



SCENIC AMERICA

Viewpoints

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VISUAL POLLUTION STILL PLAGUES FEDERAL ROADS, DESPITE INCREASED EFFORTS BY FHWA

Recent figures from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) indicate that visual pollution continues to bedevil the nation's roadsides.

In the fiscal year ending on September 30, 1993, fewer than 15,000 illegal and nonconforming billboards were removed from the sides of federal-aid Interstate and primary highways, as required by the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, leaving over 108,000 illegal and nonconforming signs in place.

The FHWA has increased efforts to identify and remove illegal billboards in the last two years with some success. In the most recent fiscal year, 14,582 illegal billboards were removed. Over 23,000 illegal billboards still remain.

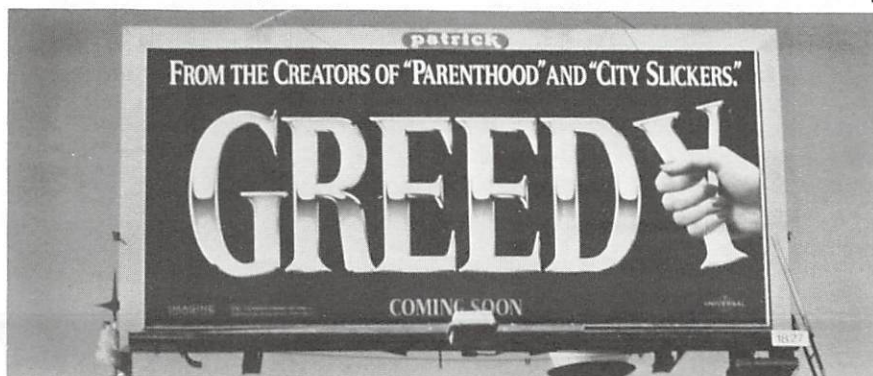
Nonconforming billboards, however, continue to line the nation's roadways. In fiscal 1993, just 373 such boards were removed; 85,066 remain, 41% of the total number of nonconforming boards identified when the HBA was passed in 1965. Amazingly, after nearly 30 years of the federal beautification program, nearly one in five billboards along America's federal-aid highways does not conform to federal law.

Conservationists have long maintained that the HBA is little more than a billboard protection

and compensation act, and FHWA's most recent numbers provide further evidence. In fact, the Act's notorious "cash compensation" provision -- which prohibits communities from removing nonconforming billboards by using such federally constitutionally valid procedures as amortization and requires instead

removed in recent years, substantially smaller than last year's 538.

The HBA's obstacles to billboard removal are compounded by its failure to protect rural and scenic areas from billboard proliferation. Congressional Research Service estimates indicate that over 15,000 new billboards are erected annually



Los Angeles billboard says it all.

that billboard owners be paid with tax dollars -- has made it virtually impossible to remove nonconforming boards, many of which stand in rural and scenic areas.

Shortly after Congress amended the HBA to require cash compensation, it stopped providing states federal money for the program, bringing nonconforming billboard removal to a standstill. The 373 billboards removed this most recent fiscal year is the second lowest number

along federal-aid highways -- nearly one every 30 minutes. Many of these are erected in rural and scenic areas, which the HBA was supposed to protect, because the Act allows new billboards to be built in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas. In many states, just one historic inn or one gas station makes an area an "unzoned commercial area" and allows the industry to erect huge new monopoly billboards nearby. SA

SCENIC BYWAYS COMMITTEE REPORT SEEKS BALANCE

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently released the National Scenic Byways Advisory Committee report, which will likely set the basis for the National Scenic Byways Program, to be implemented beginning October 1.

The report accurately reflects the committee's conviction -- that a National Scenic Byways Program must

foster resource conservation to be as effective as possible. The report calls for billboard construction bans on National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads and encourages other conservation measures.

Highlights of the committee's recommendations include:

- * Requiring that scenic byways stakeholders develop corridor man-

agement plans to foster the use and conservation of scenic, historic, natural, and other resources along the byway. These plans must show strong evidence of local support for byway designation, achieve a balance among the community interests, and inventory roadway resources.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Heritage Areas Build New Partnerships



We at Scenic America value highly our many partners in Washington, D.C., and across the nation.

