

Chapter 10- Segment 4

Mankato to Belle Plaine

Implementation Program

Communities: Mankato, Ottawa, St. Peter, Kasota, Le Sueur, Henderson

Counties: Sibley, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Blue Earth

I. The Segment's Character and Resources

Character of the area

- Agricultural: distinctive farm environments, barns, farmhouses, outbuildings, silos.
- Woodland areas: striking ribbons of hardwood trees scattered along route.
- River basins: wide and flat river bottoms, meandering river, riparian zones
- Historic towns: buildings and homes dating from the mid-1850's to 1940's.
- Heritage: early European settlements and conflicts with Native Americans.
- Mankato is the regional urban hub for the Valley.
- Ottawa has no commercial district; nor do its residents likely want one.
- St. Peter is a regional commercial hub for the area and offers a large and healthy downtown.
- Le Sueur is a significant community due to the historic events that occurred here related to agriculture and medicine. The agri-business connection still exists with the numerous food processors based in the town. The commercial area can and does serve visitors, but it is not pedestrian oriented. Signage is needed.
- Henderson is a small village with a nice historic commercial area with buildings that will lend themselves to renovation. Henderson has great potential to see renovation and rehabilitation investment oriented toward making the village a visitor destination. Currently, the commercial area has just a few businesses; there is little orientation to visitors.



Sibley County Museum in
Henderson



Intrinsic qualities present

- Cultural: Norseland and Norseland general store operational since 1858; local ethnic and historic events and re-enactments held throughout year.
- Historic: Traverse des Sioux Treat Site of 1851; Ottawa , St. Peter, and Henderson Historic Districts; W.W. Mayo House, Cox House
- Natural: Kasota Prairie and Chamberlain Wood Scientific and Natural Area; Ottawa Bluffs Preserve; Ney Environmental Area
- Recreational: Number of local and regional parks and natural areas.
- Scenic: The drive from Belle Plaine to Kasota offers a memorable experience traveling through historic towns and villages that were established because of the Minnesota River.

Intrinsic qualities of regional significance

- Kasota Prairie and Chamberlain Wood Scientific and Natural Area; Ottawa Bluffs Preserve; Ney Environmental Area (state protected preserves, natural areas).
- Ottawa , St. Peter, and Henderson Historic Districts (national register properties).
- Historic: Traverse des Sioux Treat Site of 1851 (state historic site); Mayo House in LeSueur (first office in Minnesota for Dr. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic).



LeSueur Green
Giant Marker

Character management challenges and objectives

1. Gateways are critical to both the overall image of communities and to the degree that visitors can easily see that they have entered places worth lingering in. Urban sprawl and strip development along US-169 have the potential to negatively impact the rural character of the byway and its gateways. Strip development along US-169 continues to stretch south, impacting rural viewsheds and landscapes near Belle Plaine and Henderson that serve as important gateways for the scenic byway.
2. Several buildings in the villages are “at-risk” of being lost due to deterioration.
3. Mining operations could negatively impact the byway visually unless buffering and landscape management is pursued. Efforts should be made to monitor the visual impacts of mining operations along scenic stretches of the byway.
4. A variety of natural areas have received protected status. This segment of the byway has launched a number of preservation



efforts to preserve and restore sensitive natural resources. This segment has the largest density of national register properties along the entire byway.

5. The story of “feeding the nation” has largely gone untold along the byway and should be one of the major emphases for interpretation. Interpretation concerning historic farming practices and the role of the Minnesota Valley Canning Company needs to be further developed along this segment.
6. The byway Alliance structure should be used to continually strengthen the many partnerships that already exist in this segment and to create new partnerships.

II. Tourism Marketing and Product Development

Major products for the visitor

- Kasota Prairie Scientific and Natural Area
- Kasota Stone
- Seven Mile Creek Park
- Norseland and Norseland Store
- E. St. Julien Cox House
- Traverse des Sioux Treaty Site History Center
- Traverse des Sioux Park
- St. Peter National Historic Commercial District
- Ottawa Bluffs Preserve
- Ottawa Village
- Chamberlain Wood Scientific & Natural Area
- W.W. Mayo House
- Le Sueur Museum
- Rush River State Wayside
- Ney Environmental Area
- Swan Lake
- Sibley County Museum
- Henderson Historic District
- Joseph R. Brown Minnesota River Center
- Blakely Wayside
- Gustavus College: Arboretum /Sculpture Gardens
- River and ecosystem natural history
- Settled landscape



