



For Immediate Release: Friday, November 11, 2016. To set up media interviews contact William Kelly, Executive Director, at [wkelly@illinoisroute66.org](mailto:wkelly@illinoisroute66.org) or call 217-525-9308.

**CITY OF LINCOLN, IL APPROVES ADDITIONAL FUNDING NEEDED TO COMPLETE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ROUTE 66 CORRIDOR PROJECT GRANT FOR THE MILL**

***Additional Signage for the 1926-30 Alignment of Route 66 through Lincoln to the Historic Downtown District and to The Mill.***

On Monday, November 7th, 2016, the Lincoln City Council voted unanimously to approve the additional funding needed from the City's Hotel/Motel tax, to cover unexpected additional expenses required to complete The Mill on Route 66 Accessibility Project Grant that was awarded earlier in the year by the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Program.

At the same time, the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway has been working with the City of Lincoln and the Illinois Department of Transportation to update Illinois Route 66 directional signage in the city, including signing the 1926-1930 Route 66 alignment for the first time, which goes directly through the Historic Downtown Lincoln district and passes by The Mill. The signage initiative is in progress and is expected to take 30-60 days to complete.

Bob Wilmert, President of the Route 66 Heritage Foundation of Logan County, submitted a letter to the City Council prior to the historic vote on Monday:

"I am writing to ask your support for the extra \$4,755.71 that we need for our ADA accessible restroom facility at The Mill. The required revisions will mean that we never will have to address this important issue again. It will allow us to expand to full-time hours at any time. It will be a big positive factor in attracting bus tours.

We very much appreciate your support of \$12,000 already. We have a great weather forecast to still get this project done right away. By providing us with this additional amount, we will be able to keep our reserve funds to finish the interior work and have our first year of expenses covered. It will keep us on schedule for our grand opening in April, 2017."

Wilmert added his thanks to all supporters, donors and volunteers to The Mill over the last ten years, including the City of Lincoln. Matthews Construction, who is the contractor on the project, is also donating \$1000 of in-kind services to the project.

William Kelly, Executive Director of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway, in a letter to the Lincoln City Council, made a strong recommendation for their financial support to finish the renovations to The Mill.

"These restroom enhancements will enable The Mill to accommodate the full spectrum of visitors and

enable this iconic Route 66 landmark to draw travelers from around the world to spend their time and money in Lincoln," said Kelly.

The news about The Mill and the Route 66 signage for Lincoln came just days before the 90th Anniversary of the creation of Route 66, which historians cite as November 11, 1926.

"The City of Lincoln has made an historic contribution to Route 66 with both these initiatives," said Geoff Ladd, who is Program Manager of the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway, as well as board member and past president of the Route 66 Heritage Foundation of Logan County. This is a great 90th birthday gift to Route 66 from the City of Lincoln. We couldn't have done it without them and we are grateful," said Ladd.

Both initiatives will benefit each other, according to Ladd, noting that The Mill, once it opens as a Route 66 museum in April, will be promoting the historic downtown and other attractions in Lincoln and Logan County. "The Byway feels that the best way to find Abraham Lincoln is from traveling Route 66. Central Illinois is the only part of all of Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica where the histories of Abraham Lincoln and Route 66 converge, and this is a great opportunity for tourism and economic development in Lincoln and along Illinois Route 66," said Ladd.