

# Scenic America Viewpoints

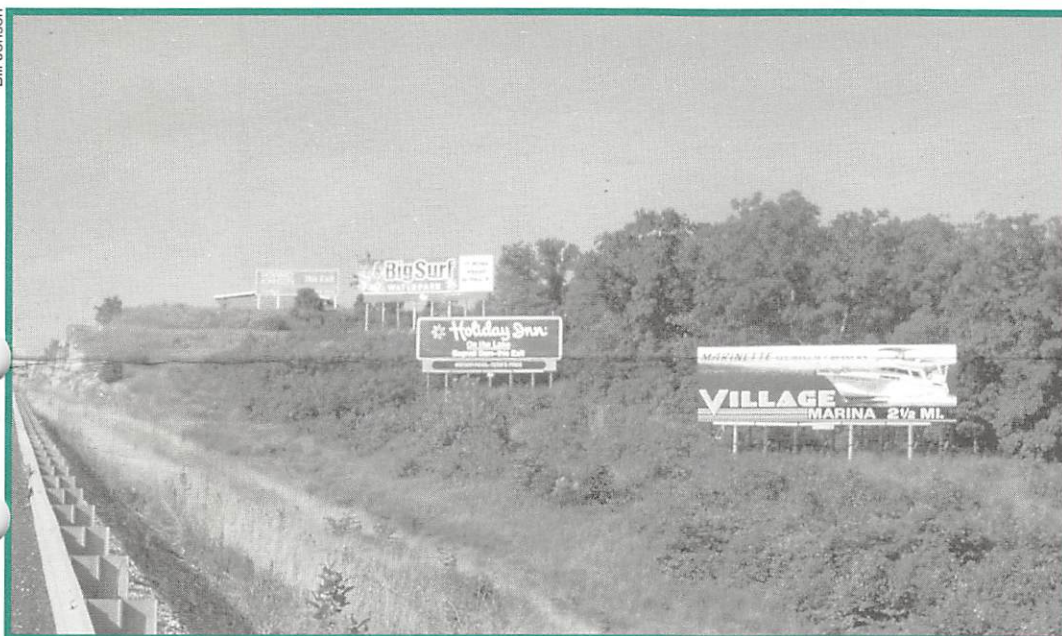
www.scenic.org

FALL, 2001



## Scenics Stay the Course for Scenic Beauty

Bill Jonson



Highway 54, MO – Missouri has three times the number of billboards as its eight neighboring states.

Scenic America affiliates have scored major statewide victories in recent months. From the veto of a bill that would have meant disaster for Florida's billboard control efforts to small victories in Texas and North Carolina, scenic conservation advocates have raised their state efforts to unprecedented heights. Even our defeats prove that we can fight hard and well against

interests with more money than civic responsibility.

### FLORIDA: Thank you, Jeb Bush!

On Friday, June 14, 2001, Florida Governor Jeb Bush vetoed a transportation bill that included an eight-line section that would have killed amortization in Florida. The bill would have forced counties and municipalities to pay cash

compensation, not just for billboard removal, but also for reducing the maximum size of billboards and for requiring the removal of billboards from land acquired by nonprofits for parks or open space.

Sharp-eyed activists at Citizens for a Scenic Florida spotted the language and worked hard to rally opposition. Every organization of local governments in the state and many

leaders of major cities opposed it, including the Mayors of Orlando and Miami and the Volusia County commissioners. Newspapers in Orlando, Tampa, and Miami ran editorials against the bill. Despite this opposition, the Florida Senate passed the bill. Still more editorials ran urging Governor Bush to veto the bill. Scenic America and several directors wrote letters to the Governor.

While Governor Bush's veto message did not mention the billboard provision, he cited the size of the bill, the number of favors for special interest groups, and the fundamentally undemocratic process behind its passage as reasons enough for rejecting it. Such omnibus bills are all too common in state legislatures and they are vulnerable to stealth provisions for heavy campaign contributors, such as the billboard industry, which could not survive as separate bills.

### TEXAS: A Great Start!

Scenic Texas worked with members of the General Assembly to craft a package of legislation to prohibit new billboards along all Texas highways, set aside a portion of state highway funding for landscaping, establish a scenic byways

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# Local Activists and Municipalities Fight the Good Fight!

Scenic America



Columbia, SC – Recently formed Scenic South Carolina worked hard to help pass a prohibition on new billboards in Richland County.

