

HISTORIC ROUTE 20

Iowa



A Study by the Historic US Route 20 Association, INC April 2017







1926 US HIGHWAY SHIELD

1960 - Present US HIGHWAY SHIELD

HISTORIC ROUTE 20 SIGN

Welcome!

Since 2014, the Historic US Route 20 Association has traveled across lowa, meeting with various Visitors Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Cities, Economic Development offices and more to discuss traveling US Route 20 and the designation of the original 1926 highway alignment as Historic Route 20.

This study is a outcome of our recent visits, follow-ups and details for the future.

Prepared by Bryan Farr - President, Historic US Route 20 April 24, 2017



INTRODUCTION



- Purpose to designate and recognize the original 1926 alignment of US Route 20 as a State "Historic Route/Highway" in the State of Iowa.
- Objective to promote travel & tourism and economic development by placing wayfinding signs (Historic Markers) on the original 1926 alignments of US Route 20 in Iowa.

Goals -

- To work with the 13 counties and 35 towns and cities on the former US 20 in Iowa to erect Historic Route 20 signs on their respective sections of highway.
- To increase travel and tourism on the former US 20 across lowa
 - Bring people back into the small towns
- To connect with other communities and states that are on US Route 20
- To make Historic Route 20 a tourist destination, similar to the iconic Route 66



The Historic US Route 20 Association, Inc.

- A 501 (c) 3 Non Profit organization founded in 2012, recognized Public Charity and Economic Development
- Federal EIN 46-0837490
- We aim to promote travel & tourism and economic development on the original 1926 alignment of US Route 20 across the United States by working with local communities, economic development offices, visitor's bureaus and chamber's of commerce.
- We work in a grassroots effort by visiting and encouraging locations to become a part of the organization
 - Historic US Route 20 would act as the organization to work with each town in Iowa
 - We promote the highway via social media, brochures and working with other travel and tourism associations
- Economic development tool We offer our signs as a uniform tool to tie in Historic Route 20 across America
 - Towns, Businesses, Organizations
- Our research indicates tourists want to take the original 1926 Historic Alignment and not bypasses or 4 lane highways













A Brief History



- Pre- 1925
 - Dubuque est. 1788, Sioux City est. 1857
 - Railroad slowly built to connect Dubuque to Sioux City would become the Illinois Central RR.
 - The Dragged Road built near and along the RR in 1910
 - U.S. Grant Highway established in 1916
 - Dragged Road becomes Hawkeye Highway in 1917
 - Hawkeye Highway –Dubuque to Fort Dodge
 - Hawkeye Highway Cut-Off Ft. Dodge to Sioux City
 - The Atlantic Yellowstone Pacific Road (AYP) connected Chicago to YNP.
 - lowa "type" concrete roads built 1921
 - 8" Thick, 20ft wide, 1ft curb raised 3"

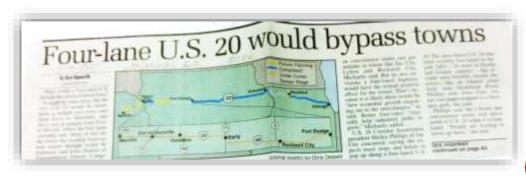






1925-Present

- Congress approves Federal Highway Act to improve roads
- Iowa designates the Dubuque-Sioux City Route to become a Federal Highway (June 1925)
 - Route 20 was not built, but connected existing routes.
- US 20 designation given in November 1925
- Approved in 1926, new shields placed on route.
- Iowa reconfigures and realigns many state highways in 1930.
- Plans to straighten 20 between Sioux City & Moville -1941
- Plans to build 4 Lane Route 20 begins 1951.
- Construction stalled between 1991-2000
- Final 40 miles to be completed by 2018





FACTS OF US ROUTE 20



National

- Length 3,365 Miles
- Longest highway in USA
- 12 States
- Eastern End Boston, MA
- Western End Newport, OR
- Lowest Elevation Hudson River at Albany, NY 0 Feet
- Highest Elevation Sylvan Pass, Yellowstone NP 8350 Feet



