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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Nebraska Byways Receive New Signs

John Craig, Director of the Nebraska Department of Roads, will unveil new highway signs marking the statewide Nebraska Byway system, in Elkhorn, on August 24 at 4:00 p.m. The new signs will be unveiled near the refurbished brick paved road along the Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic Byway. The 455 signs feature the Nebraska Byway logo along with the name of the specific byway across the lower portion of the sign and will be placed throughout the nine byways in the state.

These signs will provide additional markings, reminding travelers that they are enjoying one of Nebraska's relaxing and beautiful routes. "It is appropriate that this significant byway should be the first location for these signs as Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic byway was a part of the first transcontinental highway in the nation," said John Craig. "This byway has been guiding travelers across the state since 1912, following the path taken by many of the pioneers."

Highway 30 is commonly referred to, by residents across Nebraska, as the old Lincoln Highway. Started in 1913, an improved, hard-surfaced road was envisioned that would stretch almost 3,400 miles from coast to coast, over the shortest practical route. The Lincoln Highway takes its name from Abraham Lincoln, credited for making the project a reality. This quiet two-lane road through Nebraska offers travelers a glimpse of Central Nebraska's history and heritage, features numerous original highway markers, and houses the Lincoln Highway museum in Shelton.

"The extension of the Lincoln Highway from border to border on Highway 30 will enhance our State Byways Program and encourage more communities to become involved. This program has proven beneficial for economic development and for drawing new tourists onto historically significant roadways," noted Craig.

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Highway 30 parallels Interstate 80 from the Wyoming line east through the Grand Island area. It meanders north through Columbus and Fremont, passes through the Elkhorn area near Omaha, before ending in Blair, Nebraska, near the Iowa border. This expanded byway route will entice not only Lincoln Highway enthusiasts from across the country, but will lure additional byway travelers in general, thanks to its close proximity to the Interstate. Highway 30, statewide, has several portals to enter and exit the interstate, thus increasing the chances to add to the economic stability, create tourism partnerships, and change Nebraska's reputation from a drive-through state to a destination state, as consumers seek to slow down and experience travel.

### **Byway Leadership**

The newly formed Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic Byway organization operates under the leadership of Anne Anderson, Executive Director of the Community Development office in Gothenburg. Tourism and historical enthusiasts from across the state have met for the past 18 months to complete a \$26,000 feasibility study to extend the byway. Members of this newly formed grass-roots organization completed a thorough written strategic plan, traveler itinerary, preliminary budget, and potential membership recruitment lists to complete the extension.

"The potential for additional tourism development along this historic highway can only enhance the economic stability of many small, rural towns at a time when it is so important. We plan to work hand-in-hand with the State and National Lincoln Highway Associations to develop the planned promotion of Nebraska's Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic Byway," said Anderson.

Now that the renaming and extension of the byway have been approved, grass-roots membership recruitment and a website will begin under designated leaders in west, central, and east regions of the statewide route.

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The Lincoln Highway byway is one of nine recognized byways in Nebraska, and it replaces the Platte River Trails Scenic Byway, which ran through central Nebraska from Sutherland and then east for 95 miles to Overton. The Nebraska Byways Program, which began in 1999, is designed to showcase outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities along Nebraska's two-lane highways. It operates under the administration of the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), receiving funding through the Federal Highway Administration. Nebraska's Division of Travel and Tourism manages the marketing aspects of the byways program. For Lincoln Byways photos and a brief history, please visit NDOR's web site at <http://www.dor.state.ne.us/history/lincolnhwy.htm>.

Tourism and historical enthusiasts interested in membership can contact Anne Anderson at the Gothenburg chamber office at (800) 482-5520. For more information on Nebraska's Byways or to receive a free Nebraska travel packet, call 877-NEBRASKA or visit the Nebraska Travel and Tourism's Web site at [www.VisitNebraska.org/byways](http://www.VisitNebraska.org/byways).

#NDOR#

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