**M**unicipalities working to control billboard blight face constant legal and political challenges from the billboard industry. This spring, Scenic America helped attorneys in New York and Connecticut fend off industry lawsuits against tougher billboard controls. Meanwhile, council members in Los Angeles, California, and Richland County, South Carolina are fighting to stop billboard blight.

## New York

Times Square is the mecca of outdoor advertising making New York City an unlikely place for a billboard battle. Yet, the city recently passed ordinances prohibiting commercial billboards in mixed and industrial areas within 200 feet of, and visible from, major highways. Infinity Outdoor immediately responded by suing the city. Scenic America worked with the city to improve the ordinance and defend their new regulations. Scenic America's president, Meg Maguire, submitted an affidavit on behalf of the city in federal court.

Also in New York, Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden is engaging the Borough Council to enact tougher sign control measures.

## Los Angeles

Local activists, led by City Councilman Michael Feuer, are fighting to keep the city's 50-year-old ban on freeway billboards and take down many existing signs. In response, the billboard industry proposed removing 2,000 smaller billboards throughout the city in exchange for up to 70 new massive billboards along Los Angeles's busiest highways. Scenic conservation activists are fighting this plan on safety and aesthetic grounds.

The billboard industry's tactics on this issue also make a strong case for campaign finance reform. Councilman Feuer's successful opponent in the spring 2001 election for Los Angeles city attorney received more than \$250,000 worth of free billboard space from the billboard industry.

## Richland County, South Carolina

Scenic South Carolina, a newly formed associate of Scenic America, declared victory in July when Richland County passed an ordinance prohibiting new billboard construction. Kudos to Richland County Council Chair, Kit Smith, and Councilmember Susan Richland for their leadership on this issue. Thanks to these dedicated activists and public officials, the state capitol, Columbia, won't be blighted by additional billboards.

## Horry County, South Carolina

The Horry County Council approved a measure to designate Veterans Highway near Conway and South Carolina's legendary Grand Strand a scenic highway, complete with a prohibition on new billboard construction. Local activists packed the council meetings. The local newspaper printed more than a dozen letters from local elementary school students supporting the prohibition of billboards. The council also approved a prohibition on new billboards on Carolina Bays Parkway.



### Southern Connecticut

Several Connecticut municipalities, including Orange, Milford, and Stamford, face challenges to their billboard control laws. Granite State Outdoor of Georgia has apparently embarked on a systematic campaign of acquiring leases of potential billboard sites in Connecticut and challenging local ordinances in court. Scenic America provided technical assistance to the law firm representing Stamford.

### Washington, DC

Utilizing a loophole in Washington's sign control law, the billboard industry is trying to make a comeback to our nation's capitol with permits for 31 so-called "special signs" as large as 10,000 square feet. A newly formed Scenic DC is working with Scenic America to prevent the spread of these signs and get rid of them over time.

### Florida

Bill Brinton, Vice-Chairman of Citizens for Scenic Florida, reports that two law firms representing the billboard industry are collecting copies of all local billboard control ordinances in the state, possibly with an eye towards challenging them in court.

### Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

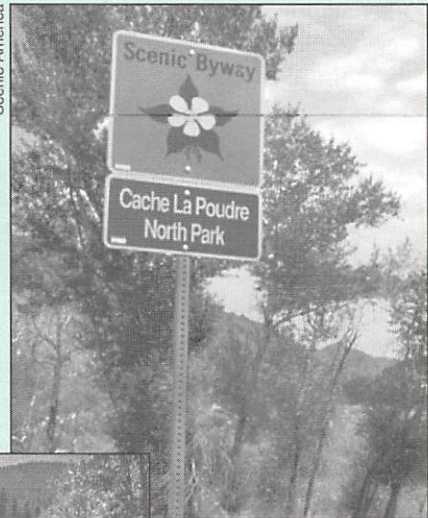
A city councilman, known as a friend of the billboard industry, introduced legislation making it difficult for community groups to fight at the local zoning level. The legislation would effectively deny standing to anyone, other than the property owner, the billboard company, and neighbors within a few hundred feet of the proposed billboard or other obnoxious land use, at permit hearings.

