



[About Us](#)

[Issues](#)

[Billboards & Sign Control](#)

[Resources](#)

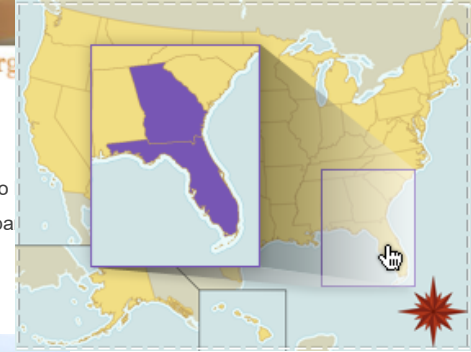
[Bookstore](#)

[Search](#)



May 2008

Get Local



In this issue:

[Landscape conservation bill passes House](#)

[Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area signed into law](#)

[Knoxville says no to digital billboards](#)

[Good news for Alabama's landscapes](#)

[Sen. Alexander delivers remarks on Lady Bird's legacy](#)

Scenic America makes the news:

[Austin City Council to ban billboard relocation, require registration](#)

[A sign of civilization - or the end of it - in Vermont](#)

[Stricter rules approved for digital signs in Mobile, Ala.](#)

Scenic Quote of the Month

"I told the group when they hired me that you can't do this because it's against the law. As a sign painter, it's unequivocally a sign to me."

~ Frank Hawkins, painter who created a sign in Vermont that has led to the first exemption to that state's anti-billboard law in 40 years.

Landscape conservation bill passes House

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed legislation that, if signed into law, would formally recognize 26 million acres of federally managed public lands as part of the first congressionally designated conservation system in the past 40 years.

The National Landscape Conservation System Act, H.R. 2016, is intended to formally recognize and protect a collection of existing special designations currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These include: National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Conservation Areas and Recreation Areas, and National Historic and Scenic Trails.

"These lands represent some of the most amazingly beautiful, ecologically rich and culturally significant landscapes in the entire country," said Brad Cownover, Director of Scenic Conservation for Scenic America.

One of 75 organizations that supported the bill, Scenic America is also the newest member of the advocacy coalition called the Conservation System Alliance, which was created to help ensure protection of the best lands and waters managed under the BLM.

Cownover said Scenic America plays a unique role as the only national organization actively focused on the protection and enhancement of the visual qualities of our public lands.

The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration. [Click here](#) for more information on public lands from Scenic America.



El Malpais National Monument, New Mexico - photo by Brad Cownover

Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area signed into law

We are pleased to report that on May 8 President Bush signed the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (JTHG NHA) into law.

The legislation, passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate, recognizes the unparalleled cultural, historic and scenic resources within the entire JTHG corridor - the region that generally follows the Old Carolina Road (Rt. 15/231) from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to Monticello in Virginia.

Scenic America is a founding partner and continued supporter of the JTHG Partnership.

"We applaud the work of our Partners, as their efforts and vision are responsible for [this] national recognition," said Cate Magennis Wyatt, President of the JTHG Partnership. "I share their pride as we accept this designation."

Scenic Trivia Question

Q: When did we welcome Scenic Tennessee on board as an official Scenic America affiliate?

A: On April 2, 2000, Scenic America's board of directors approved Scenic Tennessee's application for affiliation, and welcomed the group as our eighth affiliate.

Tell a Friend

Click here to tell your friends and family about Scenic Overlook and spread the word about Scenic America.

Make a donation

Your tax-deductible donation helps us to provide information, support, and guidance to communities, planners, and policy makers that recognize...

Change is Inevitable, Ugliness is Not!



A recent meeting of the Knoxville City Council left that city's sign ordinance unchanged, meaning Lamar Advertising will not be allowed to convert their traditional billboards to digital.

Opposition to the proposed change was organized by the recently founded group [Scenic Knoxville](#). Several city council members mentioned the overwhelming number of calls and emails they received from residents opposing the proposed change to the ordinance.



"If you had told Lamar Advertising three months ago that they would be bested by a grassroots community organization that had not even formed yet, they would have laughed you out of the room," said Joyce Feld, secretary of Scenic Knoxville.

"We fully expect Lamar to come back again on this issue in some way," Feld said.

"However, for now they can not put up digital billboards in the city, and we will be ready for them if they try to come through the legislative process again."

Good news for Alabama's landscapes

House Bill 628, the "Private Property Signage Act," died in the Alabama legislature after failing to get on the calendar before the end of the session. The bill as first written would have established a right to put signs anywhere on private property and would have prohibited municipalities from assessing permit fees for such signs, effectively making it impossible to enforce any relevant sign ordinance.

[Scenic Alabama](#) led the fight against the bill, soon joined by cities across the state, particularly along the Gulf Coast, where sign ordinances are a common and valued tool used to preserve scenic landscapes and community character.

Alabama legislators were taken aback by the uproar. A watered-down version of the bill came out of committee, but hard work by Scenic Alabama and the [Alabama League of Municipalities](#) to keep it off the special order calendar resulted in the bill going nowhere.

Elsewhere in Alabama, the Jefferson County Board of Zoning Adjustments voted against a request by Lamar

Advertising to convert an existing nonconforming billboard to digital. Its location, on a steep grade near a hospital on U.S. 31, was a major reason for the unanimous decision.

Although the bordering cities do not allow any billboards, this particular sign is located on a small piece of unincorporated land. Residents of nearby Vestavia Hills and Homewood spoke against the application, as did Scenic Alabama.

Sen. Alexander delivers remarks on Lady Bird's legacy

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) took the opportunity of the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of President Lyndon B. Johnson to draw attention to the remarkable partnership between the former president and his wife, Lady Bird, on matters related to scenic conservation.



Rural Alabama road - photo by Todd Smalls

Contact Us

Scenic America
1250 I Street NW
Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005

202.638.0550 ph
202.638.3171 fax
www.scenic.org

In remarks delivered on the Senate floor on May 21, Sen. Alexander hailed Lady Bird as "probably the most influential conservationist in America since Teddy Roosevelt," and reminded the Senate that "Lady Bird and Lyndon passed the Highway Beautification Act to free us from highway billboard blight and rampant ugliness."

The senator called for her legacy to be preserved by concluding that, "I would hope that one result of this commemoration of Lyndon Johnson's birthday would be to encourage someone among us -- or more among us -- to revive in us Lady Bird's passion for the natural beauty of America, to encourage once again the planting of wildflowers, to preserve the viewscapes, and to remind American communities of how satisfying it can be to live in one of the most beautiful places in the world."

The full text of Senator Alexander's remarks can be [found here](#).

Copyright 2008 Scenic America

[Unsubscribe](#) from this newsletter.