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**SECOND ANNUAL ROUTE 66 MILES OF POSSIBILITY CONFERENCE OCTOBER 20-23
IN BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL, IL**

The Second Annual Route 66 Miles of Possibility Conference will be held in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois from October 20-23. As with the inaugural event last year in Edwardsville, the conference will feature several informative speakers covering a variety of topics related to Route 66, as well as many fun activities.

The festivities begin on Thursday evening, October 20th, with a Hot Dog Roast at Sprague's Super Service Station located at 305 Pine Street in Normal. The Tudor-Revival style building was built in 1931 on Route 66, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Town of Normal recently purchased the building to continue the restoration.

Conference sessions begin with a keynote speaker on Friday, October 21st at The Chateau Hotel and Conference Center, 1601 Jumer Drive, Bloomington, then move to Downtown Bloomington. Friday evening is the 90th birthday celebration for Route 66, which includes a dinner and dance party at the Eagle's Club, 313 S. Main, Bloomington. Route 66 Hall of Fame members will be recognized by Steve Nalefski, McLean County representative of the Route 66 Association of Illinois. Entertainment includes a local band favorite, Wagon Load a Trouble, and stand-up comedy by Terri Ryburn, who is also the conference organizer.

On Saturday, October 22nd, the conference continues with the second keynote speaker at The Chateau Hotel and Conference Center. Conference sessions will be held once again in Downtown Bloomington at the McLean County Museum of History/Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center and the Ensenberger Building. A Route 66 Normal Short Film Festival takes place Saturday evening at the Normal Theater, 209 North Street, Normal.

On Sunday, October 23rd, a number of activities will be offered for conference attendees. A bus tour to Pontiac and Atlanta, Illinois will be led by Route 66 historian, author and preservationist, John Weiss. A Haunted Route 66 tour in Downtown Bloomington, will be guided by Deborah Senger from Spirits of Bloomington/Timeless Presentations, the author of an upcoming book entitled, "Haunted Bloomington-Normal, Illinois". The 10th Anniversary showing of the Disney movie "Cars" will also be shown at the Normal Theatre that day.

Over 25 speakers and presenters will be highlighted during the conference. A complete listing will be available soon at the conference website, www.route66milesofpossiblility.com.

--Friday's keynote speaker, Cory Jobe, has been the Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism since early 2015 is a strong advocate of leveraging tourism to promote economic development on both the local and state scale. From the florist down the street to the bed and breakfast across town, he recognizes

how tourism connects people to grow local businesses, put money in the pockets of Illinois' taxpayers and improve quality-of-life benefits for all Illinois residents.

--Saturday's keynote speaker, Aimee Awanohopay, is the Public Lands Partnership Manager with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association [AIANTA]. Her presentation is about AIANTA's "American Indians and Route 66" project, designed to provide the historic and cultural relationship between the Tribes and Route 66, as well as develop interpretation, publications, and a destination website to provide educational and promotional opportunities previously unavailable to the Tribes and other businesses.

--Dave Hoekstra was a columnist and critic for the Chicago Sun-Times from 1985-2014, where he covered everything from music, travel and food to sports, pop culture and history. While at the Sun-Times he wrote extensively about Route 66 in Illinois. In 2013 he won a Studs Terkel Community Media Award. Dave now hosts "Nocturnal Journal" - a weekend radio show on WGN-720 AM.

--Bill Diaz and his talented family hail from Pontiac, Illinois where they apply their artistic gifts at the Diaz Sign Art company. Bill was instrumental in helping design and create the many Wall Dog murals that now adorn the community. Bill was also responsible for helping put together the very first Wall Dog mural painting project along Route 66 in Atlanta, Illinois in 2002.

--Frank Norris has been involved in research work regarding "The Green Book" a publication created by Victor H. Green, a postal service worker from Harlem, N.Y., who began publishing the guide in 1936. The book was designed to help African Americans avoid, as Green put it, "embarrassing moments" after motorists started exploring long-distance roadways including Route 66, the nation's first transcontinental highway. Frank Norris will present a session titled "Courageous Motorists: African American Pioneers on Route 66" during which he will describe the experience of black travelers along Route 66, their strategies for finding available accommodations, and an assessment of the physical legacy of accommodations that welcomed African American motorists. Frank Norris is a historian with the National Park Service in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The office where he works administers or co-administers nine national historic trails as well as the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program.

--Kaleigh Moore is the Social Media Coordinator for the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway. She helps oversee the organization's social media efforts and projects like "Selfies on 66" that engage travelers along the Mother Road in Illinois. In her spare time, she writes for publications like *Inc.* and *Entrepreneur Magazine*.

Registration is available online at www.regonline.com/milesofpossibility. The registration fee is \$100, with a reduced rate of \$90 for Route 66 Association members. Others must register by September 1 for the reduced rate; the one-day rate is \$55. Included in the registration fee are the hot dog roast, all conference sessions, 90th Route 66 birthday celebration dinner and dance party, and the Route 66 short film festival with free popcorn and drink. Vendors may request tables at the registration site at a cost of \$50 to \$100.

The conference hotel is The Chateau Hotel and Conference Center, 1601 Jumer Drive, Bloomington, IL 61704. Conference rate: \$85 per night, plus 12% State and City tax, which includes a complimentary hot breakfast. To make reservations, call 309/662-2020 and mention "Route 66" special rate. Reservation must be made by September 20 to get the conference rate.

Conference contributors include the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington, Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, McLean County Museum of History/Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center, State Farm Bank and the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway.

For more information, contact Terri Ryburn at route66lives@gmail.com or call 309-452-5325.

Conference updates can be found at www.route66milesofpossibility.com.