We have joined many coalitions of like-minded individuals where scenic conservation issues and our energies could make a contribution and have created coalitions around issues primary to scenic conservation.

The newest of Scenic America's partnership ventures is the National Coalition for Heritage Areas, a non-profit group established to advance a new regional planning and development concept. The movement to develop American regional heritage areas has been growing over the past ten years. The Coalition describes the concept behind these areas as follows:

"Heritage areas are most often regional with a distinctive sense of place unified by large-scale resources: rivers, lakes or streams, canal systems, historic roads or trails, railroads. They may include both rural and urban settlement, and are cohesive, dynamic environments where private ownership predominates, and will continue to predominate, but where change can be creatively guided to benefit both people and place.

"Heritage areas encourage both the protection of a wide variety of environmental, scenic, and cultural resources and sustainable development for tourism and other economic opportunities. They educate residents and visitors about community history, traditions, and the environment, and provide for outdoor recreation."

Four such areas have been officially designated by Congress and more than eighty others are in various stages of planning, many assisted by Congressional funding. They include the Illinois and Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor that extends south from Chicago; the Delaware and Lehigh Canal Heritage Corridor along the eastern border of Pennsylvania; the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor, which includes areas in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts; and the America's Industrial Heritage Project in western Pennsylvania.

Areas that are in earlier stages of planning than these four range from the Birmingham Industrial Heritage Area in Alabama to the Silos & Smokestacks America's Agricultural/Industrial Heritage Landscape in Iowa to the Wheeling National Heritage Area in West Virginia. In each case strong grassroots support generated these projects, including enthusiastic involvement from local public officials as well as private sector participation.

Scenic America has been work-

ing for the past year with support from the Gund Foundation to assist communities in the Ohio & Erie Canal Heritage Corridor to address their community appearance with a focus on signage issues. Mary Ann Lasch, Scenic America's Director of Programs, has met with community planners and leaders to discuss how they can preserve and develop the scenic character of their communities to complement and support the prestigious heritage area designation that supporters are seeking from Congress.

Heritage areas are one of the most exciting partnerships to emerge in recent years. As with scenic byways, the opportunities to preserve and enhance the scenic character of communities is greatest where citizens place high value on the appearance and special character of their surroundings. Scenic America is pleased to be among the dozens of organizations working to advance this partnership concept. SA

ISTEA PLANNING PUTS YOU IN DRIVER'S SEAT

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) emphasizes long term transportation planning that is grassroots based. The spirit of this legislation lies in its emphasis on fulfilling community transportation needs. Plans for municipal planning organizations (MPO) in non-attainment areas are due 10/1/94; other MPOs 12/18/94. State plans must be complete by 1/95.

What will the long range plan look like for your community? 1994 gives us all a new challenge with implications stretching well into the next millennium. These long range transportation plans will set the direction for transportation investments for the next 20 years. In the two years since ISTEA passed, scenic conservationists at the local level have been successful in changing policies and programs to improve scenic resource protection across the nation.

How will your community contribute to the long range transportation plan? Scenic America encourages all of its members to become involved and stay involved in the implementation of the long range transportation planning component of ISTEA in their local communities.

Your participation is necessary for scenic resource conservation to be incorporated in your state or MPO's long range transportation plans. Without your involvement, scenic resource conservation may be left out altogether. For more information on the planning process contact your State DOT or MPO planning department or the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) in Washington, DC at 202-939-3470. STPP is a transportation alliance of which Scenic America is a member. SA

ISTEA FUNDS SPUR SCENIC CONSERVATION

Excerpted from Deborah Dull's presentation to the Transportation Research Board on Jan. 11, 1994, Washington D.C.

The good news is that state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are spending Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds for scenic conservation. At least 13 states have programmed approximately \$16 million in federal enhancement funds. Although a minimum 20% match is required, states are reporting a \$17.5 million dollar match, leveraging the funds at more than 50%.

Scenic Acquisitions Issues

1. Level of protection for scenic resources: fee simple vs. easements

Some state DOTs, as a matter of policy, don't like to buy easements—they buy the property fee simple to have complete control. While that policy is fine for regular ROW (Right Of Way), I suggest that it may reflect a pre-ISTEA lack of understanding of the purpose of the scenic resource acquisition.

