Oklahoma

The National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991, recognizes historic, scenic and culturally important roads and promotes tourism and economic development in nearby communities. Four of the 150 National Scenic Byways that have been designated are in Oklahoma, including Historic Route 66 and the Talimena Scenic Drive. Route 66, sometimes called “The Mother Road”, brings travelers from across the world to experience both America’s and Oklahoma’s history. Talimena Scenic Drive offers panoramic views of some of the most breathtaking areas Oklahoma has to offer within the Ouachita National Forest.

Key points:

- Research found that the annual economic activity from Route 66 stood at $132 million in 2011.
- A 2011 Rutgers study suggests that over 15% of the population in Oklahoma resides within 1 mile of Route 66 (the Route 66 corridor).
- Smaller towns in Oklahoma have seen sales tax revenue double as a result of some of their more popular businesses along Route 66.
- According to a 2012 study, the top two Oklahoma counties in domestic tourism—Oklahoma and Tulsa counties—brought in $4.2 billion dollars in domestic travel expenditures and employed well over 50,000 people in travel-related jobs. Both counties are along Route 66.
Talimena Scenic Drive offers breathtaking views of the Ouachita National Forest and showcases the beauty of the Winding Star and Ribbon Mountains.

Enjoy the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, one of the oldest managed nature preserves in the country, while traveling the Wichita Mountains Byway.