

# Along the Lincoln Highway

*The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association*

Volume 9, Number 4

Winter 2004

## Our Man in Greene County.

By Bob Owens.  
Greene County Consul.

**W**orking with our County Engineer Wade Wiess, the Greene County Lincoln Highway Association installed metal LH signs across the county [photo page 7].

On November 23rd, we also had an excellent informational meeting with our County Engineers and County Supervisors, with engineers and planners on hand from Snyder and Associates. The topic of discussion was the Eureka Bridge. The engineering consultants presented several plans how the bridge could be accommodated, including plans for bypassing it, or perhaps even rebuilding it.

Those in attendance understood the historical significance of the bridge—it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

On a sadder note, I must report that our good friend and charter member of the LHA, Jonathan M. Fletcher, passed away in Des Moines, also on the 23rd.

LH supporters will remember Jonathan as the grandson of J.E. Moss—builder, of the famous Moss Corner busts north of Scranton. Jonathan was instrumental in promoting funds toward renovation of the Moss Corner Lincoln memorial busts. **L**

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## The President's Corner

By Bob Stinson,  
ILHA President

**F**irst of all, I would like to say what an honor and pleasure it is to serve as ILHA President for 2005 and 2006. I have some mighty big shoes to fill considering all of the good people who have held this

office before me.

A big "thank you" for a job well done goes to outgoing president Mike Kelly. On the same note, we should all be grateful for the folks who have stepped forward over the past few years to fill the positions and serve on the ILHA Board of Directors. An organization is only as good as its membership,

and I believe ours is one of the finest groups of individuals I have ever known.

Which brings me to my second point. I joined the LHA because of a love of things historical and a desire to preserve them, as well as a burning penchant to experience the "Open Road and the Flying Wheel."

But now that I have been a part of our organization for several years, I realize the reason I enjoy it so much is the great folks who are our members. I have made many good Lincoln Highway friends: like-

*(President's Corner, Continued on page 5)*



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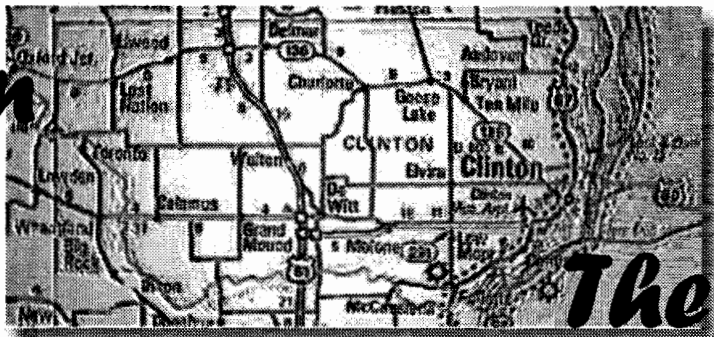
AWARENESS OF ITS GOALS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING THE LH. FACILITATE RESEARCH ABOUT THE LH AND PUBLISH A MAGAZINE FOR ARTICLES AND NEWS OF ACTIVITY RELEVANT TO THE LH. WORK WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES TO PROMOTE THE LH AS A TOURISM DESTINATION. AND BE EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.



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# Between



# The Rivers

BY JEFF LAFOLLETTE,  
CLINTON COUNTY CONSUL.

..and then some

The Iowa LHA is fortunate indeed to have two feature writers. In addition to years of entertaining story-telling by Van Becker of Linn County, Clinton County Director Jeff LaFollette will be sharing alternating issues. "Between the Rivers and Then Some" is a salute to the Lincoln Highway entering Iowa over the Mississippi River, and exiting Clinton County five miles beyond the Wapsipinicon River near Wheatland.  
-ed.

Sometimes the state DOT and county engineers get a bad rap from historical interest groups. We suspect they're out to forsake all we hold dear, and they sometimes think we're a bunch of crazies willing to chain ourselves to bridges or lie on old pavement to save it.

We have to respect their reasons for wanting to improve Iowa's roadways, the primary one being driver safety, and I am convinced they will respect our endeavors if we approach them the right way.

