

# Scenic America Viewpoints

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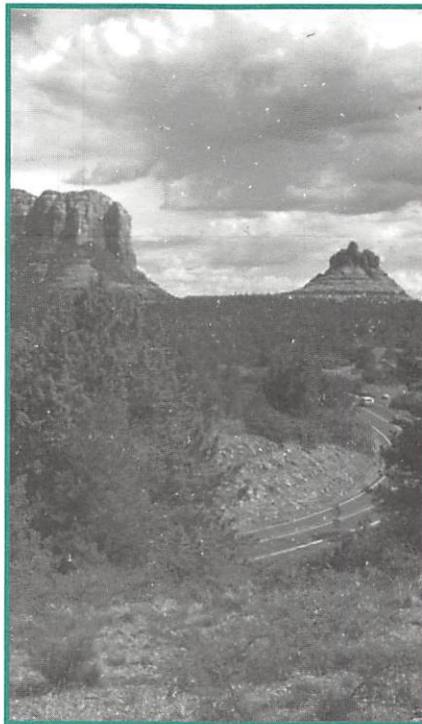


## Scenic America Announces *Last Chance Landscapes of America the Beautiful 2001*

On Thursday, November 15, 2001 at the Willard Inter-Continental Hotel in Washington, DC, Scenic America released its third annual report naming 10 *Last Chance Landscapes of America the Beautiful*. These endangered landscapes are places of beauty or distinctive character with both a pending threat and a potential solution. Speakers at the event included Representative Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI), Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), former Wisconsin Governor and Senator Gaylord Nelson, and Richard Wolf of Scenic D.C.

"America's values are deeply embedded in our love of beauty. In this time of trouble and stress, we find assurance and comfort in the magnificent and beautiful land we have inherited, in the natural places where we find solitude and in our neighborhoods, towns and cities with their wonderful monuments, public buildings and historic neighborhoods," said Meg Maguire, President of Scenic America.

Maguire said that following the tragic events of September 11th Americans feel a heightened determination to protect our country. "*Last Chance Landscapes* illustrates the tremendous challenge of protecting the beauty of our communities and countryside. Growth is inevitable; ugliness is not.



Red Rocks Scenic Road (AZ 179), Sedona AZ

Patriotism includes saving the places we love."

The third annual *Last Chance Landscapes of America the Beautiful* report lists places nominated by local individuals or groups ranging from the Marsh Islands of Coastal Georgia to the

Woodberry Watershed Forest in Baltimore, Maryland. Scenic America also named an entire state, Oregon, and the District of Columbia as *Last Chance Landscapes*. Other *Last Chance Landscapes* include a scenic byway, a *National Wild and Scenic River* valley, prized scenic landscapes, and other places treasured for their natural beauty or distinctive character. Scenic America's report briefly describes the challenges faced by the landscapes and proposes actions to help save them.

The 2001 *Last Chance Landscapes of America the Beautiful* are:

### **The State of Oregon, including the Central Oregon Region and Willowa Lake Moraines**

Moves to undermine Oregon's land-use regulations could allow unprecedented growth to destroy the state's stunning beauty. Oregon has an abundance of state and national parks, scenic byways, pristine natural areas, and handsome cities and towns. Oregonians have long sought to protect these scenic resources, enacting strong land-use planning regulations and environmental standards. Now some citizens are actively seeking to reverse these measures.

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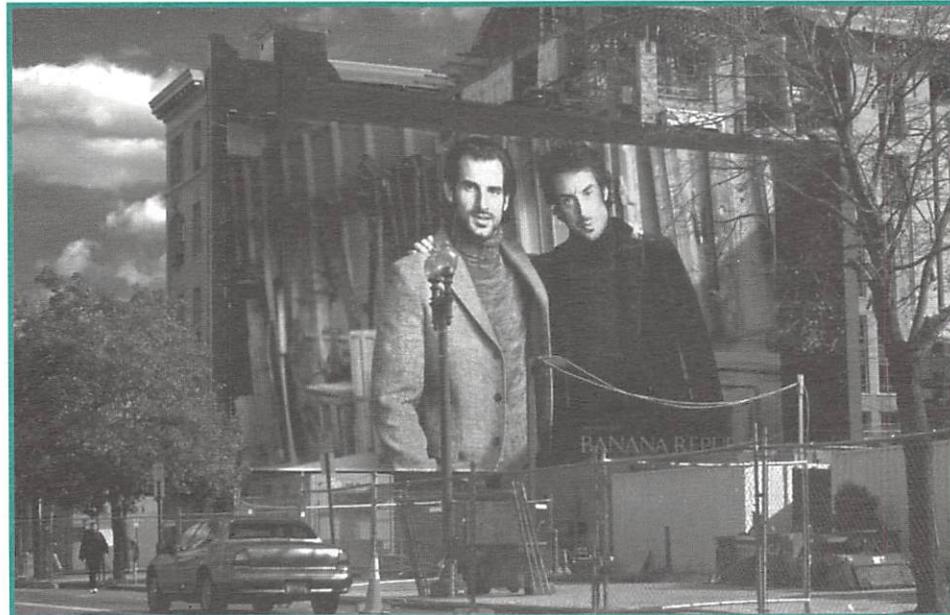
■ **New Board and Staff Members**

