

Kansas Backroads Program

Adopted - July 22, 2008

The Kansas Backroads Program is an initiative to help local sponsors identify and promote local routes offering unique, rewarding experiences for visitors traveling off the state highway system. Local sponsors are responsible for maintaining or improving the roads, as well as preserving or enhancing the visitor experience and marketing their designated backroads. While many local roads are enjoyable drives, the focus of this program is the special backroads in the State; that is, those routes that provide unique, rewarding experiences for the visitor willing to get “off the beaten path.”

Evaluation Criteria and Application Requirements

- Public county or township roads designated as backroads must be wide enough for two-way traffic.
- Designated roads shall meet low volume rural road maintenance standards established by the county and signed according to the MUTCD. Minimum maintained/or private roads will not be considered. See <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003r1r2/ch5.pdf> .
- The route should be lightly traveled (minimal commercial and industrial traffic except for seasonal harvest).
- The route must be clearly defined with a starting and ending point.
- The route should have outstanding natural features, vistas, and/or native vegetation that set it apart from other county roads in the eyes of the traveler.
- An application form shall be submitted to the Kansas Scenic Byways Committee for their evaluation and approval. Application forms may be obtained from the Kansas Scenic Byways Program.
- Intrinsic qualities must be clearly defined (i.e. scenic, cultural, archeological, historical, heritage, etc...). The local community sponsors shall provide an inventory of the intrinsic qualities, attractions, visitor’s experiences (positive and negative) and amenities.
- The length of the back road should be appealing to the visitor.
- Documentation of local support and public involvement must be provided. A signed county commission resolution that includes documentation on how the route’s intrinsic qualities are going to be preserved, enhanced and promoted, and how the route is to be maintained shall be submitted. The plan should also address safety issues like traveling on wet or snow packed roads and off-road parking for viewing attractions or scenic vistas. A marketing plan with a map showing the route and attractions shall also be provided.
- A flyer (map included) of the designated route should be provided. The flyer must be available on a local website for visitors to download. If a proposed route is approved by the Kansas Scenic Byways Committee, a link will be available on the Kansas Department of Commerce Travel and

Tourism and Kansas Department of Transportation Scenic Byway websites. Additionally, printed copies should be available for the traveling public.

- The KSBC reserves the right to limit the number of approved Backroads per county.
- The State will conduct regular reviews of the status of the Backroads.
- If the backroad intersects a state or federal highway system, then the State may consider signage at those intersections with a travel attraction application submitted by the local sponsors to Kansas Department of Commerce Travel and Tourism for approval.