Ottawa Methodist Church



- Joseph R. Brown and associated river history
- Agri-industry in Le Sueur
- Valley history and valley settlement in St Peter

Strengths of current visitor experience

- St Peter is the most active consumer tourism destination in this segment Mankato has the largest overall tourism sector, though its focus is largely on sports-oriented tourism and the meeting market.
- Le Sueur sites are somewhat nationally known and draw visitors, but more interpretation is needed.
- Pleasant scenic drive along the byway. The route passes through a varied landscape.
- Significant historic sites and structures in Henderson, Le Sueur, St. Peter and Mankato.
- Charming hamlet of Ottawa with associated stone quarries
- Close to Twin Cities
- History: churches, farmsteads, historic mining and river towns
- Recreation: parks, trails
- Cultural: museums, Treaty Center, local festivals
- Scenic: old bridges, distinctive wetlands, broad valleys, scattered farmsteads on expansive rolling terrain, woodlands

Primary existing target markets

- Day trippers from Twin Cities
- History buffs
- Bicyclists
- Architecture buffs (Ottawa and St Peter)

Potential new target markets for area

- Native American and European history interpretive experiences tied to the rest of the byway
- Farm experiences tied to Le Sueur interpretation

Target geographic markets

- Twin Cities residents
- Twin City visitors seeking day trips
- Sioux Falls is a weekend market
- People traveling across Minnesota toward the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, and Yellowstone
- Target states: Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota



Marketing and Product Development Challenges

1. The primary marketing challenge -- and opportunity -- for this segment is developing itself into being a more appealing day-trip choice for Twin City residents. Its proximity to the Cities makes this market very accessible. Now, the area does not present an image of a unified place that would draw the urban visitor, but instead a collection of sites and events with a much narrower focus.
2. This segment faces the challenge of needing to compete with a nearby 4-lane arterial -- US169. For those wishing to travel from Belle Plaine to Mankato, US169 offers a clearly faster alternative. There is relatively little development along this route and therefore for the urban dweller, US169 will seem quite beautiful and be perceived as a rural road experience. Convincing the traveler to leave US169 at Belle Plaine or Le Sueur or St. Peter is a critical challenges. In all cases, the most success will be had by reaching the traveler before their trip or if during a trip on convincing them to come back for another visit.
3. The road character changes dramatically within this segment and thus there is less character continuity compared with some other segments. From the Henderson stretch to the small city of Le Sueur to the plains of Ottawa to the City of St. Peter to the outskirts of Mankato -- is this the average visitor's image of a "scenic byway"? Probably not. Therefore, the challenge is to present a story about this segment that ties the various pieces together or which offers each segment up as a distinct experience.
4. Despite the strength of Le Sueur in telling the Food to a Nation story, there are fewer farms along this segment. Therefore, there is somewhat of a gap between the production chapter and the processing chapter of the food story.
5. While the river boating and other river stories are interesting history, there is also a distinct gap between those histories and the character of the river today. The river is so shallow and so narrow, it will be difficult for visitors to connect the river's history with its current appearance. This gap between the past and present nature of the river makes it difficult to provide experiences that replicate the past.



III. Tourism Infrastructure and Visitors Services

Roadways

- The byway is fully paved through this segment. The route crosses the four-lane US-169 several times along this route. Road conditions are good throughout this segment. Some intersections are confusing for the traveler due to changing route numbers and poor signage.

Commercial Areas, Gateways and Visitors Services

- Henderson is an intact village with minimal auto-oriented commercial development at its outskirts. Henderson offers only conveniences and light meals. No lodging, restaurants or gift shops are present. The community is currently working with University students to explore new gateway and streetscape improvements.
- Le Sueur has clear western edge formed by the river and bridge, and thus doesn't have a commercial strip at its main gateway. The route from the south is also intact as the visitors drives into a historic residential area and then directly into the old downtown. The City offers conveniences, some restaurants, and several small lodging properties along with some shopping. Generally speaking, the community is oriented toward residents, not visitors. Some businesses are reluctant to stay or relocate into the downtown area because of a perceived problem with traffic routing.
- St. Peter offers a full range of services for the traveler including historical, cultural, educational and commerce resources. As a college town, there are plenty of resources available to the traveler. Both its northern and southern gateways have commercial strip development. Of particular importance, however, is that St. Peter's downtown is sufficiently dense and sufficiently large that the outlying commercial development does not diminish or overshadow the character of the community.
- Mankato has extensive commercial strip development at the exits to US 169. The route does go directly into the center of the city. The city offers a full range of visitor services; the most extensive on the byway.
- Each of these historic river communities should develop a formal gateways program that introduces the visitors to the resources of the area. The traveler should feel a rhythm, comfort and sense of arrival as they travel from community to community. Efforts should be made to develop attractive gateway entrances through landscaping and signage.



