

Kansas Byway designation change

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Kansas' Frontier Military Scenic Byway was re-designated as a historic byway recently to better reflect what visitors will find while traveling this Eastern Kansas byway. Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Secretary Deb Miller signed the re-designation at the request of the local byway committee.

The 168-mile Frontier Military Historic Byway is a north south route that begins in Leavenworth on K-7, traveling south through Leavenworth County through the Kansas City Metro counties of Wyandotte and Johnson on I-435 and US-69, continuing south on US-69 through Miami, Linn, Bourbon, Crawford and Cherokee counties, ending at the Kansas/Oklahoma border just south of Baxter Springs. The byway is in close proximity to the old Military Road, established in 1844 by General Winfield Scott to serve as a supply route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Gibson in Oklahoma. It was also used as a national roadway for military travel from Minnesota to Louisiana, along the Indian Territory to the West. The byway features homesteads and museums depicting life during the early settlement of Kansas and sites commemorating incidents from the turbulent times of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War. Riverfront, parks and wildlife areas along the route provide opportunities for families to enjoy hiking, birding, camping, fishing or hunting as well as the many wonderful eating and lodging establishments found in the byway communities.

"The byway's rich history and other intrinsic qualities provide travelers with a broad scope of opportunities to enjoy along the route and we feel stating the importance of history in our name will expand visitor's expectations as they travel our byway," said Amy Garton, chair of the Frontier Military Historic Byway.

The Kansas Legislature originally designated the Frontier Military scenic byway as the state's first scenic byway in 1990. With the establishment of the Kansas Scenic Byways program a few years later, KDOT brought this byway into the program as the Frontier Military Scenic Byway in 2002, a time when there was not an option for historic designation. The Kansas Byways program added the option of historic designation in 2008 and designated the Western Vistas Historic Byway in 2010. Along with these two historic byways, the Kansas Byways program has eight additional scenic byways

including two that carry national designation, the Flint Hills and Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byways.

The byway program is part of a national movement initiated by the Federal Highway Administration in 1991. Today, the program continues to identify and develop byways that offer outstanding scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational and/or archaeological values for the traveling public through America. The Kansas Byways are a collection of authentic road-based experiences that preserve the natural beauty and heritage of the state, stimulate economic prosperity through tourism and enhance the positive image of Kansas.

Information about all of the Kansas Byways is available at www.ksbyways.org or “like” Kansas Scenic Byways on Facebook. If you have questions about the program or would like byway brochures, contact Scott Shields, Kansas Byways State Coordinator at scottsh@ksdot.org or Sue Stringer, KDOT Public Involvement Liaison at stringer@ksdot.org or call 1-800-684-6966.

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700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.

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