



**Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway
Corridor Management Plan Meeting
Benton County Area**

**April 21, 2015
Belle Plaine Area Museum**

Meeting Notes and Community Member Input

How has the Lincoln Highway enhanced your community up until now?

- Family heritage - businesses succeeded due to the Lincoln Highway
- Changes over the years from Story County to Clinton
- Blue Book - New York to San Francisco, old maps
- Preston's Station, Lincoln Highway Bridge, unique nationally-known sites in area
- Organizations formed along the Lincoln Highway, for example the Glad Hand Club
- Belle Plaine - story of a man stuck in the mud and farmer brought the car back into town
- Maps - early maps show the route through Chelsea and to Tama
- Benton County's role in the early transportation story
- Competition between towns in paving the roads - followed the Union Pacific Railroad
- Multiple gas station - Van Horne, Blairstown, Belle Plaine, Luzerne (iron cross)
- Radio personalities came from Cedar Rapids to Belle Plaine for cocktails during Prohibition
- Marion lost the county seat to Cedar Rapids as Mt. Vernon Road was paved
- Youngville Café
- Ghost signs have been repainted

What could the Lincoln Highway mean to your community in the future? What ideas do you have?

- Audio tours
- More wayfinding signs, and "marker ahead" signs
- Walking tours
- Selling a different brand than Route 66 or I-80
- "Curiosity" signs for information along roadway
- Electronic wayfinding - Google Maps and websites
- Hotel and Bed & Breakfasts - enhance connections with these establishments
- Family friendly things to do
- Understand the Lincoln Highway traveler better and market to them
- Interpretive panels like at the Prairie Park
- Expand the Glad Hand Club idea - everyone knows the story of the Lincoln Highway
- Work with other area byways

Intrinsic Qualities Identified

Historic:

- Depot
- Cannery
- Belle Plaine Area Museum
- Sankot's Garage
- Preston's Garage moved from 8th Avenue
- Maid-Rite building (was moved)
- Tippie Wayfarer - located one of the original cottages and moved to farm for a ladies' washroom. Brought the concept for tourist cabins from California
- 1909 ads show the amount of gas stations (22 in town). Ads show stacked tires with planted corn at the top, upside down ads, unusual strategies to draw in customers
- Maid-Rite - football players ate there, and coach said not to. They lost the game, then the next week the coach made them start eating there.
- Dedication of the Lincoln Highway - rained a lot and roads were so muddy that no one could get here from out of town. The guest speaker arrived by railroad two hours late, delaying everyone until he arrived.

Natural:

- Iowa River - Marshalltown to Belle Plaine
- Belle Plaine to Chelsea Road - nature observation area
- Relationship between Lincoln Highway and railroad
- Hills and river valley views

Cultural:

- Meskwaki settlement
- Several murals in area
- Mural on museum
- Preston's Station
- Hudson and Dodge auto tours upcoming
- Boxer Kingfish Levinsky and other boxers stopped at the Lincoln Café, might have been involved in more

colorful activities in area, too, especially during Prohibition

- George Preston on Johnny Carson, also had a 900-number with recordings of Lincoln Highway stories, and a *Country* magazine article published
- Variety of nationalities in area, including Czech, Meskwaki
- Cannery
- Another town every 1-2 miles along the route in the past
- Roundhouse
- Cemeteries with notable residents buried there
- Hobo culture - some regulars came through, including "Scoop Shovel Scotty"

Scenic:

- Hills and river valley views
- Otter Creek observation area
- Very scenic area along byway

Archaeological:

- Jumbo Well - rock, hit in 1886 - "8th wonder of the world," artesian well wouldn't stop
- Blue Clay
- Hot fountains on Main Street, horses and wagons went in
- Lots of artesian wells in area, city still has one but very hard water
- Peat bog - interesting dig between Belle Plaine and Chelsea

Recreational:

- Belle Plaine - pool, disc golf (highly-rated course), golf course
- Fishing
- Chelsea - Otter Creek
- Belle Plaine Main Street
- King Theater
- Cemetery built around a hill
- Fourth of July
- National Train Days