



## Trees are the answer!

From the Chairman:

Congratulations to Governor Taft for initiating the Ohio Bicentennial Tree Initiative. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and the Ohio Department of Transportation, along with the Environmental Protection Agency, are working in harmony to add significantly to the tree canopy in Ohio by the Year 2003.

One of the Bicentennial's most talked about programs is the Barn Painting Program. Barn painter Scott Hagan is painting the celebration's distinct red, white and blue logo on the side of barns around the state, the goal being to paint the logo on at least one barn in each of Ohio's 88 counties. In collaboration with this plan, Scenic Ohio suggests the Bicentennial Commission provide the native trees used to build these barns to each county for reforestation providing a supply of lumber to maintain and restore these barns in the future.

Since trees provide a substantial reduction in air pollution, Scenic Ohio proposes that a tree be planted for every citizen in the State of Ohio. This doable proposal would impact the scenic beauty and set the wheels in motion for perpetuating a planting program as a lasting legacy for generations to come. We offer our thanks and appreciation to Senator Priscilla Mead from Columbus for her valuable confidence in efforts toward succeeding with this goal. Contact Scenic Ohio if you can organize your community efforts in a tree planting program.

Cherie Lucks, Chairman, Scenic Ohio

**SCENIC SUMMIT  
ACTION FOR AMERICA'S  
COMMUNITIES,  
COUNTRYSIDE, AND PUBLIC LANDS**  
APRIL 21-24, 2002  
DENVER, CO

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### Scenic Ohio's efforts recognized again

The American Society of Landscape Architects has awarded Scenic Ohio the chapter's non-landscape architect's award for making a significant contribution to the natural and built environment of Ohio. Scenic Ohio was recognized for its efforts over the past 50 years in improving the function and appearance of Ohio's highway rest stops, restricting and eliminating billboards and advocating the use of wildflowers along the interstate.

## Scenic Ohio

...our mission is to  
preserve and enhance  
the scenic character of  
Ohio's communities and countryside.

- Promote Scenic Byways
- Protect open space
- Support highway beautification
- Encourage billboard control

Join us and help us protect your scenery

- 
- \_\_\_ \$20 Senior /Student
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Akron, Ohio 44372  
330/865-9715

Scenic Ohio is a not for profit 501 C(3)

## Will Ohio be rewarded for roadside efforts?

The Federal Highway Administration produces a quarterly newsletter, *Greener Roadside*. The Spring, 2001 edition recognizes those states which have achieved excellence in roadside vegetation. California, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia and Idaho were featured for highway plantings and restoration projects.

Recognition for outstanding projects come from photographs submitted to the editor before November 1, 2001. Rules can be found on its website: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/roadsides](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/roadsides). We understand that some outstanding projects have been completed in Ohio. Let's see if Ohio can be featured with next year's winners.

## Ohio's Scenic Byways: A Sunday drive any day!

By Sharon Strouse, Board Member, Scenic

The new Ohio Byway slogan captures the essence of the byway driving experience for all ages. This slogan will be used on interpretive and marketing materials. A traveling interpretive display depicting all the byways made its debut at the Ohio Hill Country Gathering in Nelsonville in Mid-June. A banner is being planned, and an accompanying map/brochure depicting the location of Ohio's 14 byways will be coming soon for byway travelers who want to travel and enjoy Ohio's Scenic Byways. A 10 to 20 minute slide show is also available. To request the use of the traveling interpretive display or slide show contact Ohio Byway Links Secretary Ken Baldwin at 330/666-1789 or Scenic Ohio at 330/865-9715 or the Scenic Ohio website at [scenicohio.org](http://scenicohio.org).

Paul Staley is the new state byway coordinator for ODOT. He met Friday, June 29, with an Ohio Byway Links representative at Camp Ohio near Utica. Ohio Byways Link has agreed to support a strategic planning process which Paul Staley has requested be completed to give new direction to the Ohio Byways Program. Representatives present at the June 29 meeting began the planning process. Other Ohio byways will receive an opportunity for input by mail.

The biannual National Scenic Byway meeting will be held in Portland, Oregon in August. Glenn Harper, representing the National Road Alliance, and I as representative of Ohio's Amish Country Byways are both making presentations at the conference.

