

Illinois

The National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991, recognizes historic, scenic and culturally important roads, all of which promote economic development and tourism in communities around the country. Illinois boasts seven National Scenic Byways, each of which demonstrates a unique and diverse perspective of the state. From presidential history to archeologically significant remains of an ancient civilization, Illinois' Scenic Byways help to preserve and promote some of the most culturally important areas in the state. Illinois is also home to the Historic National Road, which has earned the designation of an All-American Road—the gold standard of our country's Scenic Byways—for its cultural and scenic noteworthiness. Local destinations along the Byways are renowned for their [national and international appeal](#), regularly drawing visitors from myriad foreign countries, as far away as Australia, New Zealand and Ukraine.

Key points:

- Illinois is home to 7 National Scenic Byways.
- Anaise Berry, Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway [calls byways](#) “a catalyst for local and regional economic growth.”
- Illinois has also taken advantage of a [Main Street Program](#), to highlight local businesses along the byways, leading to investment and new revenues that would otherwise be non-existent.
- Tourism plays a critical role in the state economy, an Illinois Department of Commerce [2017 study](#) shows that 114 million visitors spent \$39.7 billion in the state, generating \$3 billion in state and local tax revenue and in turn saving the average Illinois household over \$1,300 a year.



Scenic Byways in Illinois

National Scenic Byways in Illinois:

[Great River Road](#) (1)

[Historic National Road](#) (2)

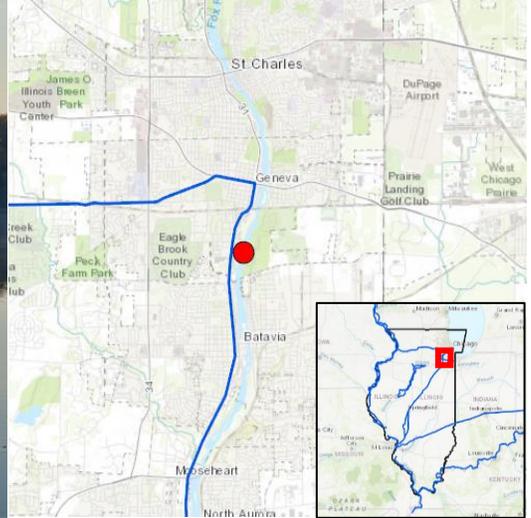
[Historic Route 66](#) (3)

[Illinois River Road](#) (4)

[Lincoln Highway](#) (5)

[Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Route](#) (6)

[Ohio River Scenic Byway](#) (7)



Lincoln Highway offers a pleasant blend of natural beauty and historic character, making it one of America's most popular routes.

Credit: Illinois Department of Natural Resources



Starved Rock State Park, located along Illinois River Road, is a popular destination among locals and tourists alike.