Visitor centers

- The Joseph R. Brown Minnesota River Center in Henderson is under renovation. The building is currently in use by local government. There will be a need for a visitors information site in the village.
- The local chambers, which often serve as visitor centers, were difficult to find in Le Sueur, Henderson and Mankato.
- St Peter hosts a visitor center at an easy to find location.

Signage

- Overall byway signage should be improved, particularly at intersections where the route changes. There is a particular need for advance warning signs for route directional changes. This is of great importance all along the byway.
- Signage should be added for sites listed in brochures and publications.

Parking

- Each community along this segment of the byway has adequate parking in its downtown commercial area. There is a need for roadside pull-offs for safe parking at key scenic vistas.

Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Services Issues and Challenges

1. A key need along this segment is access to the river and river-related recreation. Consideration should be given to a bike path near Henderson (given the lower traffic volumes and more intimate nature of the river valley) and a river-side interpretive trail.
2. Signage must be improved all along the segment; community gateway signs, byway directional and reassurance signs, and resource identification signage are all in need.
3. This segment is disjointed nature, that is US 169 both divides and then becomes the byway and thus the experience of moving along the valley is more obviously made up of subsegments of dramatically different character. Because of this, tourism information and signage needs to reinforce the concept that this is unified segment. As noted above, interpretation and marketing must also seek to unify this segment into a more cohesive product in the minds of the consumer.



4. There is a need for a comprehensive brochure that outlines the unique and distinctive shopping, dining and lodging opportunities along this stretch of byway.
- 5 Finally, there is a need for distinctive lodging opportunities such as bed and breakfasts, farm stays and other experiences using qualities distinctive to the region.

IV. Interpretation

Stories supporting the themes

There are a number of segment-specific aspects of the full byway's interpretive themes that should be targeted in local interpretation.

Historic: Struggles for a Home

The move from a hunting, trapping and trading economy to an agrarian economy signaled the end for the Dakota way of life. The loss of wildlife habitat and near extermination of bison and other abundant game added to the struggle for the Dakota. The historic event of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 hastened the end of a "struggle for a home" for the Dakota as they ceded over 24 million acres of Minnesota, Iowa and South Dakota lands that they had called home for generations. The struggles for a home for one culture was all but over while the EuroAmerican culture continued to spread westward. Riverboats along the Minnesota River were a boon for commerce and settlement of this area. Supplies, food and people were shipped up and down the riverway, creating a link to the larger population near Fort Snelling.

Cultural: Food for a Nation

In 1903, C.N. Cosgrove and his brother James, along with twelve other Le Sueur business people listened to the sales pitch of John Silver Hughs about starting a cannery in this town. The Minnesota Valley Canning Company grew from its first delivery of 11,750 cases of white cream-style corn that year to become the Green Giant Company, one of the most widely recognized multi-national businesses in existence today. The company's archives document the birth of this giant, from agricultural research to technology, marketing, distribution, labor relations, migrant workers, and the history of Green Giant.

Natural: Legacy of the River

Given the higher density of settlement along this reach of the river, it would make sense to interpret the interaction between the river's urbanizing communities and the river's ecosystems. This topic can also be connected to the historically more intense use of this portion of the river for shipping and industry.



Specific topics for this segment

Here are some of the specific interpretive topics that can be explored in interpretation in this segment. Each of these topics represent the subjects around which a specific interpretive site might be designed.

Struggles for a Home Topics

1. The Dakota were accustomed to moving with the seasons. The permanent location of these people did not work with their lifestyle.
2. Steamboats provided farmers with a way to get their crops to the larger populations. Steamboats were later replaced by railroads.
3. Joseph Nicollet's expedition contributed to the opening of this area to EuroAmerican settlement.

Food for a Nation Topics

1. The incorporation of the Minnesota Valley Canning Company occurred in 1903 and some of the greatest advancements in food processing took place here over the next century of operation.
2. The trade name *Green Giant* and its image are known throughout the world.
3. The Green Giant Company was able to increase productivity over the years through research and new means of mechanization.

Cultural Topics

1. The language barriers between the U.S. government and the Dakota made it difficult to negotiate a fair and meaningful treaty.
2. The sketchings and writings of Frank Blackwell Mayer at the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux in 1851 captured some of the unique cultural activities practiced by the Dakota.
3. Early historical documentation called bi-racial residents -- i.e., Native American and European -- "half-breeds". The challenges for bi-racials during these times caused great hardships .