## Have you checked out the Scenic Ohio Website lately?

Look for "BILLBOARDS IN AKRON, OHIO: A CONCERNED INVESTIGATION" on Scenic Ohio's website, [www.scenicohio.org](http://www.scenicohio.org), composed by Ben Stabler and Dana Williams, two graduate students from The University of Akron's Department of Geography and Planning.

The Scenic Ohio News is published by Scenic Ohio,  
Christine Freitag, Director.  
Scenic Ohio thanks  
Maggi Anderson  
for her assistance in editing our newsletters.

## Letter to the editor

March 30, 2001

Dear Chris,

After reading the Scenic Ohio News winter edition, I would like to suggest something to rid our highways of most billboards. To decrease the visual blight of billboard advertising along Ohio's highways I propose a 21st century alternative for getting the advertiser's message to the potential customer.

Instead of the visual billboards, which can be distracting to drivers sometimes, put the advertising on the radio using equipment similar to the highway and tourism information already in use. The short range broadcast stations could be located where billboards are now located so property owners would not lose income by having the signs removed. Messages from several advertisers could be broadcast from a single station, giving an audio impact similar to the visual of seeing several signs and choices, except the audio message will not overlap as some visual ones do.

Car radio manufacturers could modify their products and add a pushbutton and small light to the panel. The button, when in the "on" position, would allow the advertising to come on if the radio was off, or override the program playing if the radio was on. With button in the "off" position, the small light would come on when the radio was within the range of an advertiser's broadcast station to alert the driver to activate the radio if he/she is looking for an attraction, motel, restaurant, etc.

Do you think Scenic Ohio could get this ball rolling?

Dick Zeimer, Deersville, OH

Dear Dick,

Using a vehicle radio to eliminate the reason for billboards is a great idea. In response to Dick's letter, about 25 years ago, I heard of a company in Iowa that sold equipment that would give motorists the opportunity to turn their radio to a particular frequency, as announced on a small sign on the right-of-way. Motorists could listen to local advertising by various businesses located at the upcoming interchange. This would work for motorists approaching the interchange from either direction. I called the Iowa company and was told that it operated by burying a small wire in the roadbed.

This seemed rather expensive so I came up with another system using the vehicle's radio. It called for a low-range radio transmitter located at or near a highway interchange that would broadcast information about each service at that interchange. It would also broadcast interesting facts for tourists about the region. This system requires an aggressive national organization in the radio or advertising business to sell the radio time and operate the program. Ten seconds would give the motorist more information about a service than one could possibly read on a billboard 660 feet from the right-of-way.

Many conditions have changed in 25 years. Perhaps the timing now is such that a national organization could buy into the idea of using radio waves rather than destroy the outdoor beauty of this country.

F. Eugene Smith, Scenic Ohio Board of Trustees

### Billboards - Florida, ready to fight

By Sandra Smith, Board Member, Scenic Ohio

For the past 10-12 years the billboard industry in Florida has tried to weaken the power of citizens and their local governments to control billboards and tried to force taxpayers to pay them cash for billboard removal or alteration. Through the early warnings of the industry's schemes by Citizens for a Scenic Florida and Florida's newspapers, the industry's efforts have so far been stymied. Last year the billboard opponents were successful in having a transportation bill defeated which contained special interest language of the billboard industry

This spring the billboard industry was back again with another legislative assault on local government and scenic beauty. In late April, during the final meeting of the House Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations Committee, Rep. Randy Johnson-R rammed through an amendment to a transportation bill which would take away the ability of local governments to control billboards.

Local governments and civic organizations had no time to respond. However, in the ensuing weeks they pleaded with Governor Jeb Bush to veto the massive transportation bill that legislators had packed with over 200 special interest provisions - some good and some bad - including the restrictions on local governments' ability to regulate billboards. Fortunately, in mid June, Governor Bush vetoed the bill which will not come up again for six months when the legislature reconvenes in January, 2002. In the meantime, anti-billboard groups will be working behind the scenes on a major offensive effort to successfully combat the billboard industry's powerful lobby and have the damaging amendments removed.

## Letter to the editor, part II

April 12, 2001

Dear Christine,

Although I agree that most, perhaps almost all, large billboards should be banned from Ohio, billboards are not the major issue. A more important issue is urban sprawl and unwise development within the viewshed of Ohio Roads. I ask you what good is it to ban billboards along a scenic stretch of road and then see cookie cutter housing developments or a sprawling mega-mall built along the road.