Newport





lowa

- Length 333 Miles
- Longest highway in lowa (based on 1926 Historic mileage)
- 13 Counties / 36 Towns and Cities
- Eastern End Mississippi River, Dubuque
- Western End Missouri River, Sioux City
- Lowest Elevation Mississippi River at Dubuque 585 feet
- Highest Elevation Near Schaller 1485 feet



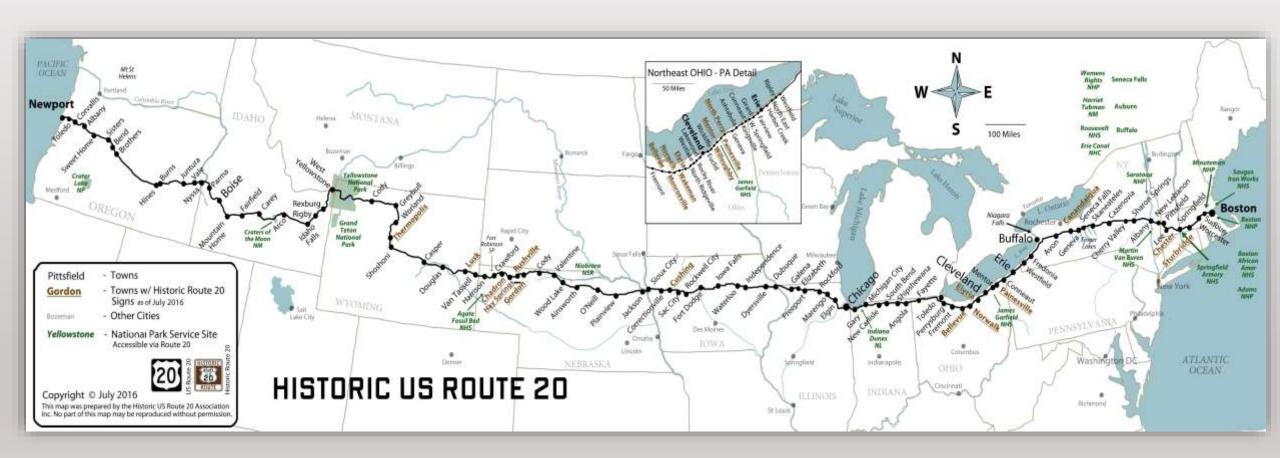
Dubuque

Sioux City



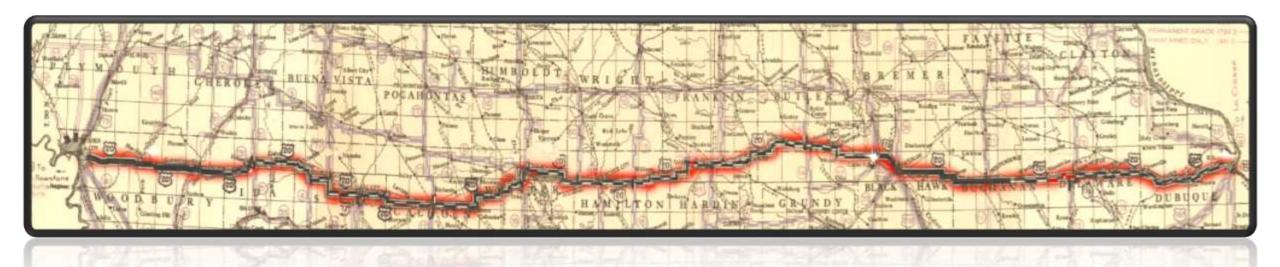


US Route 20 Across The United States





1927 IOWA HIGHWAY MAP



Taken from the official State of Iowa Highway Map from 1927. The alignment of US Route 20 is enhanced in red. This map is used as verification and proof of the original alignment across Iowa. The map was used to create the updated maps in the appendix.