One thing is for sure...as government agencies, they do an *excellent* job of keeping records. Recently I contacted the Iowa DOT office, located on Lincolnway in Ames. My mission was to gather information on the old Calamus pony truss bridge.

After e-mail and phone calls, two packages arrived from the Ames office. What a treasure trove—well above expectations!

I received thirteen pages of contract and bond information, not only on the bridge, but also on county road improvements on the Lincoln, and three pages of design plans for the bridge. One page outlined all the bridge and culvert projects completed in Clinton County and is dated January 1922. So here's some history of the bridge and the Lincoln Highway improvements.

The bridge was part of what was called

Primary Road Project #125. This project was approved by voters in Clinton County on September 3, 1919, "authorizing the construction of hard surfacing on the said primary road system of said county." It was the beginning of getting Clinton County out of the mud.

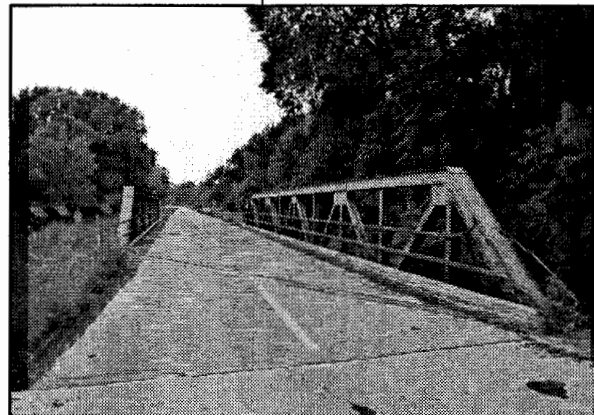
Sitting on the Clinton County Board of Supervisors at the time were John Eden, George Cook, and George McClintock. They were authorized to issue bonds for the project, not to exceed \$1,800,000. At the time of the resolution, \$400,000 had been appropriated, which had been spent on paving and improvements. The records of the Clinton County Engineer's office state that the pony truss bridge construction began and was completed in 1920. Our little bridge was known as "Design #9," a 90-foot by 20-foot "skew" pony truss bridge [photo, pre-barriers]. According to records, it was the biggest project of Primary Road Project #125.

Actually it was the only bridge listed on PRP #125. Everything else was either cattle passes or box culverts.

Estimated quantities of materials to construct the bridge were 252.4 yards of concrete, 20,100 pounds of reinforced steel and 62,300 pounds of structural steel.

The remaining road construction was to be done on Primary Road No. 6 from the west line of Section 14, Township 81 North, Range 3 East, to the Cedar County Line.

I initially thought the distance covered was



(Between Rivers, Continued on page 6)

## Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

*Minutes of the Autumn 2004 Iowa LHA Meeting  
North Warren Fire Station, Ames, Iowa.  
9 October 2004.*

*Submitted by Su Aros, Secretary.*

**B**ob Stinson, Assistant Fire Chief at the Northern Warren Fire Station in Des Moines and incoming ILHA President, hosted the meeting and provided frosted cinnamon rolls and coffee. 22 members and guests were in attendance. Outgoing President Mike Kelly rapped his gavel for the last time at 9:43am.

Motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the minutes of the July 10 ILHA meeting as published in the Autumn 2004 newsletter.

### *Treasurer's Report.*

Joyce Ausberger reported checking balance of \$1,960.84; Autumn newsletter publishing costs yet to be paid. Investment account balance is \$4,174.64.

ILHA reimbursed \$458.75 by "Keep Iowa Beautiful" grant to cover white paint for Greene County Star Motel and canopy gas station.

Motion made and carried to designate 70% of Ogden Walking Tour booklet sales be given to Ogden citizens working to save Mordini Building. Comment made of only one ILHA member from Ogden. Joyce volunteered to expend effort in the town of Ogden in generating interest and membership in the ILHA.

### *Membership Report.*

No report but a copy of lapsed memberships was circulated to Consuls for follow up.

