

NEWS RELEASE

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Western Vistas Historic Byway first historic designation in Kansas

Logan, Scott and Wallace counties are home to the Western Vistas Historic Byway, the first designated historic byway in the state and the 10th Kansas byway to receive official designation from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

“The state designation will create greater awareness of the historical significance and scenic beauty of this area for visitors and spur interest in the communities along the route,” said Scott Shields, Kansas State Byways Coordinator.

To be designated as historic, a byway must have resources that are significant historically, be numerous, be visible and have a setting or character that is complementary to the resources.

“We are pleased that the addition of historic byways to our program prompted local interest to qualify for designation,” said Shields. “Western Vistas provides visitors a visual relationship between the history, landscape and structures that define the area, to promote tourism along with natural and cultural importance.”

The 102-mile route begins in Scott County at Scott City on U. S 83 and ends on U. S. 40 in Wallace County at Sharon Springs. The historic byway passes through Scott Lake State Park on K-95, returning to U.S. 83, then north to the U.S. 83/U.S. 40 intersection at Oakley in Logan County and west on U.S. 40 to Sharon Springs in Wallace County.

The byway offers opportunities for visitors to experience the El Quarteljo Pueblo ruins, view unique rock formations such as Monument Rocks and “Little Jerusalem” and explore the various cultures and events that played a central role in America’s western expansion. Western Vistas features seven National Historic sites and six museums as well as spectacular scenery and recreational activities. Additional opportunities to experience natural Kansas along the byway exist with the wide open vistas, the sighting of turkey, prairie dog, deer, buffalo or pronghorn and the natural scenery of Scott State Lake, just to mention a few of the features.

The state designation will result in the placement of route markers along the byway, creation of a promotional brochure and a page on the www.ksbyways.org Web site. Western Vistas Byway will also be placed on the national www.byways.org Web site. The byway will be eligible for National Scenic Byway grants to enhance the route for visitors.

Leadership Team Members of the Western Vistas Historic Byway who worked on the application included John Foster, Wallace County Economic Development Director, Barbi Winderlin, former Director, Travel and Tourism, Scott City and Raelene Keller, Director of Wild West Historical Foundation, Inc., Oakley with the assistance of numerous Committee Planning Team members from the area.

The Kansas Scenic Byways program identifies scenic and historic routes in the state and preserves, enhances and promotes the routes through a cooperative grassroots partnership. For additional information, contact Shields (785) 296-4149 or Sue Stringer, Kansas Scenic Byways Public Involvement Liaison, (800) 684-6966.