



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Dwight 90th Birthday of Route 66 Ushers in an Already Busy Season Along the Mother Road

Dwight, Illinois ushered in the 90th anniversary of Route 66, with a celebration last Thursday April 21st at the restored Ambler/Becker Texaco gas station. The birthday party, which was the first 90th anniversary celebration in Illinois, included classic cars, hot dogs and cake, basset hounds and an enthusiastic crowd from all around the state. The event included an official presentation by Dwight Village President Jared Anderson, Bill Kelly of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway and Route 66 preservationist John Weiss.

"Five years ago I was at the (Ambler/Becker) station - first chance I had to meet the Beckers because we had presented them with the wayside exhibit which is a project that we did. At that point in time I said that Route 66 is one of the most famous roads in the world. Five years later Route 66 is the most famous road in the world - there is no question about it," said Kelly during his presentation.

A special round of applause was given to Rudy, the first Route 66 "ambassador" - a local Guardian Angel Basset Rescue dog, owned by Larry and Emmy Little. Bill Kelly tied an Illinois Route 66 bandana around Rudy's neck to make it official, and hopes to continue the tradition at Dwight's annual Harvest Days and Basset Waddle, which is held in mid-September.

The party was held at Ambler/Becker Texaco gas station located at 417 West Waupansie Street (Old Route 66) in Dwight. The historic 1933 filling station dispensed fuel for 66 continuous years until 1999. After major restoration work, the building reopened as a Route 66 visitor center in May 2007. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Another big hit at the event were the 50s style outfits many of the volunteers wore, including a vintage gas station attendant uniform worn by Paul Roeder, who has volunteered at the station for many years. Village officials also utilized the event for volunteer sign-up opportunities - an effort that was extremely successful.

Expect to see more 90th anniversary of Route 66 events throughout 2016. See you on the road!

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MEDIA: Photos are also available on our website photo gallery or by request

All photos courtesy Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway

Video of ceremony also available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMUkDdruQ_4

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