



WESTERN SKIES SCENIC BYWAY

Summer 2020 Newsletter

View from Nishna Bend Recreation Area
Rural Harlan, Shelby County
Photo by Lance Brisbois



Revival of the Sunday Drive

With the COVID-19 outbreak, much of our schedules went from jam-packed to uncommonly open. Some of us have been thriving on the additional time at home and with children, others are struggling with the challenging work-home-school balance, and still others are on the front lines at hospitals and essential businesses. Either way, vacations, sports outings, and trips to visit loved ones have been put on hold for the safety of ourselves and others. Because we are social animals and are so used to being on the go, many of us have been looking for creative ways to still safely “get away” in these

unprecedented times. One such way to do this is the return of the ‘Sunday Drive’. For those unfamiliar, the Sunday Drive was a relaxing Sunday afternoon cruise with the family. Often times, there was no particular destination and no set schedule. With gas prices the lowest they’ve been in years, and a reprieve from usually hectic schedules, this is a great time to bring that tradition back. The Western Skies Scenic Byway offers an excellent route for some close-to-home adventures. The 142-mile scenic byway was designated for its rolling hills and expansive skyline views. While unfortunate that

many of the museums and other attractions are not open for inside visitors, there’s still plenty to see from the comfort of your vehicle. Consider a historic church tour, a windmill-spotting competition, a hike in one of the great public areas, get a selfie with Albert the Bull or the Little Mermaid, or make a day of it and do all of the above! Many establishments are beginning to slowly open with restrictions, so if you call ahead for availability you can still enjoy a meal or a refreshment on your drive. You can find trip-planning resources at www.iowabyways.org and www.goldenhillsrccd.org/wssb.



Take a virtual museum tour



The social distancing guidelines and restrictions upon gatherings and business openings also affects non-profits and attractions such as the Museum of Danish America. However, just because you can't go visit the museum in person doesn't mean that you can't still learn about the Danish Immigrant heritage. The Museum of Danish America in Elk Horn can engage visitors online through a virtual tour of the museum, a series of videos, photos and text of the exhibits on display. The virtual tour allows you to 'walk' through the museum with your computer mouse as the guide. Videos are embedded at certain points throughout the museum, where you can learn more about the exhibit topics. To access the tour, simply visit the website at www.danishmuseum.org/virtual-tour and start exploring! To access the library of over 30 videos, in-depth information about exhibits, genealogy resources and more, visit www.danishmuseum.org/explore. Then, when the museum is able to open again, be sure to stop back for an in-person visit!



"Listen to the Wind"
by Hilde DeBruyne.
Guthrie Center

Byways of Iowa Public Art Initiative

The Byways of Iowa Public Art Initiative began in 2014 with an interest from Byway stakeholders across the state of Iowa to expand opportunities to experience authentic local art, culture, history, music, and food. The result was 16 art installations in 15 small communities along Iowa's scenic byways. Beginning with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and supported by a commitment from the Byways of Iowa Foundation to raise up to \$5,000 in matching funds for each project. over \$250,000 was raised through the support of over 100 private, local, state, and federal contributors for this project. With the help of local stakeholders, 11 Iowa artists were selected to create the public artworks. Western Skies Scenic Byway's installation is located at 307 Main Street in Guthrie Center (photo at left). You can learn more about the project on the Byways of Iowa Foundation website, www.bywaysofiowa.org/art.



Meet the staff: Lance Brisbois

Lance Brisbois has worked at Golden Hills RC&D since 2014. He has helped with many byway-related projects, but new this year he will be taking more of a leadership role with the Western Skies Scenic Byway. Lance is an excellent cell phone photographer, a prairie enthusiast, and loves hiking, biking, camping, paddling, and just about anything that he can do outdoors. He recently created a series of webpages for Western Skies Scenic Byway at www.goldenhillsrccd.org/wssb. If you have any suggestions for promotion of the byway and its attractions, please send Lance or Becca an email! lance@goldenhillsrccd.org or rebecca@goldenhillsrccd.org



AMERICA'S BYWAYS