Scenic conservation activists need to keep track of these challenges. We need to work with our local officials to make sure that sign control laws will survive the most vigorous challenges. We need to assure elected officials that we support spending tax dollars to fight billboard industry lawsuits. And we need to go to the polls to stop the billboard industry from spending its way to political power. ■

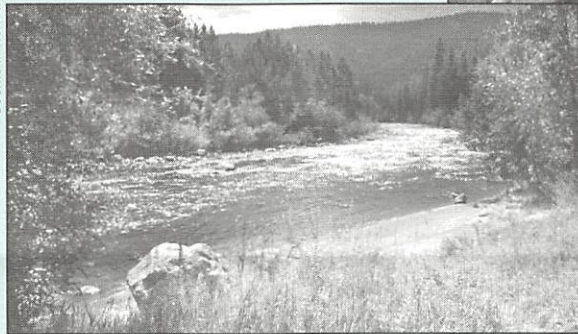
## Scenic America and EDAW, Inc. Cancel Contract Due to NAACP Boycott of Adam's Mark Hotels: SCENIC SUMMIT 2002 Postponed to 2003

Scenic America and EDAW, Inc., co-hosts of the *Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside and Public Lands*, planned for 1,000 people on April 21-24, 2002, announced that they have cancelled their contract with the conference hotel, the Adam's Mark Hotel in Denver, CO. The cancellation is necessitated by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) nationwide boycott of all Adam's Mark hotels based on charges of racial discrimination at the Adam's Mark in Daytona Beach.

Scenic America



Scenic America



Cache La Poudre  
Scenic Byway, CO

the intrinsic character of our towns, neighborhoods, and public lands. The *Scenic Summit 2003 Action Agenda* will help galvanize a

Meg Maguire, President of Scenic America, said:

"We had no choice in this matter. We cannot deliver a successful conference at the Adam's Mark so long as the NAACP boycott remains in effect and the legal issues remain unsettled. Potential speakers, funders, collaborating organizations, and members of the planning group have made clear that they would be very reluctant to support the *Scenic Summit* at this hotel and would not cross picket lines to attend. This means that the conference would not accomplish our objectives."

"The show will go on! People are determined to protect our nation's scenic beauty and community character from a sea of sprawling subdivisions, towering billboards, look-alike strip malls and franchises, cluttered signs, unscreened junkyards, invasive power lines, and poorly sited wireless communications towers which destroy

nationwide movement of citizens, professionals and decision-makers to reverse this loss. Americans believe in the promise of America the Beautiful, and they will fight to fulfill that promise."

"We will keep the public informed of our plans as we work to recoup some of the substantial costs we have already incurred. We invite corporations and foundations to become sponsors of the *Scenic Summit 2003*. Association with this seminal event can be a source of pride for years to come." ■

For more information on the *Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside and Public Lands* see [www.scenicsummit.org](http://www.scenicsummit.org).

For more information on the NAACP boycott of the Adam's Mark see [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org). ■



# THE BIG Picture

BY MEG MAGUIRE, PRESIDENT

## One Step Backward ... Two Steps Forward to the Scenic Summit in 2003!

On the previous page you read that the *Scenic Summit* will now take place in 2003. Of all the challenges we might have anticipated, surely a nationwide boycott of our conference hotel was not one of them!

Taking this step was a major decision, but we believe that we had no choice but to change our location to a place that will not be stigmatized by charges of racial discrimination. Now we are beginning to look elsewhere for suitable space for Spring 2003. So why go to all this trouble for a conference?

We believe that the *Scenic Summit* is an important step in building our movement for scenic conservation. Based on our 1997 Baltimore conference, *O, Say, Can You See?* we know that when people become fed up with scenic destruction they are prime targets to become fired up about scenic conservation. Best of all, we can point to many people who have stay fired up and connected to our movement for the past four years.

The *Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside and Public Lands* will bring together 700–1,000 people to form an *Action Agenda* to protect America the Beautiful. The *Action Agenda* will focus our efforts for change and unite us with new partners as we expand our Scenics network. Landscape architects, urban



planners, elected officials, and citizen activists will both teach and learn in five plenary sessions, four super-sessions and 40+ workshops on topics in six tracks:

**Communities:** *Enhancing Community Character;*  
**Countryside:** *Preserving Scenic Beauty;*  
**Public Lands:** *Managing Visual Quality;* **Law and Policy:** *Advancing Scenic Stewardship;* **Society, Economy and Education:** *Valuing Aesthetics;* and **Building a Movement for Scenic Conservation.**

I am grateful to those organizations and individuals that have provided seed funding to move us this far: Sally and Ted Oldham, the Federal Highway Administration, and the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). And we are looking forward to working with new funders, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Each of these partners believes the *Scenic Summit* can be a landmark event for scenic conservation.