Historic Topics

1. The exploration and mapping of this region by Joseph Nicollet was some of the most detailed work ever completed and describes early inhabitants and ecological systems.
2. In the end, the Dakota received little cash that had been promised from the treaty.
3. *Anthony Wayne* was the first steamboat on this part of the river. It weighed about fifty-tons and carried about one hundred passengers.
4. Joseph R. Brown played a major role in the settlement of the Minnesota River Valley. His life offers insights into the ways in which EuroAmericans viewed the Minnesota River Valley and the Dakota.
5. Mankato was the site of the largest mass execution in U.S. history. It was approved by President Lincoln the same week as the delivery of the emancipation proclamation.
6. The history of the Mayos and Cosgroves is told at the W.W. Mayo House in Le Sueur.

Natural Topics

1. At one time, this segment of the Byway was at the edge of a belt of deciduous hardwood timber known as The Big Woods. What evidence exists today?
2. The Methodist Church in Ottawa was build of native stone of the area that is still being quarried along this segment of the byway.
3. Steamboating on this segment of the river ended when the railroad arrived and when the river became too shallow.

Recreational Topics

1. The Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail provides over 39 miles of multiple use trail.
2. Swan Lake's 10,000 acres is one of the largest remaining prairie pothole lakes in North America.
3. This segment has become a popular area for distinctive shopping with a wide variety of speciality shops and antique stores along the Byway and in nearby towns.



Interpretive Challenges and Issues

1. Seeking and obtaining funding for interpretation design and construction along the byway will be the critical challenge.
2. The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux offers a perfect context within which to tell broader stories about Dakota and EuroAmerican settler life. Special efforts should be made to fund and reinstate the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux festival. It is a critical anchor event for this segment and for the entire byway.
3. Interpretation is needed to tie the various pieces of this segment into a more coherent travel experience.
4. The various sites and stories relating to Taking Food to a Nation need to be pulled together and presented as a more coherent whole.

Detailed Interpretive Project Concepts from Mankato to Belle Plaine

Please note that “SFAH” refers to the interpretive theme, Struggles for a Home. “FFAN” refers to the interpretive theme Food for a Nation. “RL” refers to the River’s Legacy interpretive theme.

1. Small Interpretive Kiosks

•Location: Downtown Kasota

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. RL: Quarrying Kasota Stone
3. RL: Kasota Prairie

•Location: Ottawa

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. Ottawa Historic District
3. RL: Chamberlain Woods and Natural Area

Interpretive Techniques for the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway

The interpretive media discussed in this strategy include the following:

- Small Interpretive Kiosks
- Optional: Small Interpretive Kiosk modified for 24 Hour Visitor Info Center
- Wayside Signage Exhibits
- Printed guides/ brochures
- Low frequency radio transmission system
- Activity Booklet
- Audio Tape Tours
- Self-Guided Trail
- Step-On Guide Service in each Community
- Byway Passport Program

Small Interpretive Kiosks

This plan outlines numerous sites for interpretive kiosks. Each of these sites will have four panels, 2 large (42” x 30”) and 2 small (42”x 16”) interpretive panels. Each small kiosk will have an orientation panel and at least one activity-oriented panel that will encourage visitors to take part in some activity along the Byway and one panel that will be directed to children, relating the exhibit theme to activities children will enjoy.

Each panel provides detailed interpretive information on site specific subjects and any unique local history.

The kiosks should conform to the following guidelines:

- Each text block section should contain less than 50 words.
- The main interpretive concept is communicated in 15 seconds.



- Provocative headlines and graphics are used to draw attention to the interpretive message.
- All written labels should be written at a 5th grade vocabulary level.
- Byway logo should be included.
- A limited color palette of 8 to 10 colors should be chosen for each segment of the Byway, with some overlap to tie the panels together.

The written text should conform to the following guidelines:

- All sentences are short, simple sentences.
- Unfamiliar and technical terms are avoided unless explained.
- Active verbs are used in writing text.
- Text includes descriptions of experiences visitors can have on the site.
- Colorful language and images are used to stimulate interest and visitor involvement.

Optional panels and 24 Hour Visitor Info Centers

Communities that do not have a formal visitor information center, or wish to have information available to visitors when their centers, chambers, and cvb's are closed, may wish to construct a similar kiosk design, preferably in a visible location on the Byway in the downtown area. These kiosks can be easily modified to include a small roof to shelter brochure racks that can contain information on the Byway and surrounding communities.

