



## **Illinois' Great River Road Receives Prestigious All American Road Designation**

Designation by the Federal Highway Administration will bring new attention to scenic byway

February 19, 2021

The Illinois Great River Road , which is part of a national scenic byway that runs 3,000 miles from Minnesota to Louisiana, has been designated an “All-American Road” by the Federal Highway Administration.

To receive an All-American Road designation, a road must possess multiple intrinsic qualities that are nationally significant and have one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere. The road or highway must also be considered a “destination unto itself.” That is, the road must provide an exceptional traveling experience so recognized by travelers that they would make a drive along the highway a primary reason for their trip. These roads are considered the very best of America’s National Scenic Byways. In 2020, out of 63 applications submitted, 49 byways in 28 states were designated, including 34 National Scenic Byways and 15 All-American Roads.

The Illinois section of the Great River Road covers 550 miles along Illinois’ western border from East Dubuque to Cairo. Communities along the byway include Galena, Savanna, Fulton, Rock Island, Moline, Nauvoo, Quincy, Grafton, Alton, Columbia, Waterloo, Maestown, Red Bud, Chester, and Cairo. It showcases everything from ancient cultures and modern breakthroughs to quaint downtowns and scenic views of the mighty Mississippi.

“The Illinois Great River Road is honored to receive the All American Road designation. It is a destination highway that allows visitors to explore how the mighty Mississippi has shaped our state and its people. The Great River Road tells the story of America’s history,” said Roger Carmack, Coordinator for the Great River Road in Illinois. “From big cities to small river towns, through historical sites and interpretive centers, the Great River Road lays out the history of our native people and immigrant communities, the river industry and transportation, agriculture and so much more. This designation gives credence to why so many people choose to experience the Great River Road every year.”

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC), a non-profit organization founded to preserve and improve the resources, viability and amenities of the Mississippi River Valley, hopes the All-American status will bring new attention to the Great River Road.

“More attention means more visitors to the 10 great states that line the Mighty Mississippi,” said Anne Lewis, Pilot of the MRPC. “More travelers equal more money spent in stores, restaurants, hotels and attractions, and that economic boost is absolutely vital to the communities of the Great River Road. We look forward to more road trips than ever in 2021!”

Created in 1938 and stretching for 3,000 miles through and beside 10 states, the Great River Road National Scenic Byway is the longest such designated roadway and one of the oldest. Travelers planning a journey along the road can [order a free 10-state Great River Road map](#), which shows the Great River Road’s route through all 10 states and highlights the interpretive centers along the way. Another helpful resource is the [Drive the Great River Road app](#), available for free Apple and Android devices. Travelers can plot their route along the Great River Road and find scenic overlooks, agritourism attractions, interpretive centers and more. For more detailed information, visit [experiencemississippiriver.com](#). You can also find The Great River Road on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).

Travelers interested in a journey along the Illinois portion of the byway can [download a visitor’s guide](#) and discover restaurants, lodging options, museums, outdoor recreation, and more at [greatriverroad-illinois.com](#). You can also find the Illinois Great River Road on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

CONTACT: Roger Carmack, Coordinator - Great River Road in Illinois, [rcarmack@macomb.com](mailto:rcarmack@macomb.com), 309.837.7460