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■ **Thank you and Welcome New Members**

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# Billboards Return to the Nation's Capital After 70-Year Prohibition



Banana Republic Advertisement Outside the MCI Center, Downtown Washington, DC - 32 gigantic billboards, masquerading as "wall signs," now litter the nation's capital.

On December 18, 2001, the Washington, DC City Council approved by a vote of 7 - 6 legislation allowing 32 new gigantic "special signs" to remain up indefinitely. The fight over these billboards, one of which occupies an area of more than 10,000 square feet, began in the summer of 2000 when the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs slipped regulations allowing the signs past a City Council that failed to notice them.

Those regulations, which undermine a 70-year prohibition on new billboard construction, originally allowed up to 81 of the wall signs. Once alerted by activists who consulted with Scenic America, the Council attempted to halt permits for the signs. Unfortunately, by winning a race to the courthouse, three billboard companies received 32 permits for their signs.

Local residents and neighborhood groups leapt into action. More than a dozen activists quickly formed a new organization, Scenic DC. Scenic America President Meg Maguire and Director of Policy Tom Pelikan personally testified at several committee hearings and press conferences. Scenic DC and other groups, with the support of concerned council members such as Jim Graham, Phil Mendelson, and Carol Schwartz and others advocated for legislation which would have prevented relocation of the signs and amortized them out of existence in five years.

Scenic DC secured the services of lawyers to review existing laws and suggest ways to improve them. Noted Georgetown University Law Center takings expert John Echeverria testified that the amortization provisions were legal. Former Vermont Governor Phillip Hoff, who presided over Vermont's removal of all billboards in the late 1960s and early 1970s, provided a letter of support for Scenic DC. Architects, religious leaders, and others all spoke about the importance of correcting the Council's earlier mistake.

However, Council Member Jack Evans, citing fears of expensive litigation, persuaded enough council members to support a bill that caps the number of permits at 32, allows permit holders to relocate the signs throughout the business district, and allows the permits to stay in place forever. The billboard industry has already capitalized on this victory, speaking with pride about the return of billboards to Washington in city council meetings in Baltimore and Los Angeles.

However, Scenic DC does not plan to go away. Leaders Anne Hargrove and Dick Wolf plan to keep the organization going, continue to gather information, and wait for opportunities to persuade the City Council to go after many illegal signs in the District and eventually get rid of the "special signs."

# Celebrating Ten Years of ISTEA and the National Scenic Byways Program



Participating in a panel on the future of the National Scenic Byways Program are (L-R) Meg Maguire, Scenic America, Susan Pikrallidas, AAA, Richard Moe, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and David Humphreys, Recreational Vehicle Industry Association.

In December 1991, President George H. W. Bush signed into law the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA), one of the most sweeping and innovative transportation spending bills ever enacted. Thanks to Scenic America and other conservation organizations, ISTEA included provisions for the establishment of a National Scenic Byways program to honor American roads with outstanding scenic, natural, historic, cultural, recreation, and archaeological resources.

To mark the 10th anniversary of this landmark bill and the success of the National Scenic Byways Program, Scenic America, the American Recreation Coalition, American Automobile Association, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation held a celebration

event and forum December 18 and 19, 2001 in Washington, DC.

Approximately 75 attendees came together at the Willard Inter-Continental Hotel to honor the National Scenic Byways Program's accomplishments and to discuss the future of the program as Congress prepares to renew the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), ISTEA's successor, in 2003.