Wayside Signage Exhibits

Wayside exhibits are recommended for sites along the Byway where

•Location: On US169 near Belle Plaine

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services

2. Small Interpretive Kiosk for 24 Hour Visitor Info Center

•Location: Mankato Area (to be determined)

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. SFAH: French explorer Pierre Le Sueur and the discovery of "blue earth"
3. SFAH: Steamboats on the Minnesota–Sinking of the Julia
4. FFAN: Flour mills–Shipping wheat on the river
5. SFAH: Dakota Conflict Sites: Dakota Memorial–Site of largest mass execution in U.S. History
6. SFAH: Sleepy Eye–Sisseton Chief

•Location: St. Peter Chamber Office

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. St. Peter's Historic District
3. St. Peter tornado
4. SFAH: Site of 1851 Treaty
5. E. St. Julien Cox House
6. SFAH: The Old Fort Road, an old Red River Ox Cart Trail
7. SFAH: Norseland

•Location: Le Sueur Downtown

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. FFAN: Where the Green Giant Was Born
3. Mayo House: Home of the founders of the Mayo Clinic
4. SFAH: Story of explorer Pierre Charles Le Sueur



•Location: Henderson Downtown at Joseph R. Brown Minnesota River Center

Topics:

1. Byway Orientation: Parks, historic sites, trails, services
2. FFAN and SFAH: Supply, freighting and trading center
3. SFAH: Joseph R. Brown: One of Minnesota's Most Influential Frontier Men
4. SFAH: Brown's Innovations and Inventions: first overland truck, planned transportation routes
5. SFAH: Brown: Frontier Scout
6. SFAH: Joseph R. Brown Heritage Trail

3. Wayside Signage Exhibits

•Location: St. Peter River Access below Chamber Office

Topics:

1. SFAH: St. Peter– Major Steamboat Site Along Minnesota
2. FFAN: Steamboats replaced by Railroad

•Location: Ottawa River Access

Topics:

1. FFAN & SFAH: River transportation– Bringing people and supplies
2. FFAN & SFAH: Steamboats heyday–17 years from 1851-1868
3. SFAH: Tribal Ceremonies–medicine dance, hunting, fear of approaching enemy, war, song of triumph in battle

•Location: Traverse de Sioux Treaty Site grounds

Topics:

1. SFAH: Dakota Language and Translations
2. Almost the State Capitol
3. SFAH: Twelve missionaries buried in cemetery– The life of missionaries on the Minnesota frontier
4. FFAN: Dakota planted gardens along Minnesota River
5. SFAH: Fraud at the 1851 treaties at Mendota and Traverse de Sioux

specific interpretation messages are important to the story yet there is no need for visitor orientation.

Mounting and framing should be the same color as that on the kiosks and panel colors should be complimentary to the landscape. Wayside exhibits are often low-profile, to give visitors a view and perspective of the site. Panels should be 36"x24".

Low frequency radio transmission system

Messages can be transmitted along the Byway to travelers through their vehicle radios via radio transmissions. This approach should be utilized along stretches of the Byway where there is limited opportunities for other interpretive media and a need to keep the visitor engaged in the Byway's message.

Activity Booklet

An Interpretive Activities Booklet/ Self-Guiding Tour Book would be full of interesting information and activities designed for families with children, domestic or international travelers. The Interpretive Activities Booklet would build upon the existing interpretive messages and give visitors more to think about and do.



Audio Tape Tours

An audio taped tour should be developed for the segment of the Byway that has the highest density of historic sites related to the Dakota Conflict. These tapes should be available at visitor centers, gift shops and chamber of commerce offices. Tapes can either be sold outright or rented for a nominal fee. This project should become the prototype for other themed Audio Tape Tours such as organic farming, life of women on the prairie, geology of the Minnesota River Valley, watchable wildlife (starting with birding).

Self-Guided Trails

Whenever feasible, the creation of trails or walkways on which visitors travel along and messages are communicated through the use of brochures, wayside exhibits or other media should be built. This gives visitors an opportunity to get out of their vehicles and experience the landscape firsthand.

•Location: Le Sueur County Museum Grounds

Topics:

1. FFAN: The Story of Green Giant
2. FFAN: Farming for a corporation
3. FFAN: The Jolly Green Giant–The Creation of a Marketing Icon

•Location: At Riverside Park outside of Le Sueur

Topics:

1. FFAN: View of the grain elevator–story of elevators
2. FFAN: MN–Nibblets Brand; WI– Green Giant Peas
3. SFAH: The Le Sueur Ferry– operated by Dr. Wm. Mayo.
4. The 3 Le Sueurs: Upper, Middle and Le Sueur City unite.