I am not saying that houses, factories and stores should not be built and should be restricted to certain areas. Of course that is not politically possible. The recourse is to purchase land or scenic easements within the viewshed or to accept donations of land or easements. Scenic Ohio should start an allied organization that would accept donations of land or easements within the highway and byways viewsheds and would also try to raise money to purchase land or easements.... Money to be used for purchasing land and easements could come from various sources:

- Federal and state grants.
- Private foundations.
- Cash donations from corporations and individuals.

True, there are land trusts in Ohio, but there is no land trust that specializes in preserving road viewsheds. Scenic Ohio should be the organization that starts an allied organization that specializes in preserving road viewsheds. In closing I agree that billboards are a problem but they are only a small part of the problem relating to the destruction of scenery along Ohio's roads.

Richard Berg  
Garfield Heights, OH

Scenic Ohio thanks Jeff Holland, Medina Summit Land Conservancy for answering this letter.  
Medina Summit Land Conservancy  
330/722-7313  
mslc@nls.net  
Chris Bunch, Executive Director  
For information about additional land conservancy groups in Ohio contact:  
Land Trust Alliance  
1331 H. Street NW, #400  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
202/638-4725

Dear Richard,

The question seems to be: What is the best way to preserve scenic, natural beauty along public roads in Ohio? The best tool is the conservation easement; the best vehicle is a land trust; and the fuel you need is money and time.

First, the tool. Conservation easements are the most powerful legal tool available today for the permanent preservation of natural and rural land. To best understand the conservation easement, consider a more familiar concept: the utility easement.

A power line runs through a field. The owner of that field still owns the land under the power lines. He can still farm the land, sell it, subdivide it, or give it away in his will. He has, however, given up certain rights. The right to cut down the utility poles, for instance. And he can't chase power company employees off the land when they arrive to repair the wires. The easement stays in place even after the original owner dies or sells the land.

A conservation easement works the same way, except that the owner gives up different rights in order to limit the uses of the property to protect its best natural features. Conservation easements are extremely flexible. Each can be specially tailored to the individual property and to the needs of the landowner. Easements can be written to preserve anything from active farmland to a pristine nature reserve. Remember, the landowner retains ownership, and the property is not opened up for public use. But if our purpose is to preserve scenic beauty from a road, we don't care.

Now, the vehicle. A conservation easement is meaningless unless it is held by an organization that is willing and able to enforce its terms. I recommend a "land trust" or "land conservancy". (I prefer the term "conservancy", since a land trust is not really a "trust".) A land conservancy is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Its sole purpose is to preserve rural land. It is made up of and run by people who live in and around the community being preserved. A land conservancy is not part of any government agency or park district (although they can work in cooperation with either). This means that they are less subject to the whims of the political wind. The sole purpose for the existence of the conservancy is the protection of rural or natural land.

There are more than 1200 land conservancy organizations nationwide protecting more than 4 million acres. Many communities in Ohio have good, established land conservancies ready to take on new land protection projects. An organization could be established to focus solely on scenic easements in areas not currently covered by an existing land conservancy; but it would be a mistake to pass by an existing organization if one is available.

Finally, the fuel. There is no substitute for money and time. Even easements that are donated must be monitored and enforced into the distant and unknowable future. Organizations that take on such responsibilities must do so with a realistic plan in place.

Jeff Holland, Medina Summit Land Conservancy

## TREES, a valuable asset

The Garden Club of America has received a gift of \$50 million dollars to establish a foundation for the reforestation of Washington D.C. The city's tree canopy has declined by 64 % since the 1970s. The foundation will inventory, plant trees and maintain them.

Here in Ohio, to celebrate our 200th birthday in the year 2003, Governor Robert Taft has initiated The Bicentennial Tree Initiative to be managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources under the direction of the Division of Forestry. To enhance the Governor's Initiative, Scenic Ohio would like the Governor to plant a tree for every citizen of Ohio. That daunting task will only work if efforts are made by all of us. Good examples of tree plantings, other than ODNR's that could be counted towards fulfilling this goal could be volunteer efforts to protect streams through Natureworks Streambanking funding, the reforesting projects of Nature Conservancy to help offset carbon dioxide emissions, communities like Akron who have not only taken advantage of the Bicentennial Tree Initiative [They received \$20,000 and planted 370 trees] but have included highway plantings in their capital budget.