### *State Director's Report.*

Paul Walker read resignation letter from Ron Cory, Tama County Consul. Allan Richards serving as Ron's replacement beginning in January 2005. Welcome Allan!

Future ILHA meetings to focus on planning for 2006 Annual Conference in Cedar Rapids. Good attendance needed especially at the January 2005 meeting.

### *President's Report.*

Mike extended thanks to ILHA members for support during his two years as president. He plans to remain an active member and Benton County Consul, as well as seek out old-timers from Iowa LH communities to record their highway memories.

### *Scenic Byway Status.*

Jeff Benson reports application for Scenic Byway status was filed on October 1. The DOT has 18 months to review and respond. Jeff

thanked all who worked to get support letters from 6 counties and 32 cities plus other organization. Still needed is Board-of-Supervisor letters from Clinton, Cedar, Linn, Marshall, Greene, Crawford and Pottawattamie Counties.

The argument for Scenic Byway status is "safety." Route needs to be marked/signed, allowing travelers to track the highway through their windshields as opposed to reading maps.

Jeff to write letter to DOT Executive Director seeking his personal assistance. To augment process, may involve asking Iowa legislature to stress marking route with the DOT.

Decision needed on route designation among variations, to be addressed by Benson, the Ausbergers, Cathy Noble, Charles Kuester, Jeff LaFollette.

If Scenic Byway status denied, alternate is Named Highway Program (memorial highways). Application made to the Office of Traffic & Safety. ILHA supplies signs and receives local government support along route. Carroll County used 12"x18" steel signs mounted by county engineer's office on e911 poles.

### *2006 Annual Conference Update*

January 2005 ILHA meeting used to assign action items to ILHA members. LaFollette shared information on grant application/funding/cycle/eligibility for funding from the Eastern Iowa Tourism and Clinton County Gaming Association. Will look to businesses, associations for donations to cover various conference expenses.

### *ILHA Election Results*

LaFollette accepted nomination for Vice President/President Elect for 2005/2006 and was unanimously elected to that office.

Joyce Ausberger and Su Aros elected by affirmation to another 2-year term for the offices of Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

### *General*

No resolution on identification of a LH parade vehicle.

Due to "consistent look" and durability issues in materials, vendor requests for LH street banners should be referred to Jim Cassler of the LH Trading Post. Using the Trading Post as the sole source for banners will ensure consistency and durability.

### *County Consul Reports*

Clinton - Jeff and Annette LaFollette have completed 36 pole-paintings and received an OK from Alliant to paint metal poles. The Calamus pony truss bridge appearance has improved. Will be tapping Clinton Co. cities

*(Ramblings, Continued on page 4)*

*(Ramblings, Continued from page 3)*

for LH memberships.

Cedar - no report

Linn - Van and Bev Becker went 3 for 3 in securing support letters for the Scenic Byway application. Also supporting Walker on Linn County pole-painting. Lyell Henry and Van working with county historical commission to move Seedling Mile plaque to appropriate location. Lisbon Main St. is lined with LH banners.

Benton - Mike Kelly reported good turnout for Youngville Fall Festival. Still not sufficient proof for authorities to make arrest in Youngville arson case. Period "Youngville" pen was donated to museum. Belle Plaine museum dedicated. Preston Garage perseveres as popular tourist stop for national/international visitors.

Tama - Ron Cory's final report included volunteer maintenance of the bridge/park area is in its 19<sup>th</sup> year. Bridge replaster-and-seal project on city's Spring 2005 schedule. Five painted poles and 8 LH banners have sparked renewed tourist interest. King Tower Restoration Project is 75% complete. 26<sup>th</sup> Annual LH Bridge Festival in Tama is scheduled for May 20/21, 2005. Dr. Donald Johnson purchased a LH banner to hang across from office on Mt. Vernon Road in Cedar Rapids. Allan Richards reported that Chelsea gas station to be torn down. One of Allan's goals is installation of marker where Henry C. Ostermann, Field Secretary for the LHA, was killed in an auto accident near Montour in June of 1920.

Marshall - Cathy Noble has provided Scenic Byway application support.