•Location: Rush River Wayside

Topics:

1. RL: Plant life of the Minnesota
2. SFAH: Ferry crossings along the Minnesota
3. Watchable Wildlife

•Location: At the levee and trail at edge of Henderson or at Allanson's Park

Topics:

1. RL: Flooding of the Minnesota River
2. RL: Fishing the Minnesota River
3. SFAH: German settlers

4. Tour guides/printed brochure

•Theme: Stone Quarries Tour

Topics:

1. RL: What makes Kasota Stone popular?
2. RL: How is it formed?
3. RL: How is it cut, shipped and where has it been used?



•Theme: Historic St. Peter Downtown Walking Tour

Topics:

1. Downtown historic walking tour
2. Distinctive shopping in Downtown

•Theme: Historic Ottawa Tour

Topics:

1. SFAH: Driving Tour of Ottawa Historic District

•Theme: Riverboats on the Minnesota

Topics:

1. SFAH: How Riverboats were constructed?
2. SFAH: Riverboats that brought change.
3. SFAH: The “Favorite” made trips from St. Paul to Mankato in 19 hours. Some boats could carry up to 300 passengers and freight.

•Location: Historic Explorers of the Region

Topics:

1. SFAH: Expeditions of Joseph N. Nicollet
2. SFAH: Expeditions of Pierre Charles Le Sueur

5. Activity Booklet

•Location: Story of Green Giant

Topics:

1. FFAN: Who were the Cosgroves?
2. FFAN: How did canning techniques improve?
3. FFAN: What other food technology was created at Green Giant?
4. Americans called yellow corn “horse corn”? How did Green Giant change their perceptions about eating yellow corn?



•Location: Treaty of Traverse de Sioux

Topics:

1. SFAH: What tribes attended?
2. SFAH: What were the terms of the treaty?
3. How did the tribes receive less than originally promised?
4. What events took place that were captured by Blackwell Mayer?
5. What role did Joseph R. Brown play at treaty?
6. What were the new reservation boundaries?
7. How were the annuities to be paid out?

•Location: Farming in the Valley

Topics:

1. FFAN: How did farmers utilize the riverboats, railroads and modern transportation to get their food to market?
2. Did farmers always agree with Green Giants rules and pay?
3. How were migrant workers treated in Valley?
4. What was typical size of farm in 1900? 1930? 1950? 1970? 1990? 2000?
5. What is the Valley's farmers largest market today?
6. What livestock have remained popular to raise?

6. Audio Tape Tours

•Theme: Part of Dakota Conflict Tape

Topics:

1. Treaty Site History Center
2. SFAH: Old Traverse des Sioux Cemetery
3. SFAH: Norseland attack marker
4. SFAH: Joseph R. Brown Minnesota River Center
5. SFAH: Nicollet's relationship with Indians
6. SFAH: Frank Blackwell Mayer Journal of Treaties of 1851
7. SFAH: The personal accounts of Goodhue, Mayer and LeDuc at 1851 treaties.



7. Self-Guided Trail

•Location: At River Park, outside of Le Sueur

Topics:

1. FFAN: The role of the River and farming
2. FFAN: River valley geology and soils

•Location: Kasota Prairie

Topics:

1. RL: Preservation of Prairie habitat
2. RL: Wildflowers and grasses
3. RL: Wildlife of the prairie

•Location: Henderson River Wall Walk

Topics:

1. RL: Flooding along the River
2. FFAN: River towns and commerce
3. SFAH: The Redwing Land Office: Homestead Act
4. SFAH: Susan Freneire Brown

8. Step-On Guide Service in each Community

- Location: Mankato–Local staff, volunteers
- Location: St. Peter–Local staff, volunteers
- Location: Le Sueur–Local staff, volunteers
- Location: Henderson–Local staff, volunteers

9. Byway Passport Program

- Location: R.D. Hubbard House
- Location: Blue Earth County Heritage Center
- Location: Traverse de Sioux Treaty Site History Center
- Location: W.W. Mayo House
- Location: Le Sueur County Museum
- Location: Joseph R. Brown River Center