RELOCATING HIGHWAY 20

- Relocating Highway 20 began in 1952
- Purpose to increase commerce, improve the agricultural industry as a viable alternative between Interstates 80 and 90.
 - 100 Miles shorter to Chicago Via US 20 than I 80.
- Began as 18 mile 4 lane project between Sioux City
 Moville
 - Road was called a "death trap".
- Many towns had speed limits of 25 mph = slow travel
 - Constant speed up/slow down





- WHY HISTORIC ROUTE 20 IN IOWA?
 - Since 1952, the State of Iowa has been progressing to reroute US 20 to a 4 lane highway across the state.
 - Town identity with Route 20.
 - Modern travelers unaware of Old 20 Highway 20 - take black & white



- Historic Route not easy to follow not marked.
- Would be longest highway in Iowa.
- Great for hikers, bikers and motorists – not in a hurry.
- Brings people back into downtowns
- both small and large.
- Connects other Historic Route 20 locations.





TOWN IDENTITY WITH HIGHWAY 20

- Many towns had an association being located on Highway 20 in Iowa. It was an identity that many towns had pride in. Murals & signs depicted locations on 20. Businesses incorporated the "20" in their names.
- The relocation of Highway 20 resulted in towns "losing an identity". People who leisure drive or visit would take the new 20. While traffic studies indicate an increase in traffic on the 4 Lane 20, the smaller towns are considered bypassed.
- Much of the former alignment has been relegated to a county highway with no reference to 20, such as County Route D-36 and has no consistency across the state.



 A Historic Route 20 designation would be culturally significant to many communities and to the state.



HIGHWAY OR ROUTE?

- Highway and Route are used interchangeably across US 20
- From MA to PA many will use Route, but say it Root
- From PA to IL many will use Route, but say it Rout
- From IA to OR the term Highway is used over Route
- At times the simple form US 20 is used

For purposes of continuity and uniformity, the term **Historic Route** will be used across the United States and in Iowa





HISTORIC ROUTE 20 SIGNS



Features

- Original 1926 Shield design
- Brown Background Historic
- Highly Reflective
- Highway Grade



- Sizes
 - 24"x 30"
 - Min of 2 per Town
 - Facing East/West
 - Required on State DOT Highway Segments
 - 12"x 24"
 - for reassurance in towns & local highways
 - display in storefronts, shops, etc.





PLACEMENT OF HISTORIC ROUTE SIGNS

- Minimum 2 large signs per town
 - Facing east & west
- Large signs only allowed on lowaDOT highways (City, County Routes can use small reassurance signs)
- Ensure smooth and complete travel
 - Turn by turn
 - Guidance through cities
- Signs should be placed in a safe location
 - Tourists like to stop and take pics
- Recommended locations are provided by the organization.
- Locations will be noted on our website and each sign will have a QR code placed on it for identification and scanning.





Ackley

Original 1926 Alignment with 1930-2003 alignment



Modern map with highlighted original alignment of US Route 20

Original alignment based on IOWA Highway Map of 1927 & Huebinger's Hawkeye Highway www.iowadot.gov/maps/msp/historical/pdf/1927-front.pdf

Map Copyright @ 2016 - The Historic US Route 20 Association Inc.

Basemap @ OpenStreetMap contributors

SIGN STUDY

- The Historic US Route 20 Association will complete a sign study for an entity interested in promoting Historic Route 20.
- Membership to the organization is appreciated to complete the study. (See membership)
- The sign study will detail:
 - The original 1926 alignment
 - Recommended sign locations
 - Turn by turn directions
 - History of the road/changes
- The original 1926 alignment connects the most towns. Other later alignments may be considered.

Note: Numbers on this map indicate placement of signs, detailed further in study





Sac County, Iowa Original 1926 Alignment Preliminary Map



Map of Sac County. Iowa showing the original 1926 alignment of US Route 20 in Brown. The Historic US Route 20 Association's mission is to promote travel on the original alignment where it still exists. Signage would be placed at the turns to guide travelers and tourists on the proper alignment. This map is based on the 1927 Iowa State Highway Map. In Sac County, promoting travel on the original highway keeps tourists who wish to follow the 1926 alignment off of the present Hwy 20 and into more towns.