Our wider planning committee includes people who have wanted to be a part of a national conference like this for many years – our own Scenics network and board members who have contributed ideas for speakers, topics and urgent items for the *Action Agenda*;

landscape architecture faculty from New York, Utah, and Wisconsin who are excited by the opportunity to translate what they teach into specific nationwide action; landscape designers from Colorado; staff of the ASLA who believe that designers can help communities make good choices for change; and our federal partners and supporters.

In one sense we've done a lot; in another sense, we've just begun. We have decided on topics and speakers. We have electronically notified over 10,000 organizations and several thousand journalists about the *Summit*. We are working with ASLA on offering continuing education credit for attendance at the conference. In the months ahead we will work hard to attract national corporations that care about the quality of life in America as partners and sponsors of the *Summit*. And we can invest more time in the *Action Agenda* to engage people throughout the country in protecting our scenic heritage from sprawling development, billboard blight, scars from resource extraction, poor siting of telecommunication towers, insensitive road building, and cookie-cutter franchise design.

**We invite YOU to join us at the *Scenic Summit in Spring 2003!*** Save the season right now on your calendar and stay tuned as we move to Plan B with a new location and date. ■

## With Appreciation for the Life of Christine Snyder

While we prepared this issue prior to the terrible events of September 11, as we go to press we want to pay tribute to the life of **Christine Snyder** who died in the United Airlines Flight 93 crash in Pennsylvania.

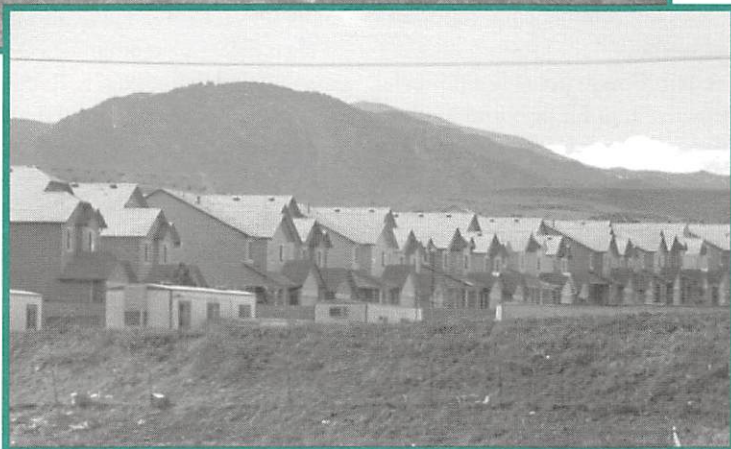
Christine was a passionate 32-year old arborist and landscape project manager for The Outdoor Circle, an environmental group in Hawaii. She had been in Washington for the national urban forestry conference with her boss, Mary

Steiner. Steiner remembers her as "...an absolutely wonderful person — the best at what she did." We mourn the loss of this gifted young scenic conservationist. ■





**Boulder, CO**  
Poorly  
planned,  
haphazard  
development  
threatens  
many scenic  
vistas and  
viewsheds  
across the  
nation.



## Federal Action for SMART GROWTH

**S**cenic America is working with staff members in Congress on two small but important bills making their way through the legislative process. Both offer small but important steps toward smarter growth in America's communities.

The Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth Study Act of 2001, HR 1739, introduced by Representative Mark Udall of Colorado, requires the Council on Environmental Quality to look at how federal projects affect sprawl. The Council will hold public hearings around the country to hear from state and local officials and ordinary citizens about sprawl. Finally, federal agencies will have to give great weight to requests from state, local, and tribal officials for comprehensive environmental impact statements if the officials believe a federal project will contribute to sprawl. Scenic America is working with Representative Udall's staff and strongly supports this bill.

The Community Character Act of 2001, S. 975, introduced by Senator Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, establishes a program offering grants of up to one million dollars to help state, local, and tribal governments improve their comprehensive plans and protection of intrinsic resources. In a time of tight local budgets, such grants could make the difference between success and failure for local efforts to save America's scenic resources.