Certainly, other states, like Maryland (MD), California, and Washington, are more interested in maximizing value for their dollar than having control of the property. They try to use easements whenever they are cheaper and would accomplish the same goal of resource protection. For example, MD prefers easements on farmland. They cost much less than fee because the existing use can continue. If the owner insists on fee acquisition, the State might buy the entire parcel, place restrictive easements on it, give the easements to a land trust, and resell the property to someone who wants to farm it.

2. Who holds and maintains the property interest acquired?

This same control issue shows up in who holds title to the property. Smart state DOTs don't want to control the property—whatever interest was acquired. They are looking to reduce their long term maintenance cost and responsibility for policing the use by not retaining title.

So who holds title? Some states are giving title to government land trusts that are part of another state

agency. Some states are placing title in the local government sponsor. Other states are giving title to private land trusts.

My discussion with an attorney at the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) reminded me that easements held by other than the appurtenant landholder may not be enforceable unless the state has special legislation. If you are with a private land trust, check your state legislation before acquiring or accepting an easement. NTHP pamphlet, Information Series No.

25, 1991, has a good discussion of the issue and the appendix lists types of easement legislation that all the states have as of 1991. Contact NTHP at 202-673-4000 about how to get a copy.

3. Environmental Clearances as a Potential Hurdle

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) covers these types of projects, but may not require an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement). States have looked at ways to streamline environmental reviews for scenic acquisition. New Jersey received an okay from FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) to use categorical exclusions (CE's) for scenic easement acquisition.

Be aware that the environmental community has been concerned about the use of CE's because projects in this category are not assessed for impacts, either positive or negative. Exclusions are only permitted for certain classes of projects where impacts are assumed to be positive or neutral.

Even where a potentially significant impact was identified, states report they have been able to prepare an Environmental Assessment with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), instead of a full EIS.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act must be addressed. Some states reported being bogged down in 106 compliance by disagreements between government agencies as to the appropriate level of protection for properties.



Route 55 in West Virginia

The DOTs prefer to place a minimum level of protection on more resources.

The states try to minimize detailed archeological studies, especially on farmland where the easement just allows continuation of existing use. Where there is concern about disturbing archeological sites, MD might look for a restriction against deep tilling, rather than do an expensive survey or give up on acquiring the parcel.

Another common problem arises when the state buys farmland for open space. By prohibiting demolition of farm buildings, potential harm to scenic character is avoided. However, the farmer may want to use the money from the open space easement to demolish the old farmhouse and build a new one. States have to weigh the cost and voluntariness of each restriction. The more restrictions that are imposed, the harder it is to acquire the parcel voluntarily and the acquisition becomes more expensive. However, there are some real success stories in these types of negotiations. MD reported an owner agreed to retain and restore the farmhouse with the money from the conservation easement.

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NEWS AROUND THE NATION...

Montana Scenic Preservation Spreading

Montana activists have strengthened sign ordinances in several Big Sky communities. Flathead County recently joined Missoula and Lake Counties in enacting strict billboard control regulations. No signs over 32 square feet will be allowed anywhere outside industrially zoned areas. The measure was passed rapidly and endorsed even by Myhre Advertising, the major sign company in Kalispell. The actions follow the designation of Flathead County's Going-to-the-Sun Road as one of Scenic America's ten most scenic byways in the country.

Baltimore Bans Boozeboards

The city of Baltimore became the first major city to enact a ban on outdoor advertising of liquor and tobacco after months of citizen pressure to rid neighborhoods of these signs. A 1990 Scenic America study showed that 75% of Baltimore's billboards were located in minority and low income neighborhoods and of these signs, 75% advertised alcohol or tobacco. With support from Scenic America, community groups such as the Coalition for Beautiful Neighborhoods and the Citizens Planning and Housing Association fought back. Two unprecedented laws ban liquor and tobacco signs in all of Baltimore except in heavy industrial zones, along interstate highways, and at three sports facilities.

Salt Lake Sign Owners Left Whining

Despite a full-court press, Salt Lake City outdoor advertisers came up losers in a battle over sign controls. A new law calls for billboard construction to be accompanied by removal of signs in residential or historic areas. The mandate prohibits sign construction on freeways,

gateways, and major thoroughfares.

