



NEW MEXICO

Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group

Inaugural Meeting
Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 1:30pm
New Mexico State Capitol – Room 309
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m. by Chair Bill Lee.

****Motion:*** Motion was made by Secretary Lancing Adams to swap #1 and #2 on the agenda. Making Roll Call #1 and Welcome and Introductions to #2. Seconded by Member Johnny Pena, motion carried.

Roll Call:

Group Members Present:

Bill Lee (Chair)
Raymond Mondragon (Vice-Chair)
Evan Williams
Johnny Pena
Elmer Torres
Acting Secretary Lancing Adams
Secretary Ricky Serna

Group Members not present:

Danielle Gilliam

4 Group Members joined approximately 12 minutes and 45 seconds into meeting:

Scott Verhines
Alicia Ortega
Dr. Patrick Moore
Daniel Gutierrez

Welcome and Introductions:

Evan Williams – Executive Director of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, economic development district for San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola Counties. Lot of programs throughout that space including 2 byways, with Route 66 obviously being the biggest one and also the most recent nationally designated byway the Trail of the Ancients Byway which connects to the whole 4 corners region. Glad to be here today.

Elmer Torres – From San Ildefonso Pueblo, retired from LANL, served as the Governor of San Ildefonso Pueblo

for 2 consecutive 3 year terms. Sits on several boards, LANL Foundation Board of Directors, Museum of New Mexico Board of Trustees, Board of Directors for the School of the Arts which keeps him busy, but wanted to be part of this to share his perspective on how the tribes were involved in the early days when Route 66 came through here as there are a lot of tribes along that route. Being a former Governor still have a lot of connections with the tribes if there is something that we need to connect with the tribal communities, not just them but other communities along the way to make this a successful event. I will do my best to get everyone to the table to see what we can come up with.

Johnny Pena – Good afternoon, I am a community activist for the south part of Albuquerque and have been for the last 3 decades. Worked long and hard to try to revitalize Route 66 on the west side of Albuquerque since over the years it was redlined, and there has not been too much economic growth. Just recently completed the Route 66 Visitor Center on the top of Nine Mile Hill which we are really excited about. I am really honored that the Speaker asked me to be on this board.

Secretary Ricky Serna – Good afternoon, Secretary of the NM Department of Transportation, been there since July of last year, we feel excited to be on this committee. Over 2200, 12,000 lane miles across the state of NM. Not only do we take responsibility for state owned assets we also partner with many local governments in managing, maintaining, and making upgrades to their local infrastructure, much of which will include Route 66. We look forward to identifying several infrastructure areas from road improvements to improvements to right of ways, visitor centers, rest areas. We look forward to being a strong partner.

Acting Secretary Lancing Adams – Lancing Adams, Acting Cabinet Secretary with the NM Tourism Department, very happy to be here and to be involved in this process. We have a huge opportunity here to do something special. Really happy to see the folks in the audience here and all the work that has already been done to get us to this point. We have an opportunity to do something that is going to add to the economic success, economic development of our state that can really showcase something that not only domestic travelers, but international travelers are looking to experience. Really excited to see how this coordination group can work with the national commission, so we can recommend so high-quality projects and activities for endorsement by that commission and just have the discussions on the state side of how we want this to look and how we want to celebrate this within our communities. Happy to be here.

Vice-Chair Raymond Mondragon – My name is Raymond Mondragon, I am from Clovis, NM. I currently work at Eastern Plains Council of Governments, I represent 7 counties on the east side of the state, 2 of those counties, Guadalupe and Quay Counties, are on the Route 66 corridor. I am certainly looking forward to it. I am the previous chairman of the centennial group for Clovis, when we celebrated the City of Clovis, appointed chair by the Mayor of Clovis and the council. I was also appointed in the Curry County Centennial by the county commission to assist with those celebrations as well. We had some really good celebrations; so, Mr. Chairman I am looking forward to serving. As a retired City Manager with the City of Clovis, I am really excited to work with those folks on the corridor particularly in Tucumcari, Santa Rosa, all along that path and the entire corridor of our state.