Story - Jeff Benson reported LH Artist Studio Tour is October 16/17. Brochures available. Marshalltown and Boone have expressed interest for 2005. LH presentation in Ames resulted in the sale of 7 map packs. Ames Historical Society website is loading LH info into interactive site; images of private LH photos may be contributed.

Boone - Joe Moore reported that LH signs to be installed on sides of new concrete bridge replacing truss bridge. Pole painting continues.

Greene - Joyce Ausberger reporting for Bob Owens: Junction Café now open along Grand Junction main street. LH stickers have been placed on all Lincoln Way businesses in Jefferson; plan to blanket Grand Junction and Scranton as well. Camp Cozy and Star Motel cleanup efforts underway. Peterson Concrete in Denison attempting to duplicate LH concrete markers. \$350 grant to Greene County LHA

received from city of Jefferson and used to purchase LH metal signs for highway marking.

Carroll - Norma Berns secured city and county support letters for Byway application. Signed up Farner Bocken as a member.

Crawford - Ardith Sporleder absent but sent report that LH markers still laying on ground in front of Carlisle's Monument in Denison.

Harrison - Elaine Ehlert reported that she had a LH display at the Woodbine Apple Festival which 6,000 people attended. Woodbine Historical Corridor repairing canopy gas station and securing carriage house where Elaine's LH memorabilia may be secured. Elaine in charge of mural design for side of the old lumberyard building that facing U.S. 30 in Woodbine. Members asked for help in what to include.

Pottawattamie - No report.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm with the passing of the gavel from Mike Kelly to Bob Stinson [photo].

L u n c h served by the Northern Warren Fire Department and ladies auxiliary with good will donations.

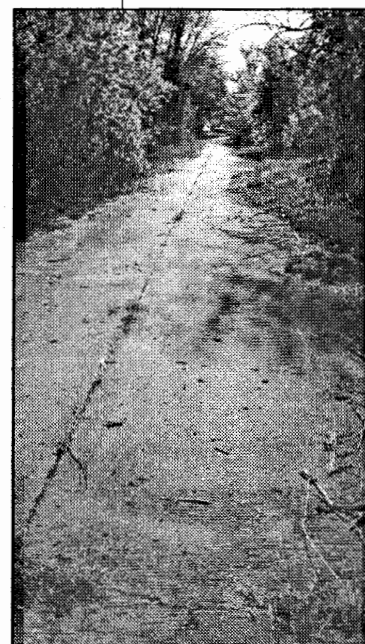


#### *Tour Highlights.*

Van Becker realized a dream when Bob Stinson drove a fire truck out of the fire house into the parking lot and Van cranked up the siren to his heart's content. John Fitzsimmons's son Sean sat in the cab with Van. One young kid, one old one.

Bob Stinson presented a slide show of the Jefferson Highway, its origin and its route through Iowa, with details of the afternoon bus tour. Two buses proceeded south out of Des Moines, in gorgeous sunny fall weather with stops at points of interest.

The group enjoyed walking along a mile stretch of 18-foot wide JH, lip curb, abandoned in 1948 [photo]. The discovery of the day by Kenny Russell of Jefferson was an A&W metal sign, 3-foot diamond shaped, along



*(Ramblings, Continued on page 5)*

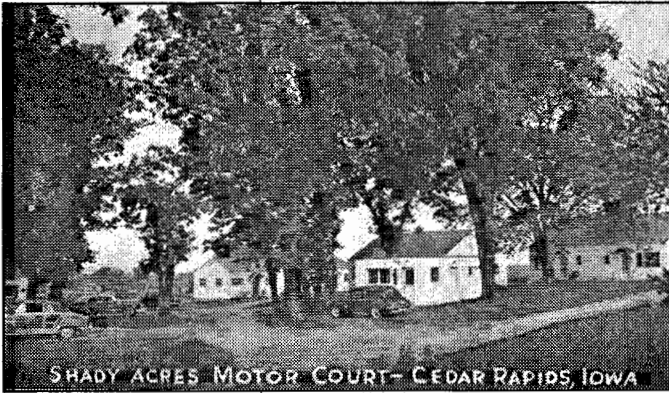
## Cedar Rapids Motor Court to be Demolished.

