

ITS Trail Committee Supports Development of Rt 66 Trail

Contributed by Rande Johnson
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At the December Board Meeting, the ITS Trail Committee voted their endorsement and support for the development of a "Historical Route 66 Recreational Trail" from Staunton through Mt Olive to Litchfield for the health and welfare of the citizenry. Below are copies of Letters to the Editor that have been included recently in various local newspapers. If you would like support this effort, send a printed copy to of the link to the left to the ITS Trail Committee, Inc., 916 N. Easton St, Staunton, IL 62088, or email one to Hroute66rectrail@gmail.com .

Letter to the EditorHistoric Route 66Recreational TrailforMacoupin and Montgomery Counties in IllinoisContinuedI would like to follow up on my initial letter by letting you know that the people are talking about this Trail again and its potential benefits to the region. The ITS Trail Committee has now endorsed the development of this trail. This group is dedicated to connecting communities with trails.In this letter, I would like to call to your attention two of many important elements that impact this trail.First of all, the Trail would complement a diverse outdoor recreational experience, in addition to those who already enjoy hunting, fishing, boating, skiing, or whatever in this area. The Trail would be handicap accessible, encourage walking, jogging, running, rollerblading, bicycling, and cross-country snow skiing in the winter. Most important, it would provide a safe and controlled environment for all users.Secondly, there is no place, except for the Chain of Rocks Bridge, where a Recreational Trail is part of the actual abandoned Route 66 roadway. We would have the only stretch of 17 miles of dedicated Route 66 Trail in the U.S.A. This would give everyone the opportunity to actually get a feel for what it was like to ride on the "Mother Road" by actually being there.Although the roadway is still sitting there, abandoned and doing nothing for us now, we are all becoming more aware of the tremendous potential and the unique nature that this Trail will have for us, our communities and region. Most of all, we are talking about it, again.We always want to remember that our government is, of the people, by the people, and for the people. With the cooperative effort of all parties, this trail will become a reality.We have a lot of work to do, so let's keep talking and become involved. Let's get it done this time. John Fritsche618-656-0700Glen Carbon, IL

Letter to the EditorHistoric Route 66Recreational TrailMacoupin and Montgomery Counties Recently, the League of Illinois Bicyclists had a promotional Route 66 Bike Ride from the Chain of Rocks Bridge, through Edwardsville, Staunton, Carlinville, Springfield, and on to Chicago. The purpose was to promote a safe route from St. Louis to Chicago along the Historic Route 66 Corridor.For a number of years now, various individuals, organizations, and groups have discussed an Historic Route 66 Trail from Staunton, through Mt.Olive to Litchfield utilizing the Northbound Lane of Old Route 66, which has been abandoned and unused for many years. Our government officials and medical professionals are all encouraging people to exercise more and this section of pavement could be the place for many citizens to start on a path to better health. Moreover, trails encourage business development that could certainly benefit this region of Illinois.The roadway belongs to the State of Illinois is still in place, so there is no Right Of Way cost. All that must be done is to remove some guardrail and dirt, repair any defects in the pavement and mark the alignment. This type of work can be done by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The Trail, which would be almost 17 miles long, would benefit the region, each community along the way, as well as new businesses moving into this area. When this trail segment becomes a reality, a rider could safely travel from Litchfield, IL to the St.Louis Arch by utilizing the Madison County and St Louis trail systems from Staunton south. Right now this valuable section of what was once the "Mother Road" is abandoned and lying idle, providing no benefit to its owner, the citizens of the State of Illinois. If you would like to have this section of abandoned history developed into a trail, talk to your family, friends and neighbors. Let them know how you feel and encourage them to call or write their elected officials for their support. Please, no more excuses! Let's get it done this time!John Fritsche618-656-0700 Glen Carbon, IL