***Please urge your representatives and senators to co-sponsor and support these measures.***

(continued from page 1)

program, and make context-sensitive highway design the rule for Texas road building. After a long, hard-fought battle, SB 1128, prohibiting billboards along portions of 13 Texas highways, enshrining context-sensitive design in state transportation policy, and ordering a study of scenic byways programs, passed and was signed by the Governor. Furthermore, one of SB 1128's sponsors inserted a provision into the general appropriations bill setting aside one half of one percent of the state's highway funding for landscaping using native plants along state roads.

### MISSOURI: Time Runs Out

Scenic Missouri tried hard to get legislation that built on their near miss at the ballot box last fall. However, the General Assembly ran out of time to pass the bill. Senate Bill 247 would have required the retirement of two billboards before approval of a new permit, an increase in spacing between billboards from 500 feet to at least 1000 feet, and the reclassification of most permits as nonconforming uses. However, the session ended before the full Senate could pass the bill.

### NEVADA: Bad News from the Bad Guys

In the wake of Citizens for a Scenic Reno's 57 percent to 43 percent win at the polls last November, which prohibited new billboard construction in Reno, the billboard industry struck back in the General Assembly. Despite strong opposition from local governments, the legislature passed a bill prohibiting amortization in Nevada.

### NORTH CAROLINA: I-40 Fight Rolls On

The fight to keep new billboards off Interstate 40 in North Carolina continues. For several years, North Carolina has enacted a series of moratoria on billboard construction. Last year, only the direct involvement of former Governor Hunt persuaded the legislature to extend the moratorium. This year, a bill permanently prohibiting new construction passed the Senate and awaits House action. ■



# CommunityViz™ Helps Communities Look At Change Before It Occurs

**W**hen developers cut trees for a new strip mall or a huge cement box that draws the economic lifeblood out of a small town, people feel a sense of loss and powerlessness over the changing character of their communities.

Now there is hope, as technology meets community planning in a direct and innovative new software tool called CommunityViz™, an extension of ArcView and GIS software. The tool is now available to help citizens and local officials visualize alternative landscape scenarios in three dimensions. This virtual build-out of a community provides valuable perspective, enabling stakeholders to see what their environments could look like in the future.

Lyman Orton, Scenic America board member, owner of the Vermont Country Store and founder of the Orton Family Foundation, developed CommunityViz™ to fulfill its mission. "We believe long-term economic growth, community vitality and a rural way of life can be combined for the benefit of all. We seek to provide information, tools and assistance for communities."

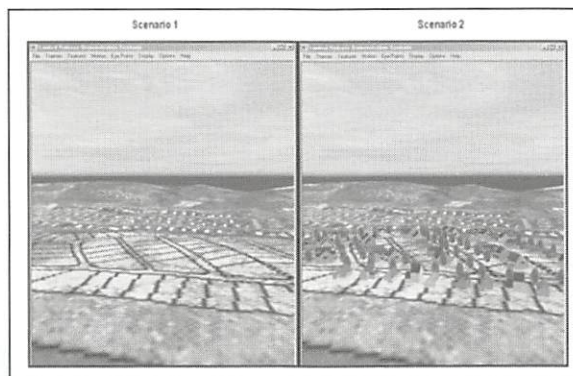
CommunityViz™ develops a virtual 3D image of a proposed project within an existing community. Citizens, planners, and officials can use CommunityViz™ to visualize and walk through alternative landscape scenarios.

"Visualization is the common language for communication. Up until now, we have not had the tools to fully utilize the power of visualization. We intend to harness this power to help planners and citizens work together to shape their communities," said Lyman Orton.

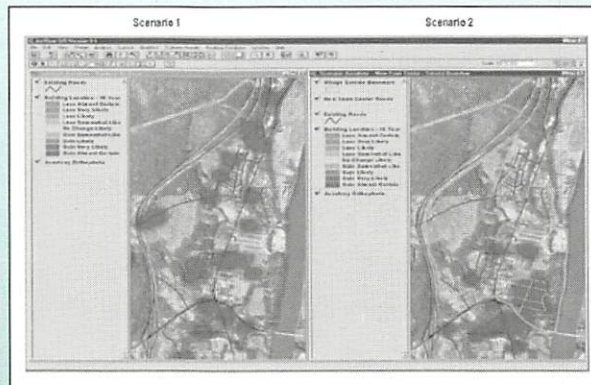
CommunityViz™ encompasses a powerful suite of three integrated software tools with realistic 3D exploration, impact analyses, and policy forecasting

for land use planning. The software's three tools are interactive: changes made in one tool are automatically reflected in the other two.