By Bev Becker,  
Linn County Consul.

This week when boredom set in, I chose to watch Cedar Rapids' public access channel. The televised Cedar Rapids City Council meeting is about as riveting as I can stand.

However, one item did pique my interest. They quickly announced and approved a resolution to extend 18th Street SW between 16th Avenue and Wilson Avenue SW.

The resolution sounds simple enough, but I



recognized the location. The upcoming street will run directly through the middle of one of our old highway landmarks, the Shady

Acres Motel, at 1791 16th Avenue SW.

So get your photos while you can. The proposed road construction will require lowering the grade significantly through the middle of the cabin camp. **L**

### *(Ramblings, Continued from page 4)*

the road [cover]. Our leader's first task is rescuing the sign and making plans for its future.

The last stop was an Indianola historical museum where members browsed through antique artifacts. Some buildings moved to the site included a school, church, log cabin, post office and general store, meeting house, and a garage where George Washington Carver lived.

At the end of the tour, the buses failed to appear, and just-sworn-in President Bob was anxiously contemplating how to get the tour to its destination.

Walking back alone on a busy two-lane to the buses' last known address, a police car spotted him. Next scene was Bob hauled away in the squad car. Bob Ausberger commented about lowered expectations for the new officeholder, and between the laughter, others remarked that this was the shortest tenure in the annals of the ILHA Presidency. **L**

### *(President's Corner, Continued from page 1)*

minded individuals who understand the grand adventure of standing on a by-passed road berm that once carried the nation's first trans-continental highway, or scrambling down an embankment to discover an old bridge abutment of our famous road. We have a significant responsibility to preserve and protect this important piece of history and tell it's story. We also have the right individuals to do it. I think Henry Joy would be proud.

One of the primary goals I want to see accomplished during my tenure is the official marking of the LH route across the state. It was discussed at length at the last meeting and we are moving in the right direction. An excellent example to follow is the magnificent job that the state of Illinois has done on their portion. Anyone who has driven it knows what a joy it is to follow.

The primary business at hand, however, has to be the preparation for the 2006 LHA National Conference in Cedar Rapids. It will be here before we know it. Paul Walker will have a presentation on this subject at the January meeting, so please plan to attend. Let's make the Iowa LHA Conference the best one yet!

Finally, I would encourage everyone to attend as many ILHA quarterly meetings as possible. This is your association and your input is important, not to mention all the fun we have. Just ask anyone who attended the fall meeting in Des Moines and toured the Jefferson Highway. Where else can you hike for a mile on an abandoned highway and have no bus on the other end to pick you up? Hey, everything came out okay though.

I hope to see you at the January meeting.

Happy Highways,  
Bob

### Upcoming LHA State Meetings

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| January 9 '05 | State Center |
| April 9 '05   | Clinton      |
| July 8 '05    | Tama         |
| October 8 '05 | Lowden       |
| April 8 '06   | Coe College  |

*(Between Rivers, Continued from page 2)*

from the bridge to the Cedar County border west of Wheatland. Inspecting a plat map of Clinton County, however, I saw that construction actually began approximately one mile west of DeWitt on current U.S. 30, far to the east of the bridge and comprising almost 20 miles of paving, bridge, and culvert construction, and drainage tile installation. \$1.8 million bought a lot of highway improvement in those days! Today that would barely pay for a mile.

At 85 years old, the bridge is actually younger than retired Clinton County Consul Elmer Ketelsen, though not as spry.

Now let's put the bridge in conjunction with the Lincoln Highway.

Prior to the truss bridge construction, the Lincoln exited Calamus west on the roadbed of current U.S. 30. At a point east of our pony truss bridge, the road veered northwest to enter what is today the Wapsi Oaks Country Club. There you'll find an old truss bridge crossing Calamus Creek, which resembles the pony truss but is shorter.

