Like many who came before us, our journey to find Historic Missouri Route 66 began at the edge. The imaginary line, invisible to most, but not to us, separates the state of Missouri from all others. Initially, we were searching for that moment when you know you have arrived somewhere special. "
Wayfinding

Wayfinding is an ability to navigate and receive communicative information within an environment. A successful wayfinding system orients users in space, establishes a clear destination, and directs users through space from one point to the next. It is a spatial identification of location, destination, and directional information. The process of identification of space and organization of movement is assisted by structures and graphics. Organization of a space is often defined by circulation, and the process of being able to establish a mental understanding of navigation.

Decisions made by users are continually influenced by cues and available information as they progress through space. Wayfinding is not just about building maps, it’s a process of exposing users to information that leads to more decisions. Information given at an inappropriate time will not serve to influence decision making.

Good articulation of space and spatial organization help maintain a sense of orientation. It also contributes to the satisfaction of users and promotes return visits. How much information is given and availability is critical to good wayfinding. The lack of information or information overload can cause concern and confusion. User satisfaction and frequency of use can be increased by a good wayfinding plan. Furthermore, a well implemented strategy will reduce stress, frustration, and stimulate users to push toward discovery.

Hierarchy is used to assist the organization and movement through places. Hierarchy establishes major and minor circulation and develops ease of navigation in complex systems. Pattern can also create an identity of a particular path and suggest hierarchy or destination. Wayfinding should allow people to navigate complex systems with ease and establish a clear destination before they arrive. Effective communication to a broad group of people should be a primary goal. Users with different physical and psychological barriers must also be considered.

Wayfinding and signage in the corridor of Missouri Route 66 can enhance visitor experience by providing wayfinding elements along the corridor that assist travelers in finding their way along the Byway.
Wayfinding signs enable successful navigation of the Route itself as well as to the points of interest along the Route, to overlooks, interpretive sites, campgrounds, picnic areas, and other destinations along the scenic drive. Consistent appearance and placement of signing provides an additional level of comfort and meets traveler’s expectations.

Graphic wayfinding connects user to their destination. Graphic information can include text, pictures, graphs, diagrams, or maps. The presentation of information in graphic wayfinding must be clear and easy to understand and follow. Complex or busy graphic wayfinding does not allow people to follow or comprehend thus defeating the purpose. Consistency and unity of information should be standardized and are important factors in development. Sign features such as native stone, limestone or brick bases and wood timber elements can reinforce architectural themes along the scenic drive. Visitors travel with the goal of reaching familiar destinations or finding new locations through exploration and the “sense of discovery” as an important part of the experience. Visitors enjoy the corridor primarily for its intrinsic qualities which are archaeological, cultural, historical, natural, recreational, and scenic. These qualities are enhanced through design and engineering that protects resources and experiences while promoting a sense of place within the corridor.

Sign and gateway designs set the tone for the visitor experience and are important wayfinding elements which provide visual cues to aid travelers in setting desired goals, making decisions and following through the experience.

**Gateway and Entrance Signs**

Landmarks, gateways, and focal points establish a point of reference that also marks a place. Reference points establish direction, assist in navigation, and reduce the complexity of travel into smaller parts. Orientation and direction are established by reference points when applicable and compensated by graphic arrows or directional graphics in alternate situations. Directional information should be complemented with destination signage, and landscape elements where applicable, leading travelers to their destination.

Gateways can be places and/or elements within the landscape, or on the roadway. A gateway marks a significant shift in context, experience, or place, identifying a sense of arrival. Gateways are experienced differently when traveling in opposite directions. Each gateway presents an opportunity to be developed with unique attributes to reflect local character or concept. Entrances to states over state lines, to towns and cities, shifts in the landscape or context, or transitions from rural to urban areas are a few examples of gateway opportunities.
A gateway can become a place for visitors and returning users to enhance their experience by receiving information and itinerary items. One variation of this concept depicts a welcome and tourism center offering information and items for visitors while highlighting resources and amenities along the corridor. The sense of arrival is accomplished by a shift in the streetscape treatment and a welcome sign establishing the identity for Missouri.

Route 66 wayfinding signs. Another approach to a welcome center is a kiosk.