Map Copyright @ 2016 - The Historic US Route 20 Association Inc.

SIGN STUDY

PART 2

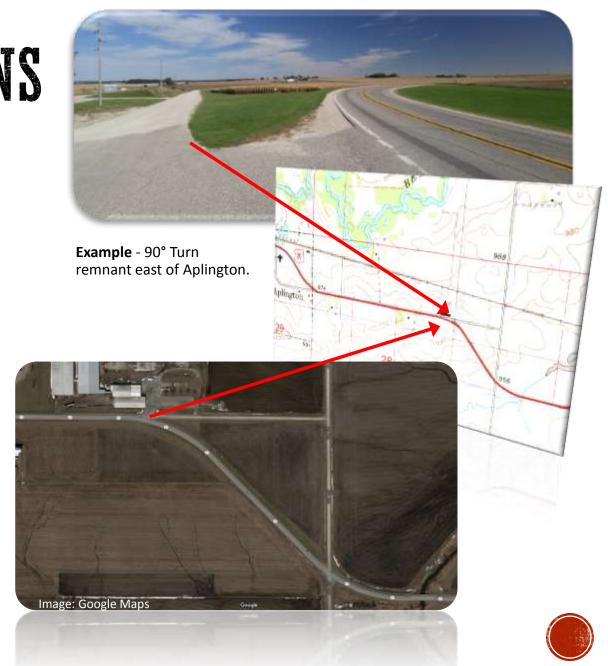
- We can also prepare a study for an entire county or just a city.
- We can offer a presentation to detail our efforts with a community.
- We request the local area to participate by submitting a town history, the best local attractions and how you want to be viewed by the traveler.
- Even though signs will only be placed on the original alignment - the culture of Route 20 can extend beyond the highway. A business just off the highway or attraction may be included.
 - Our guide books and website will indicate taking a tour of the downtowns off the main Historic Route.

Note: The letters correspond to sign placement recommendations. "A" is for large and letters are for smaller reassurance or turns.



ELIMINATED 90° TURNS

- 90° turns were very common on the old roads in Iowa.
- To eliminate stops and dangerous turns, many 90° turns were straightened for smooth traffic flow.
- We consider these 90° remnants the original historic highway. They are recognized on maps and in literature.
- Due to the number of straightened turns in lowa, Historic Route signs will be optional on these sections.
- The traveler will be alerted to these turns in printed guides and it will be their option as to the route traveled.



IOWA DOT REQUIREMENTS



- lowaDOT is requesting and requiring ALL towns, cities & counties where the historic alignment passed to submit a resolution to agree to place Historic Route 20 signs on their sections of highway, whether it is state maintained or local.
- The state is looking for continuity if traffic is diverted from the current Route 20, the path back or across lowa needs to be complete.
- lowaDOT will grant Historic Route status to the entire route if the required resolutions are received.

- Towns may put up signs without State approval on non lowaDOT highways. i.e. local, county, city roads with local permissions.
- Any IowaDOT maintained highways must wait until their designation is granted. i.e. Iowa 57, current US 20
- All signs and installation, including maintenance, will be the responsibility of the local entity interested and not lowaDOT.
- IowaDOT will only allow large signs on the State highways.



POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

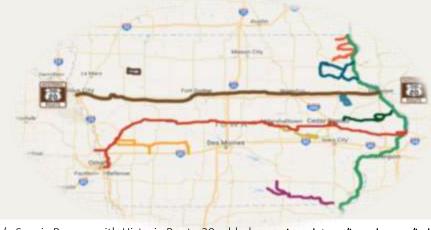
- Over 4.3 million visitors spent \$1.06 billion in 2015
- 55% are first time visitors
 - 79% stay overnight
 - 84% stay in hotels, B&Bs or campgrounds
 - 2.9 nights is the average state along the route
 - Typical party is one to 2-3 adults & 3 children
 - 51% of visitors come from outside the highway area
 - 40% of visitors come from other states
 - 3% come from outside the country
 Historic Route 20 has recorded travelers coming from Canada, UK, Australia, Germany, Austria.