This alignment of the Lincoln predates the pony truss construction, so we'll call it the 1913-1920 segment. It then turned back west and ran north of the bridge area to pass through what is today the Syracuse Wildlife Area, public land belonging to the Clinton County Conservation Board.

You're free to walk the old roadbed here for about 0.5 mile [photo]. However, it's dirt and can be very muddy. It's more easily accessed



in the fall and early spring. Be aware if you are walking here that this is public hunting land, so *wardrobe l'orange* may be advised.

After some distance the 1913-1920 Lincoln grade veers west-southwest until it dissolves under what we today call "old U.S. 30." In 1920, the Lincoln was diverted to the newly built pony truss bridge, replacing the original section and its two curves. However, the nar-

row asphalt of old 30 [at right] didn't come into existence for another ten years. Just up ahead is the first of two concrete and steel bridges which, according to Clinton County Engineer's documents, were constructed in 1930 and opened to traffic in 1931, further raising the roadbed out of the Wapsipinicon River and wetlands area. Until the concrete bridges were opened in 1931, the 1920 Lincoln flowed into the 1913 roadbed just beyond Syracuse. We can call this piece the 1913-1931 section. By the way, the 1931 bridges still support traffic today, but through creative use of yellow stripes, the county is restricting use to a single lane.

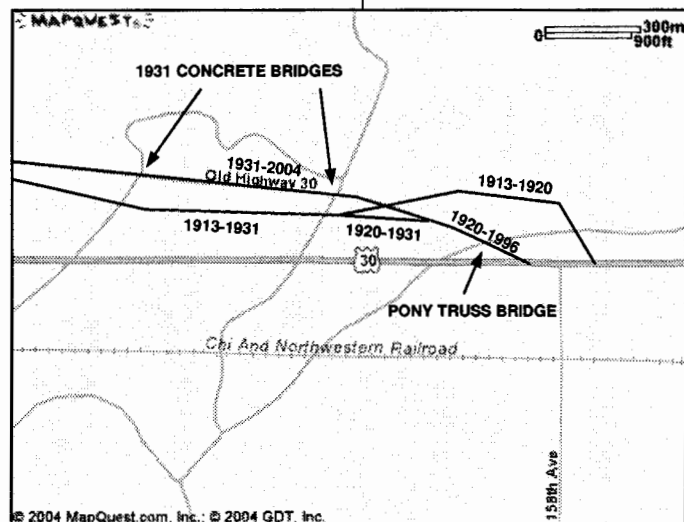


Driving on "old 30" asphalt from Syracuse, proceed 0.1 mile and look to your right to survey the original roadbed. Follow it another 0.1 mile to the point where it crosses under old 30, and come to a lowland crossing.

From here you can walk west of the lowlands where there might have been a box culvert and the roadbed built up. Over time the culvert was likely removed and the berm either washed out by flooding or removed altogether.

Driving west for about 0.3 mile, the original Lincoln is on your left. The 1913-1931 highway is running between and parallel to old 30 to its north and current U.S. 30 on the south. Within a half-mile there are four alignments of the Lincoln, from abandoned dirt grade (1913-20) to abandoned concrete (1920-31), to narrow asphalt (1931-present) to modern concrete! See map.

Through here you can drive west about 0.3 mile, or simply walk the roadbed, and encounter some bridge abutments. The steel piers and concrete abutments are derelicts from the first steel truss bridge that carried brave travelers on wooden planks over this "Wapsi" backwater.



When it's wet - which is often - this is some of the soupiest land in Clinton County, so

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| Lyell Henry                   |  |

*(Between Rivers, Continued from page 6)*

be careful if walking. Did I mention the mosquitoes and water snakes? Snakes are rare and more than happy to share their Lincoln Highway treasure with you, if you don't step



on them. Mosquitoes have no such integrity.

From the first pier, hop back in your car and drive to the second concrete bridge and park in the parking area on the north side. Land north of old 30 is still part of the Syracuse Public Area, but the land to the south is private property. You may encounter four-wheel trails and snowmobile trail signs. Walk across old 30 and into the woods.