V. Objectives

1. Provide more ways to physically and visually access the river and thus increase awareness of river restoration objectives and efforts as well as provide more recreational and educational opportunities.
2. Devise strategies for Henderson and Le Sueur to integrate tourism into their overall community development efforts and to thus enhance the intrinsic qualities of these towns. Use tourism to increase recreation facilities, cultural and historic amenities, and the overall business environment.
3. Identify critical natural and cultural landscapes whose presence is integral to the character of the byway. Work to protect these landscapes in ways that are compatible with the needs of owners.
4. Encourage economic diversification and economic health in local communities and the region.
5. Develop an interpretive program for this segment that captures the interesting and important stories of the segment as well as ties the segment to the overall interpretive experience of the byway.
6. Create a byway development strategy that brings segment communities together for the common purpose of protecting and managing intrinsic qualities. This effort should focus regional resources on sequential projects that will benefit both individual communities and the entire byway.
7. Anticipate the long term growth potential of this area and devise growth management strategies to ensure that this area will always have the feel of communities enveloped by nature. Allowing the area to look like and feel like “Anywhere, USA” will not result in a community with any competitive advantages from a community character perspective.
8. Identify critical landscapes and find ways to protect these landscapes in ways that meet the needs of property owners.
9. Work locally and regionally to market the segment in a manner that both builds from existing visitation and events, and creates new visitor profiles. Market the area in a way that tells a fuller story about the segment and its qualities.
10. Determine the locations for and find funding to erect signage along this segment. Types of signage needed include identification, advance warning, directional, assurance, sites-of-interest, and interpretive.
11. Proceed with plans to provide more multi-use trails.
12. Find funding to design and develop interpretive sites along this segment and in the segment’s communities.



VI. Implementation Program

This section is organized by the seven-point structure used for the full byway's RiverStories program: 1) resource management, 2) marketing, 3) tourism product development, 4) interpretation, 5) business development, 6) transportation investments, and 7) recreation investments. Please note that sidebars indicate the relevant objective associated with each action.

Resource Management

1. **Prepare an inventory of landscapes that may be in need of special management or guidelines in order to protect the character of the byway.** Work with residents and landowners to confirm or modify the inventory's results. The product from this exercise should be an agreed upon list of sites that are important to the corridor's character. Cost and Resources: Work with local or regional planning organization to perform inventory using established scenic landscape principles.
2. **Develop a US 169 Management Plan that balances the development needs of property owners and communities with the byway's needs for character and landscape protection along the corridor.** This is important along this segment as it faces the most immediate pressures for suburbanization from the growing Twin Cities area. Cost: \$20,000. Resources: Center for Small Towns or Regional Development Commission, MNDOT.
3. **Use, and modify as needed, the design guidelines manual produced by the Browns Valley and Ortonville segment.** Cost: minimal. Resources: Local and regional planning offices should use this material to augment their existing regulations and standards.
4. **Develop a set of advisory guidelines for earth removal/sand/gravel extraction operations concerning buffering.** Cost and Resources: Work with local planning organizations to prepare such guidelines. County planning agencies and the state Department of Natural Resources.

Objectives 3, 7 and 8: Devise growth management strategies to protect landscapes and historic areas and encourage good quality community development.

Objectives 6, 7, and 8: Devise growth management strategies to protect landscapes and historic areas and encourage good quality community development.

Objectives 6, 7, and 8: Devise growth management strategies to protect landscapes and historic areas and encourage good quality community development.

Objective 4: Encourage economic diversification and health.

Marketing Program

5. **Support an effort to fund a major media marketing program (i.e., bringing in several groups of travel writers to thus promote the area) for the byway.** Cost: \$200,000. Resources: National Byway Grant with Alliance as sponsor.

Objective 9: Market the segment to strengthen existing visitation and build new visitation.



Objectiv9: Market the region.

6. **Develop a three-year cooperative marketing effort between Henderson, Le Sueur, St Peter and Mankato to define the segment as a cohesive travel destination.** In particular encourage a three-year focus on the following target efforts:
 - **Develop a Tracing the Valley History Trip** that invites the visitor on a day adventure to “trace the path of history” through 3-4 special sites/experiences on the river and to a similar number of village/town experiences along the segment with an emphasis on presenting a spectrum of the historic, cultural and natural history issues that the byway as a whole is seeking to interpret and promote. The segment’s Alliance members should work to take the existing sites and attractions along the route and package them together as a cohesive experience and develop the needed support materials. As interpretive investments occur, use the Tracing History program as a guide to the most important investments. This program should be targeted toward the following segments: Minnesota and Western history, Native American history, river natural history and general Twin Cities families. Cost: Initially, \$5000 for brochure and map development. More interpretive funds will be needed as time passes. Resources: National Scenic Byway marketing grant.
 - **Restore the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux event and build a multi-town set of events around that one occurrence.** Broaden the impact of that event to touch the entire byway segment from Henderson to Mankato. Cost: Funds should be sought to seed a restarting of the Traverse des Sioux event. Estimate of \$50,000. Seek foundation funding for a three-year program. Resources: Alliance and local communities with foundation support, Chamber of commerce. and Treaty Site History Center.
 - **Le Sueur should work with other ag-tourism oriented sites along the byway and become a jumping off point for ag-tourism promotion and experiences.** Given its proximity to the Twin Cities and name recognition of the Green Giant brand, it offers a good point to capture the attention of urban visitors and then hook them on extending their experience to other programmed events and sites along the Valley. Cost: Organizing time. Resources: Alliance and ag-tourism sites and attractions.