We all know the benefits that trees have on our physical health, but have we considered the benefits to our mental health. Roger S. Ulrich, Associate Dean for Research at Texas A&M has published several papers on this subject including The Role of Trees in Human Well-Being and Health [available from Scenic Ohio]. Ulrich's research goes back to ancient Rome and the poet Virgil who described the restorative well being of leaving the congestion and noise of the city for rural nature. The great landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted wrote about stress associated with "modern" life. Trees and nature bring "tranquility and rest to the mind" [1870]. Quoting several studies which have been done exploring aesthetics and vegetation he concludes, "Findings from studies of stress as well as unstressed individuals suggest that many scenes dominated by trees foster restoration because they elicit positive feelings; reduce negatively toned emotions such as fear, anger, and sadness; effectively hold interest; and accordingly, might block or reduce stressful thoughts".

Trees hold economic value as well as benefits for our health and welfare. In Akron, a study of trees in 1996 placed their value at 39 million dollars: an investment worth protecting. Scenic Ohio believes that every community should inventory their trees, plant new trees and guarantee their maintenance. The Washington D.C. Casey Foundation is an example of a good investment in the long lasting beauty and health

## Profile of Scenic Ohio board member, F. Eugene Smith

By Christine Freitag, Director, Scenic Ohio



Gene Smith has presented his ugliness show, "Why Ugly? Why Not?", at his expense, to hundreds of people from coast to coast. More than 700 organizations, universities, churches, designers, architects, numerous clubs and city planners have seen it. Gene, an industrial designer, has made

fighting ugliness his crusade.

In the 70s Gene tried to rent a billboard from Naegele Outdoor Advertising Co. with the message "Beautify Akron. Ban Billboards." Naegele's representative refused to rent him a billboard with that message. Later that summer, at a fund raising auction, Gene was the highest bidder for a Naegele billboard. Again Naegele refused to post his message, "Beautify Akron. Ban Billboards". On the basis that he had paid for the billboard, Naegele had a monopoly on billboards in Akron and there was no other way he could post his message and the message was lawful and reasonable, Gene filed suit. Then in October, Naegele sued Gene for \$280,000, charging that he was campaigning to destroy their business. They later dropped their suit. Gene did not get his billboard but drew attention to his goal, the proliferation of billboards in Ohio.

Gene has always maintained he is not opposed to signs and every business has the right to identify itself but not the right to deface the community. He has campaigned against billboards because "It is the only industry that is not trying to improve urban ugliness. How ironic, that we have to die before we can be surrounded by beauty." He maintains that people today grow up with ugly commercialism and don't see the ugliness.

The winner of numerous awards, Gene's firm, Design Management Inc. has assisted clients with design related decisions and activities world-wide. Closer to home he is known for his design work for Akron's famous West Point Market, Quaker Square in downtown Akron and for the historic restoration of Medina, Ohio, Deland and Fernandina Beach, Florida.

Gene has been an inspiration for many organizations. He served on the board of Scenic America and helped found Scenic Ohio, originally the Ohio Roadside Council.

# Finally... a good looking sound wall?

By Christine Freitag, Director, Scenic Ohio

**Evergreen** is a precast concrete design with units that can be planted with native vegetative materials. We first heard about them from friends who saw them in Europe. They are widely used in Austria, South Africa, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Germany. They can also be seen in Sweden, Belgium, and Canada. We decided to look into their use in this country and found they are here but have been used primarily as retaining walls. They can be found in Connecticut, Puerto Rico, Wisconsin, California, N.J.-Parkway, Chesapeake N.Y., Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont, none in Ohio.

It is a wall that appears to be both functional and aesthetically pleasing and worth exploring because with carefully selected native plant material they grow to become a living green wall. Their use as a sound wall, however, can be a problem. A landscape architect who Scenic Ohio considers an authority on sound wall design, has seen these walls in use. As a freestanding wall, he says, plant material is apt to dry out. As a retaining wall with dirt behind it, plant material has a much better chance of receiving enough moisture. The Blue Route in Philadelphia is a good example of this. Both retaining walls and freestanding were used. With the freestanding walls desiccation was a problem.

These walls are lovely compared to the walls we see in Ohio. We suggest that ODOT consider using these in situations where conditions are right.