Chair Bill Lee – My name is Bill Lee, I am currently the President and CEO of the Gallup McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, highly involved in tourism in our community. We understand that over a third of our community's economic resources come from tourism. It is a vibrant part of what we do. I am also a small business owner. I do hot air balloon rides along Route 66, and I am happy to say, one of the founders of a great event, the Route 66 Freedom Ride, Flight & Cruise, which highlights the mother road all the way from Tucumcari to Gallup every year at the end of July with a motorcycle run, ballon rally, and classic car show that

we truly love. I think Route 66 is important in our state, it certainly has a storied past and part of that storied past comes from Gallup, with the 7th Governor of the great State of NM, Governor Hannett. Hannett's Joke, if everyone knows that history and if not look it up, is quite a story of how Route 66 came to be and continues to grow. I am excited because every year I know that one of the biggest reasons people come to our state one of our biggest and best assets is Route 66, especially when we talk about the international community, those folks really love to come and travel the mother road. This is a celebration that should include and adopt everybody throughout our state and get everybody involved and I am excited to see so many good faces here today. Trust me, we are going to need your help and we are going to through the overview of what we are being charged with and what we are up against to put together a great centennial celebration.

***Introductions done after approval of OMA Resolution:**

Scott Verhines – Good afternoon, everyone, sorry we are late. I am Scott Verhines, I am a recently retired civil engineer who has been fortunate to work from the 4 corners of the state over a long period of time. Happy to be on the commission.

Alicia Ortega – Good afternoon, my name is Alicia Ortega. I also apologize for being late, I am from the Pueblos of Pojoaque and Santa Clara and today we were celebrating Pojoaque feast day at Our Lady of Guadalupe, so that is where I was at earlier today and left a little early so I could join you all. It is an honor to be here, thank you for having me.

Dr. Patrick Moore – Good afternoon, I am Patrick Moore, Executive Director of NM Historic Sites and the Chair of History and Heritage for the Department of Cultural Affairs representing Cabinet Secretary Garcia y Griego. Glad to be here, apologies too for our being in the wrong place.

Daniel Gutierrez – Daniel Gutierrez, Director of NM Mainstreet Program, program of the Economic Development Department. I appreciate being here.

Approval of Agenda: Vice-Chair Mondragon moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Member Torres. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Adoption of the Open Meetings Act Resolution: Chair Lee highlighted 3 things in the Open Meetings Act of importance for members of the group and audience.

1. Unless otherwise specified, regular meetings shall be held at least once each quarter at such place and location indicated in each public meeting notice.
2. Notice of each public meeting of the Coordination Group shall be posted on the New Mexico Tourism Industry website (www.newmexico.org/industry/upcoming-events) at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting and shall include the meeting agenda.
3. Copies of the written notice for any public meeting shall be provided to those broadcast stations licensed by the Federal Comminutions Commission and newspapers of general circulation that have provided a written request for such notice.

Chair Lee, so, everything we do will be in the sunshine, in the light of day as it should be. We want all of NM to see what we are doing and how they can get involved, I encourage everybody to be a part of that. Open Meetings Act is something that we must abide by and be faithful to.

Members Scott Verhines, Alicia Ortega, Dr. Patrick Moore, and Daniel Gutierrez joined the meeting during this action item

Motion by Secretary Serna to approve the adoption of the Open Meetings Act Resolution, seconded by Member Pena. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Presentation of Bylaws: Chair Lee noted they are a group of 12, and there must be a quorum of 7 to conduct business. It is important that everyone attends the meetings, meetings will be at least quarterly, and anticipates that we will probably have more. The Group is also charged with 5 stakeholder meetings, and we will probably have more than 5 as this is a big task and it is going to take a lot of effort on everybody's part. Chair Lee identified items 1-7 in Article II of the Bylaws:

1. Identifying consumer experiences, events, projects, sites, and activities to be officially certified by the Commission and included in official promotional efforts.
2. Proposing the development of programs designed to involve all citizens in activities that commemorate Route 66 centennial events in the State.
3. Recommending, planning, sponsoring, and coordinating official Route 66 centennial events, programs, and activities that align with Commission's strategic principles which include Celebrate and Honor, Preserve and Protect, Tourism Demand Generation, Tourism Development, Business Retention and Expansion, and National Collaboration.
4. Identifying additional Working Groups to address specific challenges and opportunities, as needed.
5. Drafting and maintaining supplemental documentation and reports containing information and specifics to the Coordination and/or additional Working Groups actions.
6. Prioritizing projects and activities utilizing the Commission's dynamic scoring process.
7. Submitting all information and reports to the Commission necessary to carry out the functions of the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission.

Chair Lee stated the bylaws are very specific, and if approved as presented, "we are going to be charged with carrying out those things. Any questions or comments about the bylaws?"

Secretary Serna had a comment regarding one word that stood out in the Executive Order regarding stakeholder engagement portion (sponsor). The bylaws do not discuss the ability for the Group to generate, manage or expend any resources for the purposes of sponsoring any activities or carrying out the responsibilities of stakeholder engagement. Secretary Serna asked if the word sponsor is addressed at all anywhere.

Chair Lee responded that where it stands, from the federal level and state level there is no money attached to this group. We do not have those funds. He then turned the question over to Secretary Adams to add comment.

Secretary Adams added in terms of dollars the administratively attached piece (NMTD) will function to support per diem and all those parts of the groups. Regarding sponsoring and having dollars to put behind these projects is still an open question. Administration of the committee will be funded by the NMTD.

Adoption of Bylaws: Motion by Secretary Adams to approve the Adoption of Bylaws, seconded by Vice-Chair Mondragon. Motion carried; none were opposed.

National Route 66 Centennial Commission Overview: Presented by Secretary Adams.

Congress established the Route 66 Centennial Commission to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Route 66 in 2026. The Route 66 Centennial Commission consists of members appointed from the eight (8) states along the *Mother Road*.

Member states are tasked with recommending ceremonies, celebrations, media productions, publications of materials, the issuance of commemorative items, and other ways to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Route 66.

Member states of the Route 66 Centennial Commission were further tasked with establishing Route 66 Centennial Coordination Groups focused on centennial planning in their respective state.

Pursuant to Public Law 116-256, Section 5(a), the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission includes 15 members appointed by the President, on the recommendations of the Secretary of Transportation (3), the governors of each of the states through which Route 66 runs (8), and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives (4). To date, 13 seats on the Commission have been filled.

Secretary Adams, included is a picture (members of the National Route 66 Centennial Commission) including my predecessor Jen Schroer who is here today who is on the National Commission. I really look forward to working with Secretary Schroer and understanding the strategy and needs of the commission.

Pursuant to Public Law 116-256, Section 4, the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission is working to identify and recommend activities that may be carried out by the Federal Government that are fitting and proper to honor Route 66 on the occasion of its centennial anniversary.

Secretary Adams, this is important because we recommend project to the Commission and the Commission identifies which federal agencies would be responsible for carrying out some of those recommendations, whether that be the Treasury Department when it comes to coins; whether it comes to commemorative stamps from the U.S. Post Office; or Department of Transportation for infrastructure, that is something the National Commission is tasked with, determining which federal agency to carry it out. Then they will use seven strategic principles to identify the activities. I want to be clear that this is fitting for the National Commission because it is fitting in their framework, but it is withing the purview of this working group to identify other areas in which we want to look.