Reagan Outdoor Advertising employed the usual tactics to fight proposed restrictions. They claimed that billboards are important for public service announcements and that the first amendment protects the right to plaster a city with towering advertisements. In addition, industry officials claimed that residents had no objections to billboards when signs were not mentioned in a survey of Salt Lake's worst environmental problems. Advertisers' efforts however were in vain, and Salt Lake City passed the new sign ordinance.

Rhode Island Byway Causing a Stir

Shannock Road in Rhode Island, one of Scenic America's top ten endangered byways in America, continues to be the subject of local debate. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation was upset by the designation of 'endangered' claiming that sensitive design planning of the Shannock Road widening project would preserve scenic quality. An improved DOT plan will be presented soon and is expected to have provisions for reinstalling original walls and trees after construction is complete. Whether this plan is feasible and will successfully preserve the scenic byway, which winds along southern Rhode Island's Pawcatuck River, remains to be seen. "Improvements" to the road are likely to alter both scenic and historic landscapes. The outcome of the project will determine the effectiveness of joint planning between local communities, environmental organizations, and DOT's engineers.

Minneapolis Trades Signs

In December, Minneapolis passed a controversial cap-and-replace sign ordinance in which sign companies may trade in two square

feet of neighborhood billboard space for one square foot of new construction on city freeways. The law replaces previous regulations which required billboards to be set back 330 feet from freeways. Some citizens have praised the ordinance for ridding neighborhoods of billboards which have hovered above the city for years. The law, however, will allow increased construction of large signs on gateway highways leading into the city, a concession some activists lament. In addition, officials fear anti-trust lawsuits from smaller advertisers because Naegele Outdoor Advertising, owning 90 percent of the neighborhood signs eligible for trade-in, will be the primary beneficiary of the new regulations. Others argue that lawsuit fears are unfounded due to a Supreme Court ruling, *Omni Outdoor vs. City of Columbia (SC)*, stating cities are exempt from anti-trust laws as long as they regulate rather than participate in the marketplace.

Tax Time for NJ Sign Owners

Sign owners who for years have avoided taxation in New Jersey are finally coming under regulation. The small township of Galloway, near Atlantic City, has taken on the powerful billboard industry. Taxation of billboards recently began to be enforced after a study determined that a 1986 law allowed for it, but only large, metal boards had been taxed. Attempts to tax wooden signs brought threats of lawsuits from Maxwell Co. Advertising and the Outdoor Advertising Association of New Jersey. Galloway township was up to the challenge when it taxed a 105 square foot wooden sign and won the case in court. The events in Galloway exemplify the need to stand firm against the intimidating outdoor advertising industry which for years has blighted America's scenery while avoiding taxation. SA

SCENIC CONSERVATION MOVEMENT: "FOR REAL!"

"We're for real," crowed Scenic Missouri Executive Director Karl Kruse, reporting that the group's Board of Directors had met and approved their first-ever budget. They're not alone, though; a nationwide movement to preserve scenic resources is creating an impressive and growing group of statewide scenic conservation organizations.

Scenic Missouri

The brand-new organization has a broad range of activities. Already, Kruse has begun building a statewide coalition to preserve scenic resources. Members include the Auto Club of Missouri, the state chapter of the American Automobile Association, the state National Wildlife Federation chapter, and the Conservation Federation of Missouri.

The coalition's two legislative priorities for the coming year will be to create the state's first scenic byways program and to restore the city of St. Louis' right to enact billboard controls that are stricter than state controls along federal-aid roads within the city limits. St. Louis' existing law, which bans new billboard construction throughout the city, was struck down by a recent court decision, which ruled that the city's billboard controls could not be stricter than the state's on federal roads.

Scenic Missouri has an ambitious program for its first year. To get in on the ground floor, contact Karl Kruse at 314-446-3129.

Scenic Kentucky

Among the oldest of the state "scenics," Scenic Kentucky continues to make a visible difference.