A kiosk is a small structure that offers information to visitors and guests at a smaller pulloff area. They provide visual, audible, or print information about a place. These elements can be easily adapted in built environments, or introduced as a new feature. Kiosks host opportunities for digital information exchange geared for mobile devices such as: PDAs, ipods, and transfer drives, often referred to as jump drives. The kiosk digital exchange could work both ways allowing travelers to upload photographs or messages for public viewing on a website or interactive blog. A kiosk could also house digital information boards for upcoming events, feature local advertisements, discount sales, or dining specials.
A kiosk offers a chance to draw visitors out of the car for a quick break, and build interest in the immediate area capturing sales revenue of travelers. By specifically identifying economic opportunities and taking advantage of the economic contribution of tourists, means providing a reason to stop and spend time and money in the corridor. Wayfinding is a way to get people engaged, visually building curiosity and establishing a level of comfort to stop.

Creative solutions to visual complexity are the placement of thermoplastic, concrete, or modular paver logos and badges on the roadway. Pavement markers differ from traditional pole mounted signage and assist the preservation of complementary context and promote corridor identity. Pavement markers are used in many places, and could be developed in partnership with the Missouri Department of Transportation, counties and cities to meet transportation safety and signage standards.

Paver logos and stamped concrete are commonly used at intersections and nodes signaling transition to different districts, pedestrian crosswalks to direct movement, and serve as traffic calming devices for motorists. Variations on this theme show the diversity of how materials pallet can be selected to enhance streetscape experience and aesthetics inviting people out of their car to a pedestrian friendly environment.

Base components of a streetscape include: circulation net-
Banners mounted to power and light poles also signal a sense of entry. These vertical elements visually lead travelers into urban areas, and reinforce the identification of a place or district. Banners are widely used to mark festivals, holiday, places, and much more. They are an informational piece of art that can be used to celebrate the significance of Missouri Route 66. Properly used in the corridor, banners should be designed to promote an attractive addition so as not to detract from the character of the place or distract drivers.

Visitors enjoy the corridor primarily for its intrinsic resources. Preservation, promotion, and protection of these resources can increase awareness with proper identification and location of interpretative signage. Interpretative signage contributes to the overall integrity of a resource or area while promoting a sense of unity throughout the corridor.

Interpretative signage allows for a viewer or user of a resource to receive educational information about the resource, a vital function for the scenic byway industry as traveler’s long for information about a corridor’s resources. Interpretation can help accomplish the Missouri Route 66 Vision, build a knowledgeable constituency for supporting the corridor’s goals and strategies, encourage a sense of stewardship among visitors and stakeholders, and help educate the travelling public. Interpretation encourages curiosity and provokes thought. A well-developed interpretive plan, improved signage, and clear branding could increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of the wayfinding program.

Mobile internet web directories, podcasts, audio tours, and local museums and tourism centers should be referenced linking travelers to more detailed information of interest. An interpretative sign program could also be incorporated into education curriculum and field trips, and Geo-caching to inspire exploration and continued education. Interpretative signs could also be accompanied by a corridor map depicting proximity to other cultural resources, located within a county, State, and city along the entire Route.

A Missouri Route 66 Byway tour could offer different thematic tracts to follow that would be addressed in interpretive signage at each numbered site. The different storylines would connect and overlap, and provide an opportunity to invite a visitor to a try new experience at each point. Stories may be repeated in a few areas, but with a different emphasis or perspective. A map of the Byway should be very visible at every stop with the stop highlighted. It should be easy to read and indicate mile-

The wayfinding system for Missouri Route 66 could consist of:

- Gateway signs
- Interpretive signs
- Identification signs
- Corridor map signs
- Kiosk signs
- Monument signs
- Street light and power pole banners
- Trail signs
Visitor Experience and Interpretation

Interpretation would center on overall Missouri Route 66 themes. Existing facilities, such as state welcome centers and others, would deliver interpretive messages and visitor orientation. More in-depth interpretive media would be used at select sites. These facilities would employ professional level interpretive techniques, including formal and multimedia programs, modern exhibits, signs, maps, and guidebooks. It is important to ensure consistency between interpretive sites.

Different portions of the Missouri Route 66 story would be emphasized at the various centers and interpretive sites. Visitors would need to visit several to gain an appreciation for the entire story and the significance of Route 66.

There would be a particular emphasis on the comprehensive history of the road and the understanding Route 66’s place in the development of transportation in the United States. Designated interpretive themes would be explored in structured programs at participating sites.

These themes would be coordinated over the whole route, and would be used in thematically consistent and widely available professional interpretive media. Brochures, maps, videos, guide books, and CD/DVD could be produced for distribution at the participating sites.
“Interpretative signage contributes to the overall integrity of a resource or area while promoting a sense of unity throughout the corridor.”