Tourism Product Development

7. **Develop the concept, the plan and then the funding for a river-oriented/ river-parallel recreation system in this segment. Perhaps it is a trail system, or a network of bike routes or a series of river access/interpretation points.** The key point is that there is a real need for a system of access points/experiences related to the River Valley in this segment. Give it a name, create a system of signage and information to unite it for the traveler. The Audobon Birding Trail may offer a building block for this effort. Sponsor events along the system. Cost: \$5,000 in seed funding to encourage the segment's communities to think collectively about what they could create in the way of a recreational/interpretive system. Resources: Seek technical assistance from the National Park Services Rivers and Trails Program. Raise the funds from local communities and small grant amounts from the byways program and other sources.
8. **Develop a small visitor kiosk or center in Henderson.** A facility in addition to the Joseph R. Brown River Center will be needed to accommodate visitors. Cost: \$10,000. Resources: Local support with assistance from the state.

Objective 11: Provide more multi-use trails and pathways.

Objective 2: Integrate tourism into overall community development.

RiverStory Interpretation

9. **More roadside interpretive sites need to be developed in this segment of the Byway.** Please see Section IV of this document for detailed recommendations on interpretive projects in this segment.

Objective 12: Design and develop interpretive sites.

Valley Ventures Business Development

Business development in this section of the byway should focus on retail attraction in Henderson, a general downtown revitalization/cohesion program in Le Sueur and general support for business development efforts in St Peter and Mankato.

10. Support corridor-long efforts to establish a **Valley Ventures Tourism Business Revolving Loan program.** Use this program to seed new businesses in this byway segment. Cost: Political support and lobbying for the USDA, EDA or SBA funding. Resources: Support the Alliance and local entities of government in establishing this fund.

Objective 4: Encourage economic diversification and health.



Objective 2: Integrate tourism into the overall community development process.

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Objective 10: Erect signage along the segment.

Objective 11: Proceed with plans for more multi-use trails.



*Objective 4:
Encourage
economic
diversification
and health.*

11. **Henderson and Le Sueur should participate in the River Towns Main Street Program, as noted for other segments.** This program could be staffed by a rotating planner position. The objective would be on main street and town marketing, innovative retail attraction and other activities. Cost: \$50,000 to start the program. Resources: National Main Street Program and Small Towns Center.
12. **Take the lead in using a portion of the Valley Venture program to start a coordinated series of downtown marketing efforts.** Seek allocation of a portion of the Valley Ventures funding to support downtown organizations and downtown marketing. Cost: Set aside \$200,000 from \$1 million Ventures fund for this program. Resources: Economic Development Administration or Small Business Administration grant.
13. **Improve the entrance-way into Le Sueur for new visitors.** Currently, the byway's route and the location of the pedestrian oriented portion of the City are not clear to the new visitor. Use signage, landscaping and some physical changes in the blocked streetscape to make the downtown easier to "read". Cost: \$5000 to \$50,000 depending on measures taken. Resources: Transportation Enhancements program.

Transportation Investments

14. **Create a signage plan.** Working with a team of local highway engineers and local businesses, hold a mobile workshop to tour this section of the byway and identify specific locations for needed signing. This will then become the signage plan for this segment of the byway. Specific signage sites are needed as noted below. Costs: No costs for mobile workshop other than time from participants. Resources: Alliance and RDC organize.

Recreation Investments

15. As noted above in the tourism product section, **create a trail and river access system through this segment.** This recommendation supports those made for all other segments in that there is a need for Valley long bicycling and multi-use trail system for both visitors and residents. Cost: Unknown. Resources: federal and state trail funds as well as local funding.
16. Generally speaking, there is also the need for investment in new restroom facilities at many recreation and tourism sites. These facilities should be factored in during all planning for new tourism investments. Cost: Unknown. Resources: Contribution from local, state and federal agencies and entities.