

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ILLINOIS ROUTE 66 SCENIC BYWAY ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS (March 11, 2020) – The Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Casey Wichmann as the organization’s Executive Director. Wichmann brings to the Byway a wealth of knowledge and an extensive background in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors. She brings more than a decade of non-profit experience to the organization including work with the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield and most recently, the state-wide Illinois Association of Park Districts. An experienced Director of Marketing and Development, Wichmann also brings years of experience in event planning, financial and human resource management, fundraising, grant writing and strategic planning to the Byway. Wichmann is a 1998 graduate of Western Illinois University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management.

“I am elated about the opportunity to work with such a successful and historic Byway. This year promises to be one of growth and strengthening our organization. I look forward to working with our incredible members and partners who help us achieve our mission every day. Being able to combine my years of professional experience with a passion for helping non-profits thrive and grow is an exciting opportunity. I am honored by the confidence the board has placed in me to lead this organization to new heights,” states Wichmann.

Anne Haaker, President of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Board of Directors stated, “We are excited to have Casey join the Byway. We look forward to the new energy and creativity that she brings as we move towards our centennial celebrations.” Route 66 will be celebrating its centennial in 2026; that significant anniversary led Illinois to be the first state to introduce legislation to establish a State Route 66 Centennial Commission. The legislation was passed unanimously by the Illinois House and Senate and has been signed into law by the Governor. In Congress, there are two bills going through the legislative process: one that would establish a Federal Route 66 Centennial Commission, and another that would amend the National Trails System Act to designate U.S. Route 66 as a National Historic Trail.

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The Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway enhances and promotes economic opportunities for each Illinois Route 66 community by preserving, protecting and promoting Illinois Route 66. The Byway does this by sustaining and increasing heritage and cultural tourism through the development and marketing of a cohesive Illinois Route 66 product. The organization assists Illinois communities on Route 66 capitalize on their Route 66 tourism opportunities by assisting in strategic planning, marketing and grant assistance. The Byway works with businesses on Route 66 to help develop their Route 66 identity and help them offer a better experience for explorers of “The Mother Road.”