Executive Director Kim Klein is implementing an active program. The group will nominate the Cordell Hull Highway to be the state's first official scenic byway under a new program recently designed by the Department of Transportation. While the program does not mandate that designated roads be protected, Scenic Kentucky will work closely with local officials to conserve the roadway's vital re-

sources. In addition, Scenic Kentucky, at the request of the Kentucky Long Term Policy Research Center, is preparing a paper on the state's scenic beauty, including sign control issues. The paper will address existing scenic resources, conservation trends, and the elements needed to ensure that these resources are conserved.

To help Scenic Kentucky, contact Kim Klein at 502-588-8839.

Scenic Louisiana

Scenic Louisiana continues to fight for a billboard-free I-49. Despite earlier efforts, the state legislature passed a law allowing billboards to be constructed within 5,000 feet of state or federal intersections with I-49 when the Highway Beautification Act's criteria are met. Scenic Louisiana recently caused the state's Department of Transportation to halt billboard construction along the roadway until it certifies that Natchitoches Parish's zoning ordinance is valid for qualifying for placement of billboards.

Although the DOT has made a preliminary determination that the ordinance is valid, Scenic Louisiana claims that the glut of billboards in the Parish at undeveloped rural intersections indicates that the county is strip-zoning land as commercial to allow billboards. Ironically, the Senator who favored allowing billboards on the roadway has joined Scenic Louisiana in questioning the Parish's billboard activity.

Call Scenic Louisiana president Juliette Navratilova at 504-752-3476.

Scenic Illinois

This group is slowly but surely building a groundswell of public support for scenic conservation in the Land of Lincoln. Chairman John Hedrick has built a formal advisory board which includes representatives of the major land-use organizations in Chicago, and this group is working to combat billboard blight along the state's "strategic arterial" roads. In addition, Scenic Illinois is building bridges to other organizations, such as the Illinois chapter of the American Institute of Architects

and regional planning groups.

If you'd like to know how you can help Scenic Illinois, write John Hedrick, Scenic Illinois, 1013 Meadowlark Lane, Glenview, IL 60025.

Scenic North Carolina

Scenic North Carolina has played a leading role in conserving the Tarheel State's scenic resources.

Dale McKeel, Executive Director, has scored a number of important victories of late, including one which would certainly be on a "most likely to be noticed" list. As a result of Scenic North Carolina's dogged work, the legislature and DOT have taken steps to reinvigorate the state's well designed but largely ignored scenic byways program. Most obvious of these: the state has at last earmarked funds to promote the scenic byway network by erecting scenic byway trail blazer signs and producing brochures and other promotional materials.

Call Scenic North Carolina Executive Director Dale McKeel at 919-832-3687.

Scenic Birmingham

Scenic Birmingham, a citywide "scenic," has been an important voice for Alabama's scenic environment for several years.

Steve DeMedicis, head of the organization, has provided substantial advice and assistance statewide. Most recently he has been aiding the city of Homewood, which is seeking to defend its billboard ordinance from possible industry challenges. The city took down many illegal billboards and instituted an amortization period which runs out next year.

Steve DeMedicis can be reached at 205-930-9550.

All of these organizations -- and many more around the nation -- are making a difference in their scenic environment. All provide help to local activists and appreciate your help. If you'd like to know more about starting a state "scenic" or would like to find out if there's one in your state, contact Scenic America at 202-833-4300. SA

OUTDOOR SPENDING CONTINUES TO PLUNGE

Expenditures on outdoor advertising continue to shrink. According to Advertising Age Magazine, total outdoor advertising declined by 4.2 % from 1991 to 1992, and continued to drop by .3 % in the first half of 1993. The reduction in outdoor advertising was the only negative change for any media category with the exception of radio.

One reason for the drop in outdoor advertising expenditures is the recessionary economy. Lower consumer spending results in a scarcity of advertising dollars, leading to a shift by corporations away from outdoor advertising, which is considered to be a relatively less effective medium for product promotion. Therefore, when times get tight, companies rely on their bread and butter, TV and print advertising, while billboards stand unused but continue to blight the landscape.

Controversy over visual pollution of our nation's scenery and a nationwide trend to strengthen legislation regulating billboards have also contributed to the decline in outdoor advertising expenditures. Tired of the obtrusiveness of billboards, many communities have restricted or banned the construction of new signs. Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and Montana's Missoula County are just a few of the areas which have put their foot down on billboard blight in recent months. Public disapproval with billboards

has caused outdoor advertising to be a less attractive alternative for businesses concerned not to upset potential customers.