The Commission is using a set of seven strategic principles to identify activities, including:

- Celebrate & Honor
- Preserve, Protect & Enhance
- Generate Tourism Demand
- Tourism Development
- Economic Development
- National Collaboration
- Research & Education

Based on these principles, the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission recommends the following initial set of activities as being fitting and proper to honor Route 66 on the occasion of its centennial anniversary:

- A Route 66 Centennial Stamp
- A Route 66 Centennial Stamp Series Featuring Each of the 8 Route 66 States
- A Route 66 Centennial Commemorative Coin
- The Route 66 Alternative Fuels Corridor Initiative
- A Route 66 Centennial Global Marketing Campaign featuring the eight Route 66 States
- Designating Route 66 a National Historic Trail

Secretary Adams, page 15 of the presentation is a table showing what the national commission is laddering up to. We have the states that are involved, the charge to identify the activities, the charge to identify what federal agencies are going to be responsible for executing these activities, the execution. Where we fit in, in that is really informing the commission through our delegate and through our members on what is important for Route 66, so we make sure we are at the table. If there are investments to be made we share in that, when those endorsements of activities happen and those certifications of activities happen that NM gets endorsed and certified through this process.

New Mexico Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group Duties: Presented by Secretary Adams.

On September 8, 2023, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed Executive Order 2023-131, establishing the Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group for the state of New Mexico.

The Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group consists of twelve (12) members tasked to:

1. Recommend, plan, sponsor, and coordinate official Route 66 centennial events, programs, and activities in the State;
2. Encourage the development of programs designed to involve all citizens in activities commemorate Route 66 centennial events in the State;
3. Maintain a supplemental document containing specifics pertaining to these actions where Group members will provide regular updates and input;
4. Make available to the public information on Route 66 centennial events happening throughout the State;
5. Submit meeting minutes, recommendations for state signature centennial projects, and other regular reports to the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission and/or its working groups;
6. Prioritize projects and activities utilizing the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission's dynamic scoring process;
7. Identify consumer experiences, events, projects, sites, and activities to be officially certified by the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission and included in official promotional efforts; and
8. Perform other actions, as directed by the chair or the governor.

Secretary Adams commented that the Group will be responsible for ensuring there is an efficient system for maintaining all records and supplemental documents, so they are available to the national commission, the public and the working group members. He additionally noted he wants to make sure the Group understands any infrastructure components being endorsed nationally and the Commission's plans are for that.

The Route 66 Coordination Group shall be administratively attached to the Tourism Department. We will be supporting the business of the committee.

William Lee and Raymond Mondragon have been appointed by Secretary Adams as the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee. The Group will need to establish by-laws, meet at least four times each year, and establish working groups or subcommittees as necessary to address specific topics and tasks.

Projects and Activities – Each signatory state agrees to identify projects and activities in its state for the centennial celebration that align with the U.S. Route 66 Commission’s strategic principles which include:

- Celebrate and Honor
- Preserve and Protect
- Tourism Demand Generation
- Tourism Development
- Create Economic Development
- National Collaboration
- Research & Education

Each state agrees to identify and propose projects and activities for the following designation consideration by the Commission:

1. National Route 66 Centennial Projects: Through state representation on the National Working Groups, states will propose projects that span across all eight states and/or require multi-state collaboration, as well as activities that are national in nature.
2. Route 66 State Signature Centennial Projects: Through each state’s independent Coordination Group, states’ members will provide the Commission with a proposed list of prioritized State Signature Centennial Projects.
3. Route 66 Centennial Certified: Through each state’s independent Coordination Group, state members will identify consumer experiences, events, projects, sites, and activities to be officially certified by the Commission and included in official promotional efforts.

National Working Groups – The framework of the national Commission provides that four (4) National Working Groups be established to identify and prioritize projects. New Mexico’s representative on the commission shall appoint one state representative to serve on the Commission’s National Working Groups. The National Working groups are defined as follows:

1. National Event Celebrations
2. International/National Tourism Marketing
3. Infrastructure
4. Commemoratives and Publications

Secretary Adams explained that as the Group makes recommendations to the Commission, they will fall into one of these working groups for further deliberation.

Stakeholder Meetings – Each Signatory State will conduct at least five (5) stakeholder meetings to obtain input from their community on the proper activities and projects to honor the Mother Road. Signatory States are encouraged to record and share meetings with the Commission for communication purposes.

