LH collections in the interim until a building is made available? State or National? Franklin Grove,

IL? Lyell Henry will investigate.

The Memorandum of Agreement of Linn County's proposed Mt. Vernon Road widening and resurfacing project of the Seedling Mile/Lincoln Highway Historic District was read and discussed. The DOT stated that they would respect the ILHA's wishes, but would implement their planned reconstruction.

Jeff Benson, co-President, drew up a letter for the group to vote on and agree to send it to the DOT. Much discussion after a majority voted affirmative with 3 dissenting votes. It was decided that Jeff would rewrite the letter, using stronger verbiage.

The meeting adjourned at noon, and participants strolled to downtown Ames to different eateries, stopping along the way at the Story Center to visit the exhibit, "Mud Road to Miracle Mile: The Lincoln Highway in Story County."

Reconvening at 1:15, an overflow crowd met at the Ames Library meeting room for a presentation by Joe Harper, describing the exciting Reed/Niland's Corner restoration project in Colo and Lyell Henry's presentation on the development of roadside accommodations on the Lincoln Highway. A newspaper announcement of the LH presentations is credited with the large number of local attendees and Iowa LHA members at the afternoon sessions, resulting in a wonderful meeting and day! L

Where Have All the Markers Gone? Gone to California.

by Van Becker

The long-rumored, but never seen, missing Tama concrete highway marker finally showed up last December, 1999, on eBay, the online Internet auction. Check out the photos. We may never see it again. It is understood that this marker was only offered at auction to settle a divorce or it would still be in hiding. This original marker is in good shape except for a few cracks in the lower post. The required minor repairs will be underground and unseen when remounted. Yes, the medallion was present and the directional arrow was straight up. The seller apparently did not know the original 1928 location, but it was believed to be in the Tama-Toledo area.



How does a Lincoln Highway Association marker do at auction? I opened the bidding at \$100 in the first few minutes of auction. That brave bid held for only about five hours of a full seven-day auction period. Some familiar names flashed by as bidders. I didn't realize that Carl Fisher could still bid, but his name appeared with a \$500 bid. Almost a week later, the auction passed the seller's reserve price (the minimum acceptable price to the seller), believed to be \$800 and sold/closed in the middle of the night for an incredible \$960 to a California buyer! Sadly, the new owner lives many miles off the Lincoln Highway. The buyer, from San Luis Obispo, California must pick up or arrange the shipping himself. His prize is stored in the Tama/Toledo area. No shipping was offered by the seller. Remember, these markers weigh 300 pounds.



The accompanying photos will be included in our chapter's list of markers with the note of when it left the state for California. It is disappointing that the historic significance is diminished by removing this marker from Iowa. Because of the price paid, the new owner must be a Highway enthusiast. However, he is not listed on the latest LHA membership roster. The new owner, when contacted by *The Des Moines Register*, said he felt a bit guilty about his purchase as he felt the marker should be in a Lincoln museum. He recalled childhood stories from his mother and grandparents of journeys on the Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania. As he is an antique collector, the marker will be placed with other antique mementos of his family's history.

The Lincoln Highway ran all the way to California. Now our marker has too. \$960, WOW! What a ride! L

National LHA Has Website.

The Iowa LHA has been on-line since 1996 with a comprehensive website catering to Lincoln Highway enthusiasts everywhere. Now we are happy to announce that the website for our national association is open for business.

For the past six months the Board of Directors has discussed initiating a serious internet presence that would represent the national organization, and now it is a reality.

The goal was to keep it small—a sort of Lincoln Highway index that dispenses the essential information of the LH, like history, important events, our mission, how to join, etc. Visitors seeking more information are then encouraged to click to related LH sites.

You can visit the official website of the LHA at www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org. And while online, be sure to check out these other good state sites that you may have missed:

OHIO: hometown.aol.com/LincolnHighway/OLHA.html

INDIANA: www.lincoln.tripod.com/

ILLINOIS: www.svonline.net/~lha/

UTAH: www.xmission.com/~pgrimes/lincoln.htm

New Banners Ready.

A fresh batch of red, white, and blue Lincoln Highway banners have been manufactured and are now for sale. Made of a more durable grade of tough vinyl, the new set of lamppost banners should last longer and be more colorfast than the last issue—which are five years old and still “hanging in there” on city squares and roadways across the state.

Cost of a banner and bracket pack is \$100, while the banner alone is \$60 (used with your existing bracket). Shipping and handling is \$10. Direct your order to Joyce Ausberger. L

Outside Iowa in the LHA.

*From “Linc” Across Nebraska,
Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association*

- The Site Selection Committee for the National LHA Conference met with hotel managers, chambers of commerce, and visitors’ bureaus in several locations. Grand Island was chosen for the Conference because of its location. We plan to take our east bus tour as far as Omaha and our west bus tour as far as North Platte. [June 13-16, 2001]

*From Land of Lincoln News,
Illinois Lincoln Highway Association.*

The long awaited windmill was raised in Fulton last November 19th. Built in the Netherlands, taken down, shipped by boat to Fulton [across the Mississippi River from Clinton IA] then raised again by the original builders. It is to be a welcoming center and museum for the Dutch town of Fulton and the Lincoln Highway as it enters Illinois.

We’ve been talking with Peter Youngman, Indiana Director, about a tour of eastern Illinois and western Indiana. Early morning coffee in Illinois, visit places along the way, picnic supper in Deep River, Indiana. The Ideal Section and Ostermann Memorial are in this area. This would be in conjunction with the Indiana Chapter. Let us know if you are interested. L