Regardless of declining expenditures, the billboard industry remains a choice medium for legal drug merchants. Current statistics show that eight of the top ten outdoor advertisers are alcohol and to-

bacco producers. Cigarettes once again led all product categories in outdoor advertising spending with \$123.5 million in 1992, while beer, wine, and liquor coughed up an additional \$57.2 million. In fact, alcohol and tobacco companies accounted for 28% of all outdoor advertising expenditures in 1992. SA

NEW TREE VIDEO UNDERSCORES CONSERVATION

Trees are an extremely precious community resource. Scenic America's video, Trees Are Treasure: Sustaining the Community Forest, produced by Maguire/Reeder, Ltd. (Alexandria, VA), is an excellent medium to introduce community members to protection of their tree resources. Stories of communities which established their own successful tree ordinances encourage others to do the same.

With spring around the corner, use of the videotape can be a means of creating uniquely appealing programs for community groups such as the local garden club, Kiwanis Club or environmental group.

On April 22, Earth Day, and on April 29, Arbor Day, feature the video followed by a panel discussion of what the community's goals are and should be regarding tree conservation. Supplement the discussion with copies of "Trees in Your Community," factsheet in-

cluded in Winter 1994 Viewpoints.

The 12 minute, full color video describes the importance of public policy and regulations for tree and forest protection. Order the video for \$19.95 plus \$3.00 s/h. Additional tree conservation materials available from Scenic America:

Tree Conservation Ordinances: Land Use Regulations Go Green, by Chris Duerksen is a guidebook for planning and implementing tree conservation ordinances. \$24.00 plus \$5.00 shipping/handling. IF ORDERED ALONG WITH VIDEO: \$29.95 plus \$5.00 shipping/handling for both.

Trees Make Cents, by Elizabeth Brabec. This 8-page bulletin documents numerous case studies which demonstrate the positive influence of tree and landscape protection on property values and other economic measures. Five valuation methods discussed. \$5.00 plus \$3.00 shipping/handling. SA

ISTEA FUNDS SPUR SCENIC CONSERVATION, *Continued*

MD has a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement among the State DOT, State Historic Preservation Officer, FHWA and others which may be a possible model for other states. Basically, it allows the agency to assume that an enhancement project will have no adverse effect unless one is brought to its attention. The agency uses existing documentation and does not do original research. If a potential impact is identified, it allows the weighing of cost and voluntariness of each restriction and commits the state DOT only to make a good faith effort for additional optional restrictions above the basic open space re-

quirement.

In general, states sounded as if they were using common sense in looking at differing levels of potential harm to resources. All agencies are being flexible because acquisitions are voluntary and no condemnation is planned. They are working to get the most protection for the funds available.

4. Greed Enters the Picture

Several states reported encountering situations where a private group took an option to buy land at bargain prices and wanted to sell it to the state for full fair market value and pocket the difference. The

states said they just won't agree to those deals. There are many other properties on which to spend the limited funds available.

Overall, the states are showing some strong efforts to use enhancement funds to protect scenic resources through easement and acquisition. Understanding the differences between scenic resources activities and other transportation projects and construction has brought some welcome creativity and effectiveness. I hope this report will help your efforts to expand the use of enhancement funds for scenic resource protection. SA

BILLBOARD PERMIT SURVEY REVEALS STATES RARELY COVER COSTS

The state DOT's aren't charging enough for outdoor advertising permits to cover their own administrative and maintenance costs. In the state of North Carolina, for example, the state DOT lost \$210,000 over the last two years. A recent survey, conducted by Scenic North Carolina, evaluated fees and costs for all fifty states. The billboard permit fees, and program cost were compared.

There are two types of billboard permit fees charged: the application and renewal fee. State DOTs also differ in their fee structures. For example, in Alabama the application fee is \$25.00 while the renewal fee is \$10.00. In contrast, Florida's application fee is set by the sign size (0-20 sq. ft. = \$25 and over 20 = \$35). In addition there is a \$300 Annual License Fee.

What are the results of reviewing fee schedules from the state DOTs? Do the fees cover the state DOTs' costs? In most cases, the answer is a resounding "No." The range of fees which are set by the state DOTs show no consistent pat-

tern.