Parkway Retaining Wall - Post Construction



Five Years Later



Information about Evergreen  
is available from:

Kistner Concrete Products, Inc.  
8713 Read Road, P.O. Box 218  
East Pembroke, New York 14056  
716/ 762-8216 (Fax:716/ 762-8315)  
<http://www.kistner.com>

**“One day even human beings will  
discover that beauty is a biological  
necessity.”**

**Robert Hart, *Forest Gardening***

*Submitted by Edward McMahon, Director of the  
Conservation Fund’s “American Greenways  
Program” and former president of Scenic America.*

## Brief notes from Scenic America

- \* Representative Mark Udall, D- Colorado, has introduced HR 1739, the Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth Study Act. This bill requires the federal government to study its role in contributing to sprawl. Through a series of hearings around America, the federal government will learn if its actions have worsened the impact of sprawl. The study will bring a fresh perspective to the federal agencies accountability and make them a better partner in efforts to protect our scenic beauty. Scenic Ohio encourages you to ask your representatives to cosponsor HR 1739 and support its passage through Congress.
- \* Dover, Delaware - On June 14, Governor Ruth Ann Minner signed the first of six legislative bills integral to her Livable Delaware agenda. The bill [Senate Bill 105] creates the Livable Delaware Advisory Council on Planning Coordination, a council charged with addressing sprawl, congestion and other growth issues in the state. Minner sites traffic congestion, accelerated air and ground water pollution...decrease in natural habitat as the reasons to implement the bills designed to stall sprawl in Delaware.
- \* West Jefferson, Ohio - A draft Corridor Management Plan will be released. This draft plan is part of the process of having the National Road, US 40, designated as a National Scenic Byway. The plan is "a set of strategies designed to guide the development, marketing, interpretation and preservation for long term actions", according to a newsletter on the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) issued recently by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. [Scenic Ohio encourages the Historic Preservation Office to work with the State of Ohio Department of Transportation to prevent the proliferation of billboards by not issuing permits as they did in Holmes County as that byway group waited 20 months for ODOT to approve its Scenic Byway Management Plan.]
- \* Billings, Montana- Speaking at the Western Heritage Center, June 5, 2001, Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation called "Downtown" the key to limiting sprawl. One solution to sprawl that has worked nationwide is revitalization of older, downtown areas. "Sprawl is the disinvestments of people and commerce from our cities." In addition to eating up open space, sprawl has "left the core of our cities at risk."
- \* Scenic America has approved in draft form a new policy toward its affiliate and associate organizations. To better educate our members about beautification issues across the country, it will be sending to all our Scenic Ohio contributors its publication Viewpoints.
- \* Winter Park, Florida - What looks like a giant redwood growing on the outskirts of Winter Park is actually a 10-story cell phone tower with fake branches, leaves and bark. Nextel Communications built the tree which looks so real it has even fooled an osprey.

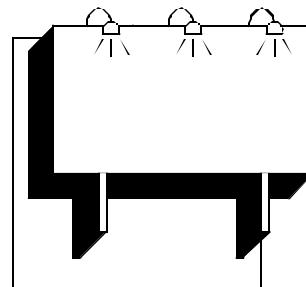
### From Scenic North Carolina:

The organization requested the NC state DOT consider adding a fourth logo for attractions and they agreed to do so. In 1977, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved expanding the "logo" program. This change is reflected in Section 2F of the new version of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), released by FHWA in December 2000.

F. Eugene Smith points out that the intent of logo signs was to eliminate the need for billboards. Ohio ended the possibility of removing the hundreds of non-conforming billboards when the Ohio Legislators removed amortization from the Ohio Revised code in 1998, thereby requiring the billboard industry to be compensated for billboard removal. This subject was covered in Gene's article in our WINTER 2000 newsletter.

### And from Scenic Michigan:

Scenic Michigan led the fight to protect Holland, Michigan's 1994 ordinance to ban new billboards. Holland, Michigan recently received a positive ruling from the Michigan Supreme Court. The high court decided unanimously against Adams Outdoor Advertising in favor of the City of Holland Sign Ordinance to regulate billboards under the Home Rule Cities Act.



SCENIC OHIO THANKS YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.  
THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF SUPPORTERS SINCE  
NOVEMBER, 2000:

Akron Garden Club	Leaf & Blossom Garden Club
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David Beach	Nancy & Bill McGrath
Tracy Bieser	Gary Meisner
Alexander Bobersky	Dick Meyers
Margaret Brideweser	David Minc
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