* Information from the 2015 Economic Impact Study of the Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor. Based along the 427 mile long, 11 county PA Route 6 Alliance.

Route 6 is the second longest highway in the United States. It shares similar cultural ideals and is used as a model for Historic Route 20

CREATING TOURISM

- Historic Route 20 can easily tie in and connect with other tourist routes.
 - Great River Road Scenic Byway
 - Loess Hills Scenic Byway
 - Lewis & Clark Trail
 - Historic Route 6 Iowa
 - Lincoln Highway
- Placement on the State's travel website as a Historic Trail Route







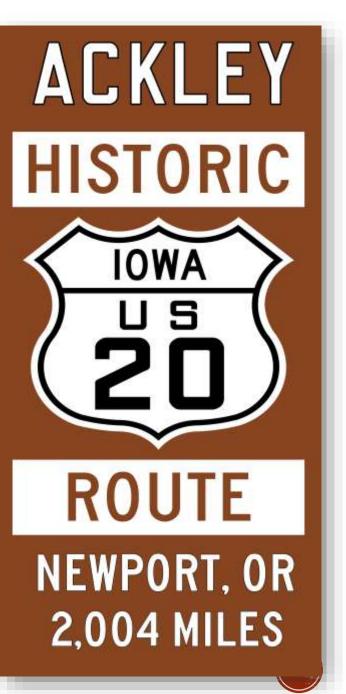


Iowa's Scenic Byways with Historic Route 20 added. www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/index.aspx

POLE BANNERS

- Pole Banners are used in nearly every community.
- Conversation Piece
 - Town Name
 - Distance Between
 - Boston, MA
 - Newport, OR
- Can be made into larger signs, posters, magnets, etc.





PRESERVATION

- We aim to preserve the history and cultural significance of Historic Route 20.
 - An original 1920s concrete highway exists between Sioux City and Moville.
 - A small section in Cushing was lost (destroyed in 2015)
 - Provide support and advocacy for sites along Historic Route 20
- Establish a local lowa Historic Route 20 branch, office and museum.





- We aim to work with historical societies, museums and other groups to preserve history.
- Promoting established mom and pop businesses, small stores and museums, help bring dollars to the local economy and sustainability.



CENTENIAL CELEBRATION - 2026

- 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of the US Highway system.
- States such as Illinois are preparing major tourism plans to promote travel on Route 66 in 2026.
- Route 20 is a viable alternative to Route 66
- lowa should embrace Route 20's historic significance in the state and country
- Completed Historic Route 20 signage would enhance and allow for a larger celebration in Iowa and across the United States
- Events across 20 could be planned to encourage travel in conjunction with other states.
- Potential for great marketing ideas



EMBRACE HISTORIC ROUTE 20

- Historic Route 20 is just not a road sign on the side of a highway.
 We aim to remain active in the community and have the community embrace their location on the historic route.
- Promotional materials should include:
 - Phrases such as "We're on Historic Route 20"
 - Highlighting the route on maps & guides
 - Place small signs in windows, buildings
 - Create their own brand of Historic 20
 - Kiosks with town & route history
 - Participate in a passport program
 - Re-create the culture of being on Route 20
- Contribute and update events calendar on the Historic Route 20 webpage - www.historicUS20.com



Signs placed on a winery that was a gas station in New York.