The two-day event featured several moderated discussions with distinguished panelists from across the nation. Among the speakers were The Honorable Norman Mineta, Secretary of Transportation; Mary Peters, FHWA Administrator; Scenic America President Meg Maguire; Board member

Ruth Hawkins; Sally Collins, Associate Chief and Chief Operating Officer for the USDA Forest Service; David Humphreys, President of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, and David Fasser, New York State Scenic Byways Coordinator.

Secretary Mineta and Administrator Peters praised the National Scenic Byways Program for the positive effect it has had on byway communities. Participants from Vermont, Illinois, and Kansas agreed, adding that the National Scenic Byways program has become an integral part of the economic success of many local communities and has helped to breath new life into landscapes that may otherwise have slowly died or succumbed to development pressures.

Others added that byway leaders, supporters, and organizers must convey to top political leaders the excitement echoed across the country by travelers, inn keepers, school teachers, preservationists, manufacturers and others to top political leaders.

ISTEA and the National Scenic Byways Program have accomplished much in the past ten year, and the future, though challenging, promises an exciting road ahead. Special thanks go to Derrick Crandall, President of the American Recreation Coalition for his work in spearheading this celebration and leading the program.

# THE BIG Picture

BY MEG MAGUIRE, PRESIDENT

## Tense Times for Conservation

What's it like in DC these days," a friend asked recently.

"Tense," I replied.

She assumed I was referring to terrorist threats, but I reassured her that we probably live in one of the most heavily guarded places on earth. Jets patrol high in the sky day and night; and ugly physical barriers, blocked off streets and police are everywhere.

No, the tension to which I referred related to the many conservation issues hanging by a thread in Congress. How the House and Senate resolve these issues will have a lasting impact on scenic beauty:

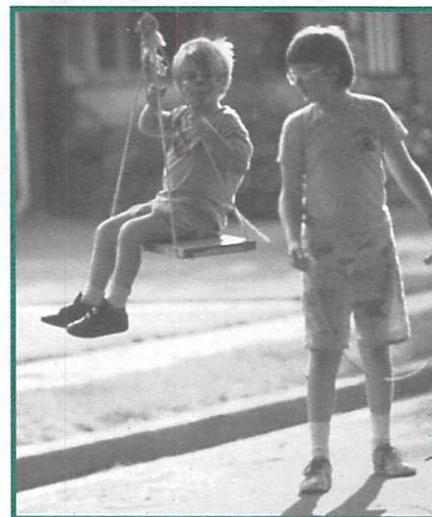
- Will the conservation provisions of \$4.4 billion over five years in the Senate Farm Bill hold in the conference committee with the House? (This could mean a lot of money for conservation easements, including scenic easements, and rural landscape preservation.)
- Will the President's budget proposals end up with a fair deal

for balanced transportation and the environment?

- Will we adopt greater energy conservation measures so that we become less dependent on foreign oil? Or will we drill on 2000 widely spread acres through out 1.5-million-acre Alaskan Wildlife Refuge, one of the most beautiful, ecologically sensitive and pristine places on earth?

While bi-partisan coalitions are emerging on all of these issues, the tension is palpable because the majority for the conservation position is usually so slim, dependent on a few key votes. On the Hill we always hear the same thing: unless members hear from people back home they assume no one really cares.

Four years ago I was stunned to learn from one senior Senate staffer that ten letters on a given topic from constituents is an indication of significant interest. Ten letters. That's nothing. But if your letter is not one of the ten, then you are squandering your power as a constituent to indicate significant interest.



As a resident of the District of Columbia I do not have a congressperson or senator. It isn't fair, but it's true. Most of you reading this column have three representatives in Congress. I envy you and urge you to use your power of one to speak your mind.

Tension is creative if civic-minded citizens weigh in with their point of view. Tension is destructive when Congress hears only from well-paid private sector lobbyists. This is a democracy. All points of view must find expression. Have you made known your views lately?

We can be incredibly powerful with our congressional representatives and two senators if we simply take time to write a letter. It isn't necessary to know all the bill numbers and the amendment sponsors. Take 20 minutes today to write a personal note to those who represent you in Congress to let them know what you think about the issues they face. Tell them that the national sacrifice of place for pure profit must stop. Their job is to preserve and protect the treasured and sacred places we love.



### **Washington, DC**

Washington's lovely public spaces, government buildings, and historic neighborhoods embody the diversity, strength and ideals of our nation. However, in the past two years the District of Columbia has been bombarded by a proliferation of new billboards masquerading as "wall signs," giant wireless telecommunication towers, suburban style gas stations, fast food franchises, and unsightly security barriers. The mayor and city council need to take immediate action to retain the stunning visual character of the nation's capital.