- **Scenario Constructor** is a powerful, interactive tool for performing implication analyses, providing users with the ability to build and evaluate a mul-



**CommunityViz™ allows communities to accurately visualize what proposed policies and landscape changes will look like.**



titude of land-use scenarios.

- **Policy Simulator** projects short and long-term policy implications of projects over time. Users control the complexity of the analysis by selecting from numerous policy templates.
- **Town Builder 3D** visualizes the impact of decisions in a real-time environment. Users create and manipulate a virtual representation of a town to visually explore different land use alternatives.

Bill Shouldice, President and CEO of the Orton Family Foundation, notes, "It is clear that our communities are fragile and that there are many forces at work to change the character of the places where we live, work and raise our families. At the Orton Family Foundation we believe that good tools and information, in conjunction with engaged citizenry, will ensure that a community's vision is attained for the next generation."

The Orton Family Foundation, in partnership with the American Planning Association, has also just released an innovative manual aimed at boosting citizen involvement in community planning. Entitled, *Lights, Camera, Community Video*, the manual is based on the Orton Family Foundation's work with five communities in Vermont and Colorado. The manual is written to help a community produce a high quality, professional video that documents the history of a

community and identify areas that need attention in the planning process.

The Orton Family Foundation is offering seed money to six qualifying communities who want to make their own videos. For more information on the manual and seed money opportunity, visit [www.orton.org/news-](http://www.orton.org/news-room/7.03.01_video.htm)

[room/7.03.01\\_video.htm](http://www.orton.org/news-room/7.03.01_video.htm).

**For more information on CommunityViz™ and to take a virtual tour, visit [www.communityviz.org](http://www.communityviz.org).**



# People



Wendy Taylor

Wendy Taylor, Director of Affiliate Development, has become Vice President for Affiliate Development and Administration, Meg Maguire announced on September 3, 2001.

Ms. Taylor has been an outstanding member of our staff for four years, growing our Scenic network from fewer than 10 organizations to over 25 organizations. Her administrative talents and skill with people make her an ideal leader of our organization.

**Bill Brinton**, Scenic America Board Member and co-founder of Citizens for a Scenic Florida, received three awards in the late spring for his work to preserve and enhance Florida's scenic beauty from the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board, Greenscape, Inc., and the Jacksonville Historical Society. In addition, Citizens for Tree Preservation, which Mr. Brinton co-founded in 2000, received the coveted Lee and Mimi Adams Environmental Award given annually to the organization that contributes most to the environment of Northeast Florida. We're very proud of you, Bill!

**Asia Bullock** has joined Scenic America as Office Manager, replacing **Djuana Waters Joseph** who will enter Montgomery Community College full time this fall. Asia is a student at Strayer University where she hopes to earn her degree in business administration in late 2002. Prior to joining Scenic America, Asia worked at the American Psychological Association.



Asia Bullock

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects recently presented an Honor Award to **Scenic**

**America** in recognition of outstanding professional achievement in Landscape Architecture, Planning, and Historic Preservation for the Taconic State Parkway Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (New York State Department of Transportation Region 8 Division). Congratulations to **Carol Truppi**, former Director of Programs for Scenic America, who directed the scenic conservation portion of the project.

Scenic America welcomes to our Board three new affiliate member representatives: **Cece Fowler** of Scenic Texas; **Jane Wingfield** of Scenic California; and **Dale McKeel** of Scenic North Carolina. In April, the Scenic America Board adopted a resolution to designate three places on the board for affiliate members. This will ensure that we stay close to our grassroots network as the movement grows.

We welcome **Scenic Nevada** to our network! Citizens for a Scenic Reno has broadened its scope and changed its name to Citizens for a Scenic Northern Nevada. The group is working with citizens in southern Nevada on a new statewide organization. Watch for updates on Scenic Nevada!

# AND Services

## Receiving Viewpoints for the First Time?

If so, welcome. In April, Scenic America's board voted to extend Scenic America membership to all of our associate organization's members. The Scenics network now consists of 23 state and local organizations with a total of approximately 6,000 members. We are pleased to send each of you our *Viewpoints* newsletter three times a year to keep you informed about scenic conservation issues nationally.