State DOTs in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming all charge fees for a billboard permit ranging from \$0-\$50.00. Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin levy a significantly greater fee for a billboard permit (ranging from \$50.00-\$500.00). Included in this price spread are variations in the time of payment (i.e.-annual as opposed to a one-time fee) and how the fee(s) are defined (i.e.-flat-rate vs. based on the size of the sign).

The Winston-Salem Journal reported the debate surrounding the billboard permit fees issue. According to the article, leaders of the billboard industry don't feel that permit fee alterations are needed. Mr. William H. Whiteheart of Winston-Salem, the president of the

N.C. Outdoor Advertising Association said: "Essentially we don't have a problem that needs to be addressed here. We don't have anything broken that needs to be fixed." Senator Howard E. Lee of the Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee was quoted as saying, "This is only the beginning of what I believe will be a long and difficult process." This legislative committee has recommended two adjustments: first, a transfer fee of \$10 whenever billboards are sold, or treating each transfer as a new application, which would cost \$60. Second, a one-time inspection fee of \$25 to \$50 for new signs to ensure compliance.

Scenic America urges states to review their practices and revise their permit fees to cover their own administrative costs. If your state is one that is unintentionally subsidizing billboard permits through low fee schedules, it's time to recommend a change.

Copies of the billboard permit survey are available from Scenic America or Scenic North Carolina. SA

SCENIC BYWAYS COMMITTEE REPORT, *Continued*

* Encouraging states to ban the construction of new billboards along all National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads, which will be "the best of the best" of America's scenic byways. This recommendation expands on existing law, the Highway Beautification Act as modified by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which bans new billboard construction on the interstate and federal-aid portions of state-designated scenic byways.

* Requiring states to ban new billboard construction on All-American Roads, except in cities with populations over 25,000.

* Encouraging the use of "logo signs" and tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS) as equally ef-

fective but less intrusive alternatives to billboards.

The committee's strong conservation recommendations are the result of broad support from many groups led by Scenic America. These groups fought for a program which fosters economic growth while preserving the scenic character of America's cherished byways.

The 17-member committee was mandated by Congress and formed by the US Secretary of Transportation to provide advice and guidance on designation criteria for National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. The committee included six federal agency representatives and representatives from a variety of interests, including scenic and historic preserva-

tion, conservation, private property owners, business, and others. Scenic America president Sally Oldham represented scenic preservation. Ironically, the billboard industry was a part of the committee, despite their longstanding opposition to effective scenic byways protection.

The ball is now in our court. Public reaction to the National Scenic Byways Program will largely determine its success. If scenic resource advocates take the initiative in the next 18 months and push their state Departments of Transportation to nominate and protect scenic byways, it will set a strong precedent that will foster other success stories. SA

MEMBERSHIP DOESN'T COST, IT PAYS!

It almost sounds ridiculous to ask, but what can you possibly get for six cents a day...less than it costs to buy one soda a week? Membership in Scenic America! That's right, for \$20 a year you can join the only national organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of our communities and countryside. Browsing through this issue of "Viewpoints" will convince you of the major impact Scenic America is having nationwide.

Your membership may be the best investment you ever make. It helps protect the special character and visual quality of places we all revere -- areas of outstanding beauty, scenic vistas, historic buildings and sites, winding roads, and neighborhoods like your own. Perhaps more important, we're helping ensure that such places -- and the experiences they provide -- will be there for the next generation. And the next.

But Scenic America can't do it alone. We need you to join us in our fight against billboard proliferation, in our efforts to conserve and promote scenic byways, in our work to assist communities nationwide to protect their scenic resources.

As a member, you'll receive our quarterly newsletter, "Viewpoints;" you'll get special updates and alerts on scenic conservation issues important to you; and you'll become part of a dynamic nationwide net-

work of scenic resource advocates. But if that's not enough, what else does that six cents a day buy you? The satisfaction of knowing that you're making a difference in the appearance and livability of communities nationwide.

So, please join us! Equally important, please tell your friends, neighbors and family about Scenic America and encourage them to join, too. You may clip and use the membership form below or copy it for others' use. Thanks! SA

Scenic America, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the only national group devoted solely to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of America's communities and countryside.

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