### **The Marsh Islands of Coastal Georgia**

Already weak state and local laws to protect marshland are threatened by development pressures on hundreds of environmentally-sensitive islands in the marshes along the coast of Georgia south of Savannah. These tiny islands rise up out of the salt marsh, naturally mitigating the effects of flooding, water pollution, and erosion. Their serene beauty and isolation provide refuge for abundant wildlife, including bald eagles, sea otters, minks, and terrapins. But coastal development on privately-owned lands threatens to overwhelm the entire landscape.

### **Red Rocks Scenic Road (AZ 179), Sedona, AZ**

Several million visitors travel the Red Rocks Scenic Road (AZ 179) each year to experience its rare, unspoiled beauty. This world-class state scenic byway is threatened by the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) plans to reconstruct it as a five-lane expressway, obliterating the scenic values and views that make it attractive. But significant features of the road may yet be preserved by applying context-sensitive design principles.

### **Coyote Valley, San Jose, CA**

A proposed Cisco Systems office park would pave some 700 acres of Coyote Valley's amber hills, eliminating its seasonal wetlands, historic barns, ranches, farms, and orchards. These

are the most visible indicators of the Santa Clara Valley's rich agricultural tradition. Less than 11 miles south of San Jose, CA, along Highway 101, Coyote Valley provides an important visual buffer between the intense suburban development of San Jose and agricultural communities south of the city. Citing current economic conditions, Cisco postponed development plans for the valley in late 2001.

### **Narragansett Bay, RI**

Narragansett Bay, located in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts, has been central to the region's economy for over 300 years and is one of the few estuaries in the country that is relatively free of heavy industry. The bay supports a thriving and diverse ecosystem of aquatic life, shore birds, plants, and marine animals. This valuable scenic and ecological resource is threatened by the proposed conversion of a former naval base into a load-center container port which would permanently alter the bay's ecological and scenic resources.

### **St. Croix Valley Scenic Corridor, Minnesota and Wisconsin**

Growth in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN are pushing homes, roads, commercial development, and other infrastructure into one of the nation's most scenic recreational areas, the St. Croix River Valley. Stretching over 150 miles along the border of Minnesota and Wisconsin, the Valley attracts millions of visitors each year to its breathtaking beauty and array of water sports, hiking, bird watching, climbing, and photography, adding millions to the local economy. Designated one of the nation's original *Wild and Scenic Rivers*, the St. Croix is the only river in the world protected for its entire length.

### **Harpeth River Valley, Williamson County, TN**

Located in Tennessee's Great Central Basin of fertile river valleys, wetlands, watersheds, forests, and rolling hills, the Harpeth River Valley contains a rich collection of scenic, cultural, rural, and historic resources. From its quaint roads lined with stone walls to its collection of

Native American historic sites, the valley is a treasure that is likely to be buried soon under a landslide of residential developments, road construction projects, and environmental issues.

### **Lynville Mountain Landscape, Roanoke, VA**

A proposed new interstate highway and sprawl from nearby Roanoke threaten the outstanding scenic beauty of the Lynville Mountain landscape and its unspoiled views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Located less than five miles from Roanoke, and visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway All-American Road, Lynville Mountain has remained free of development and seeks to retain its rural character.

### **Woodberry Watershed Forest, Baltimore, MD**

Developers have many possible futures in mind for the Woodberry Watershed Forest, a 110-acre woodland located between the nationally-renowned Druid Hill Park and Cylburn Arboretum along the Jones Falls Expressway in northern Baltimore. All would destroy the area that has been undeveloped since 1790, serving at various times as a mill run, city landfill, quarry, and de facto urban park for hundreds of nearby residents.

"All Americans have a say in how we treat 'America the Beautiful.' The truth is that we can all do a lot to protect America, to save the places we love — natural places where we find solitude, and our neighborhoods, towns and cities where we live and work and are bound together in community," Maguire said. "*Last Chance Landscapes* is a wake-up call highlighting both threats and potential solutions. We are pleased that over the past two years, *Last Chance Landscapes* has spurred local and state officials, businesses, and average citizens in Delaware, Utah, Illinois, Texas and many other states to step up to the plate and take effective action."