Scenic America is pleased to announce our new **Scenic News Briefs** service. Now, Scenic America members can sign up to receive an e-mail update on scenic issues several times a week. This service, which replaces the *Grassroots Advocate*, will help you easily keep up-to-date on what is happening with billboards, cellular towers, sprawl and other issues affecting the scenic environment. The Scenic News Briefs contain excerpts from newspapers across the country, as well as links to the full stories. To sign up for this new service, go to the Scenic News Briefs link on Scenic America's website, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

## Scenic America Viewpoints

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.

Kathryn J. Whitmire, Chair  
Meg Maguire, President  
Wendy J. Taylor, Vice-President  
Asia Bullock, Office Manager

Samuel R. Daines, III, Development Director  
Tom Pelikan, Policy Director  
Steven Strohmeier, Program Associate  
Carrie Walkley, Development/Membership Associate

Viewpoints is a publication of Scenic America and is available free to its members. Individual memberships in Scenic America costs \$25.

All photos: Scenic America unless credited.



# Wires, Poles, Cables and Community Visual Quality

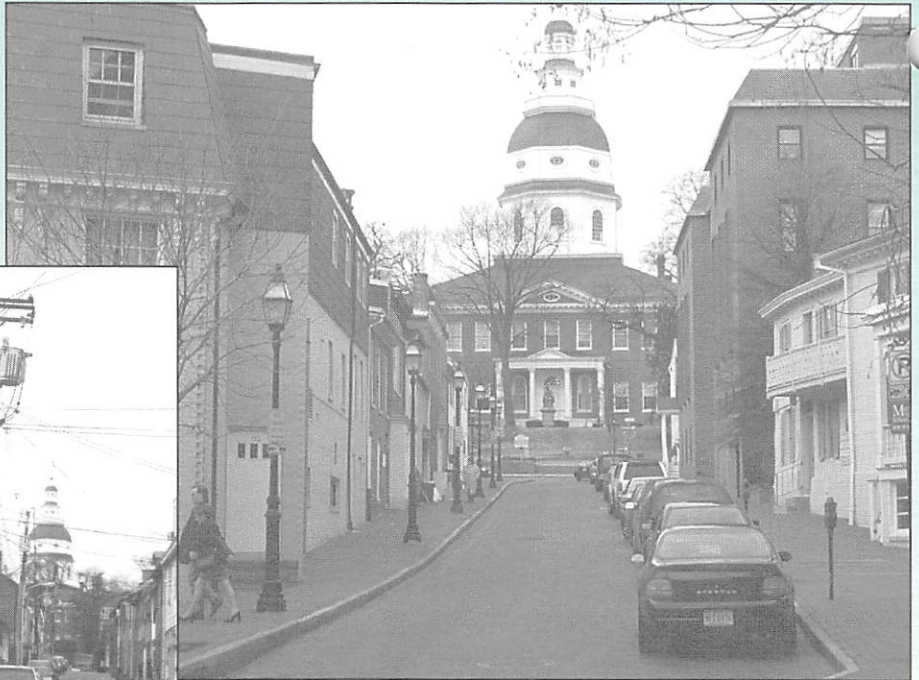
For more than a century, utility wires and poles have ensnared our public spaces and scenic vistas. Today, more than 3 million miles of electrical wires, 180 million telecommunications cables, and over 200 million utility poles overwhelm the aesthetics of our communities. Citizens across the nation ask what they can do to mitigate the visual impact of overhead utilities, but find few answers.

Scenic America's new Action Guide, *Power to the People: Strategies to Reduce the Visual Impact of Overhead Utilities*, gives communities the tools and information they need to form a comprehensive utility relocation plan. Utility relocation helps communities look better, improve safety, reduce utility disruptions, preserve trees, increase property values, and improve quality of life. *Power to the People* explains options for reducing the visual impact of utilities, such as underground burial, wire relocation, and utility camouflaging, as well as the pros and cons of each option.

*Power to the People* examines federal,

state, and local funding sources for utility relocation projects, noting places that illustrate various utility relocation strategies. With dedication, foresight, and proper planning, communities can steadily relocate overhead utilities to improve aesthetics, restore scenic vistas, and improve community character.

*Power to the People: Strategies for Reducing the Visual Impact of Overhead Utilities* is available from Scenic America for \$8.00 plus shipping and handling by calling (202) 543-6200, or from our secure online bookstore at [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).



Annapolis, MD's ongoing undergrounding program is dramatically changing its appearance.



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