



# THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

## **Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership Collaborates with Illinois State University Grad Students to Build Navigation App**

The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership has taken the first step in developing a navigation app that will help travelers journey across the country on Historic Route 66 with a mobile app.

The GPS-based app has several purposes, including:

- Helping people navigate Route 66 across the country, finding important waypoints in the process
- Enhancing economic development along Route 66 by promoting sites, attractions and events found there
- Educating travelers about the history of Route 66

Using GPS technology to provide turn-by-turn, real-time directions, the app will also provide several themed travel itineraries. The itineraries will include geographically organized information, categorized by each of the eight states located along the famous roadway.

The Road Ahead's Promotion Working Group began discussions with faculty and graduate students in Illinois State University's (ISU) Arts and Technology Program in the fall of 2017 to design and develop the app. The goal was to explore the feasibility of using current technology to not only make finding the route easier, but to also educate and inform travelers about the history, cultural importance, and travel experiences available on Route 66. A prototype was completed and demonstrated at the end of the year. The Route 66 Navigation App is projected to launch in May 2019 with the first two of several travel itineraries. ISU is working with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) and the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership to develop the "American Indian and Route 66" travel itinerary. This specific itinerary will introduce and raise awareness of Tribal history and culture along Route 66. To ensure Tribal voices and stories are included in the navigation app, AIANTA is calling

on Tribes to recommend key destinations, locations, and annual activities and events for inclusion. The second itinerary under development is the “Green Book” itinerary. The Road Ahead’s Green Book Task Force already has access to these sites on a database provided by the National Parks Service. The Green Book itinerary is designed to help people travel to the still existing sites, and to raise awareness of this important aspect of Route 66 history.

“The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership believes all Americans can find their stories along Route 66, which is why it is important the Green Book and American Indian itineraries are included,” said Road Ahead Board Chairman Bill Thomas.

Additional itineraries under consideration for future implementation include an RV travel aid and a directory of recommended hotel and motel properties.

The app will be part of a set of traveler resources made accessible to the public on the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership’s website at [www.rt66roadahead.com](http://www.rt66roadahead.com) including: Jerry McLanahan’s *Route 66 EZ Guide*, the *Route 66 Ultimate Guide* navigation app developed by Scott McCoy, *Route 66 Navigation* created by Marian Pavel, River Pilot’s Garmin-based *Route 66 GPS Attractions Guide* , and more.

Established in 2015, with the support of the National Park Service and the World Monuments Fund, The Road Ahead Partnership’s mission is to revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national and international icon through partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research and education, and economic development.

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