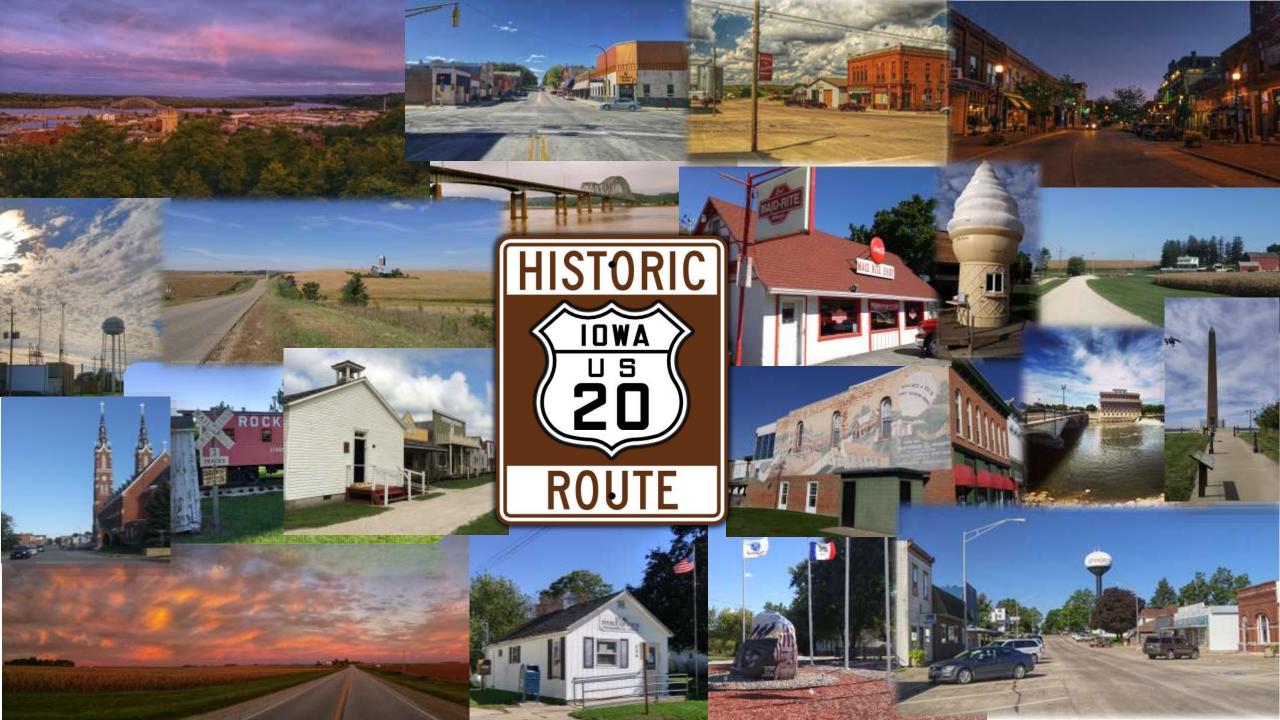


Signs placed in window of a shop in Ohio.

FUTURE ON HISTORIC 20

- Signs in every Historic Route 20 community.
- Historic Route 20 guide signs on 4 lane 20
- Historic Route 20 Guide Book
- Work with Iowa Tourism
- An active Historic Route 20 Association lowa Branch
- Yearly Historic 20 meetings
- Annual events
 - Road Trip across Historic 20
 - Fairs & Festivals





CONTACTS

Historic US Route 20 Association Inc.

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(617) 733-5796 <u>www.historicUS20.com</u> www.facebook.com/historicroute20



Active Iowa Member Contacts

(August 2017)

Sac County Economic & Tourism Development

Brandy Ripley (712) 664-2940 briplry@saccountyiowa.com

Ackley Economic Development (641) 373-0114 ackleydevelopment@gmail.com

References

Sioux City Journal Article: http://bit.ly/2ozfdsZ

Radio Iowa:

http://www.radioiowa.com/2016/09/30/highway-20-association-encourages-visits-to-small-towns/

Active Iowa Members

(August 2017)

Dubuque County Tourism
Cedar Falls CVB
Ackley EDC
Sac County EDC
Woodbury County Rural EDC
Iowa Falls Chamber/Main St
Sac City Main St
City of Cushing
City of Correctionville
Calhoun County EDC
Ida County EDC

Contacted & Interested

(August 2017)

Parkersburg EDC
Webster City Chamber of Commerce/Tourism
Eastern Iowa Tourism
Western Iowa Tourism
Waterloo CVB
City of Dyersville
Delaware County EDC & Tourism