For more information on the *Last Chance Landscapes* program, visit our website at [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

# Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside, and Public Lands

August 3-6, 2003  
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Denver, Colorado

Scenic America and EDAW, Inc. are pleased to announce that the *Scenic Summit* has now been rescheduled for August 3-6, 2003 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Denver, Colorado. This groundbreaking national conference will bring together nationally known speakers, citizen-activists, professionals, and government officials to accelerate efforts to protect America's natural beauty and distinctive community character in the early 21st century.

"America the Beautiful is disappearing," said Meg Maguire, President of Scenic America. "Sprawling subdivisions, towering billboards, look-alike strip malls and franchises, cluttered signs, unscreened junkyards, invasive power lines, and poorly sited wireless communications towers destroy the character of our towns, neighborhoods, and public lands."

Craig Taggart of EDAW, Inc. emphasized that the principal purpose of the conference is to frame an action agenda to guide citizens and professionals as they work closely to build an activist movement to reverse this loss.

The *Scenic Summit* will address how to turn best practices into common practice. Before the conference, a panel of nationally-recognized experts, citizen activists, and business representatives will prepare a draft *Scenic Action Agenda*. At the conference, *Scenic Summit* participants will debate and revise the *Scenic Action Agenda* to create a collaborative "living document" to guide scenic conservation efforts in the 21st century.

The *Scenic Action Agenda* will detail specific strategies and recommendations to:

- Bring the visual environment to the forefront of public awareness;
- Strengthen citizen action and expand the scenic conservation movement;
- Apply the analytical and decision making tools available in the field of visual resource analysis;
- Make scenic resources a fundamental consideration in all public and private decision-making;
- Develop educational standards, curricula, accreditation, training, and public awareness programs;
- Draw public attention to the connection between health benefits, the economy, and visual resource management; and
- Build partnerships for change.

"The *Scenic Summit* is an opportunity for those concerned with the future of America's scenic environment to come together and set a national agenda for scenic conservation to truly make a difference in the way we plan, the way we make decisions, and the way we care for our communities, countryside, and public lands," said Maguire.

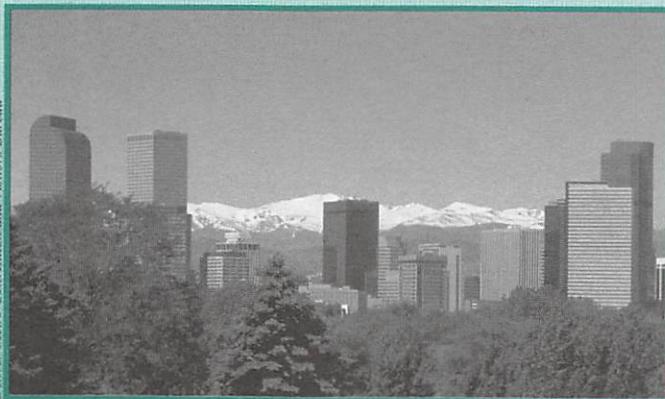
*Scenic Summit* participants will discuss a wide range of topics including:

- Smart growth
- Sign control
- Community design
- Digital technologies
- Protecting working lands
- Visual resource education
- Utilities and telecom tower siting
- Context sensitive design
- Beauty and the bottom line
- Scenic byways
- Urban forestry
- Scenic education
- Resource extraction
- Viewshed protection
- Corporate responsibility
- Cultural landscape protection
- Organizing for scenic conservation

*Scenic Summit* supporters include the American Society of Landscape Architects, Federal Highway Administration, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U. S. Forest Service, and Sally and Ted Oldham.

Conference brochures and registration materials will be available in fall 2002. Check now for updated information on the *Scenic Summit* website at [www.scenicsummit.org](http://www.scenicsummit.org).

The views and conclusions of the *Scenic Summit* are those of the authors and organizers and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.



Denver Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau

Denver, CO

# Scenic America People

## Changing of the Guard: Scenic America's Board Rotation

To keep our leadership fresh, Scenic America enacted a board rotation policy in 1994, which took effect in 2000. As a result, board members may serve a maximum of two 3-year terms before rotating off the board for at least one year. Over the past two years, we have had the bitter-sweet experience of saying goodbye to board members who have served for many years and welcoming new members.

Scenic America will miss Bill Jonson of Clearwater, Florida who has rotated off the Board after many years. Bill is a citizen activist extraordinaire, founding Citizens for a Better Clearwater to fight billboards in his adopted home and later going on to co-found Citizens for a Scenic Florida. Last year, Bill successfully ran for the Clearwater City Council based on his solid reputation as someone who cares about his community and gets things done. Congratulations are also in order for his recent marriage to Becky Carlson.