You will immediately see a road berm about 200 yards ahead. Hike to the berm, scrape off the dirt and leaves, and say hello to Lincoln highway concrete from 1921. This is concrete from Primary Road Project #125. Walk west toward the river, to some fallen trees. Look on the north edge of the old roadbed and see a steel pier and a concrete bridge abutment, remnant of another steel truss bridge with wooden planks. No-trespassing signs stand to the west, and we shall take that suggestion to heart.

If you track the roadbed back to the east, you can walk for about a quarter-mile on 1921 concrete, though nature has reclaimed most of the slab. Eventually it ends at another lowland crossing, which was probably another box culvert and dirt berm. From here you're better off getting back onto old 30 to continue west into Wheatland.

Information on the early Wapsi wetland Lincoln Highway was provided by Wheatland resident and local historian Bob Steele. Bob also informed me that this area was used by the city of Wheatland after the PRP #125 road was abandoned in 1930 and turned into the town dump. Artifacts still abound: old paint cans, tin cans, bottles, etc.

If you have enjoyed reading about this lost segment, you will have the chance to experience it. The Spring 2005 Iowa LHA meeting is in Clinton County, the first meeting here since 1996. Our county tour will include the pony truss bridge, and as much of the other sections as the waters of the Wapsipinicon will allow.

This is a rare opportunity to see some of the last virtually undiscovered segments of Lincoln Highway in the state, all within an historic two-mile section. So please keep Saturday, April 9, 2005 available for our meeting in DeWitt. Bring your hiking boots and camera and plan to have some fun.

Until next time I'll see you between the rivers...and then some. **L**

# Consuls: We Need YOU in State Center!

The mid-winter board meeting of the ILHA will be at 104 Main Street in State Center on Saturday, January 8th. As usual, friendly conversation begins at 9:00 am, with Bob Stinson trying out his new gavel at 9:30 am. There are several topics on the agenda – like nomination of the new State Director – but the bulk of the meeting will deal with the upcoming 2006 national conference in Cedar Rapids. We'll drive to Niland's for lunch.

It's important for all Consuls to attend the meeting and spread the conference workload. If everyone takes a little responsibility, no one will need to take a lot. In case of inclement weather, the discussion will be postponed until the spring meeting in DeWitt.

So who are those people on the cover standing in the right-of-way of the Jefferson Highway!?

Oh, right! It's our new slate of 2004-2006 officers. And what a great group of officers it is. From left to right: re-elected Treasurer Joyce Ausberger (who's only pretending to hold up the A&W sign), Bob Stinson – President (doing a good job hiding his handcuffs), Jeff LaFollette – Vice President, and Su Aros, re-elected Secretary. Elections were held at the October meeting in Des Moines, which was followed by a very fun tour of the area's Jefferson Highway. You will have to attend the State Center meeting to hear the Bob Stinson incarceration story and see him do the "perp" walk.

Since the last newsletter, a couple of County Consuls slots have become vacant. Thanks go out to the Nortons of the Lincoln Hotel in Lowden for service to the LH in Cedar County for the past two years.

We are also sad to accept the resignation of Ardith Sporleder from Charter Oak. Ardith has been the Crawford County Consul since the early days of the reorganized LHA. A search is underway for replacements in both Cedar and Crawford Counties. Interested parties should contact State Director Paul Walker at his phone number inside. **L**

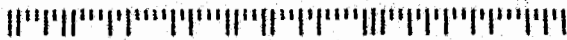


Greene County's new road signs (the lower one, with the "L")

In This Issue...

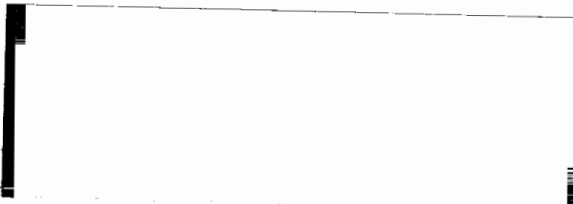
Discussions to Save Eureka!

New segment explored!



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