We are pleased to welcome Karl Kruse, Executive Director of Scenic Missouri and Ronald Lee Fleming, President of the Townscape Institute back to the Board.

We are also very grateful to board member Grant Jones, FASLA of Jones & Jones in Seattle, Washington for helping to recruit three new outstanding board members who are all Fellows of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Mark Johnson is co-founder and Principal of Civitas, Inc., a nationally-recognized urban design, planning and landscape architecture firm located in Denver, Colorado. His long-term commitment to the redevelopment of Denver's Central Platte Valley redefines the role of the urban designer and landscape architect in the development process. His drive to make cities better, paired with a willingness to engage in political venues has resulted in a reputation for getting things done.

Robert Z. Melnick is Dean of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts and Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. Professor Melnick has served as Dean since 1995 and as head of the landscape architecture department from 1990 until 1995. He formerly served on the Preservation Technology and Training Board of the National Park Service. His teaching and research focuses on landscape preservation, land-use planning, and cultural and historic landscape analysis. Melnick is co-editor of the award winning book, *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, published in 2000.

Charlie Scott is Project Manager/Senior Landscape Architect at Jones & Jones. He has 20 years of experience in complex planning and design projects, including municipal and regional parks, transportation facilities, zoos, corporate and university campuses, museum and civic facilities, and large-scale commercial developments. He has successfully managed a wide array of multi-faceted projects requiring the involvement of various public agencies and community-based organizations and coordination of diversified teams of consultants and environmental specialists. A sampling of his projects includes the Indianapolis Canal Walk; the Paris-

Lexington Road Reconstruction in Lexington, Kentucky; and the North SeaTac Park in SeaTac, Washington.

## Staffing Up

Scenic America welcomes Joan Woods as our new Director of Development. She served most recently as Deputy Director of the Program Development Division at the National Center for Victims of Crime. Prior to that, she worked for four years doing programmatic, computer-based training and resource development at the Enterprise Foundation. Joan brings strong development, program and journalism experience and an enthusiastic, "can do" attitude.



Congratulations to Steven Strohmeier, recently promoted to Program Manager. Steven has done an excellent job managing Scenic America's *Last Chance Landscapes* and *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* projects and last year authored Scenic America's *Power to the People: Strategies to Reduce the Impact of Overhead Utilities*.



## Scenic America

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

Tom Pelikan, Policy Director  
Steven Strohmeier, Program Manager  
Carrie Walkley, Development Associate  
Joan Woods, Development Director

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

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# Thank You!

Thank you! To those who gave during our year-end appeal. These donations help us support the individuals featured in this newsletter and make Scenic America's work possible. We came very close to meeting our \$18,000 goal for the appeal. If you have been meaning to send in a gift but got caught up in the busy holiday season, you can send a donation today in the envelope provided with this newsletter.

**Scenic America extends a special thank you to the following donors who generously gave \$100 or more:**

Larry & Eve Barrett  
Mrs. H.H. Bassett  
James Benkard  
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Carroll Shaddock  
Mrs. & Mrs. Sherwood Smith, Jr.  
Jane Talcott  
Mary Lou Tanton  
Vollmer Associates

**Welcome to Scenic America!  
Our newest members:**

Kathleen Bakewell (NY)  
Carol Beyers (IL)  
Gary Bruckner (IL)  
Theresa Chamberlain (AR)  
City of Tybee Island (GA)  
James Coffman (AZ)  
Sally Cohn (MO)  
Laurel Cooper (AZ)  
Steve Dick (SD)  
Angela Dye (AZ)  
Steve Fleegal (AL)  
Clem Grosskinsky (OH)  
Lauren Hepkin (NJ)

Mark Hunner (WI)  
Kermit Johansson (AZ)  
Tom Kokx (NH)  
Mysteri Lemay (LA)  
Kim McCaskill (NC)  
Patric McPoland (FL)  
Mary Mysers (NC)  
Lyle Oehler (CA)  
Old Canada Road Scenic Byway (ME)  
James Palmer (VT)  
H. Karl Raff (RI)  
James Reiersen (MN)  
Alton Roane (FL)  
Stephen Svete (CA)  
Charlotte Underwood-Miller (MA)  
Jan Van Huizen (NY)  
Carmen Wagner (WI)  
Wyman Wong (CA)



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801 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20003  
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