Guiding Questions to Consider

1. How can this Group most efficiently and effectively inventory all existing assets related to Route 66 in New Mexico? What sources already exist?

2. What research and planning has already occurred, and how can this work be leveraged? We need to understand what has already occurred, what do we already know?
3. Who are the key stakeholders that this Group must engage with? How can those stakeholders best contribute to the five stakeholder meetings required by the EO?
4. How should this group approach the "vetting" of projects/activities? National dynamic scoring process?
5. How should this group organize its work to efficiently and effectively communicate priorities to the National Commission?
6. How should this group approach the different "versions" of Route 66 in New Mexico? Should we celebrate all of Route 66, the old and the new?
7. What does success look like for 2026 and beyond for this Group?

Secretary Adams noted the this is administratively attached to the Tourism Department, so we have the responsibility to provide information and to connect the national with the state group, noting that Mr. Lee is the chair, and we are all members of this group.

Chair Lee, thank you Secretary Schroer for being at the meeting, I know you're busy being Secretary of another agency and still being on the National Route 66 Commission, and I look forward to working with you on this going forward. Lancing has provided some great questions for us to think about and to talk about as we look to make this one of the best pieces to make this a shining star not only as a state but also on the national level as well. It is important to look at the ideas that do tie us to the other states, that is part of the heritage of the mother road, it connected the nation in a way that had never been done before. Yes, we want NM to shine but we need to recognize that we do have other partners to deal with. Open up questions from the group, thoughts, questions from the overview.

Secretary Serna asked how aggressive we need to be as an organization. The EO dissolves itself in 2027, the national expectations are a report no later than 2 years from when the commission is formed which is a way from now. Secretary Serna asked if there is there a better timeline that we can back map from that could guide the sense of urgency with which we operate as a group.

Chair Lee thanks Secretary Serna for his question. He is of the mind that the clock is ticking, things have got to get done and done in a fairly timely manner. We are going to do our best to do that and that we have engaged stakeholders that can force that timely to happen in a more efficient, better way. Does not have a timeline today but 2026 is around the corner, we must move forward. The next meeting will be not only a group meeting but also a stakeholder meeting. We are going to be tasked as a group to put the timeline together. Chair Lee asked Secretary Adams if he had anything to add.

Secretary Adams would be interested in having the stakeholder meeting as well as the group meeting on the same day.

Vice Chair Mondragon added that he would like to see the next meeting be in Tucumcari. We have some folks here from Tucumcari that he is sure would help him get things set up. We are excited about this. This is something that is huge, it is big, iconic for US Route 66, we want to put on the best performance that we can because it is economic development, it is tourism to our state, it is how we bring folks back into our state. I would like to see us have the stakeholder meeting in the morning and then the Route 66 Commission meeting in the afternoon. He proposed stakeholder meeting, break for lunch, then afternoon Route 66 meeting in Tucumcari, I would be more than happy to coordinate that for this commission.

Chair Lee indicates that they would take this up as an action item shortly. He does want to see the stakeholder meetings take place along the route, that can be new and old Route 66, we do need to include all these communities. Where does the group feel our focus should be, old or new Route 66? He personally is on the same opinion as Secretary Adams that it is all part of the history of 66, it is all part of the mother road, and we should include all of these communities to the best of our ability to embrace the history, culture and vibrancy this road has brought to our nation and to NM.

Member Torres, it is a big responsibility and we need to start looking at this from the east side of the state all the way to the western part of the state, who is involved in this? What are the route plans? I concur with you that we should involve the old and the new together. NM is a very unique state, we are different from Texas and Arizona, there is a lot of things that happened with the route since it was established in the early days, how much has economic and tourism grown from the early days to now? How many of these things are still in place along the route? Where are some of those stories and histories that we can tap into? Things that we can showcase, engage the communities and stakeholders. Put them in a nice package all the way from the eastern part to the western part of the state.

Chair Lee, we will start on the eastern part of the state and work our way across. It may or may not prove to be our best option. He does not know that 5 stakeholder meetings are all they are going to have. There is going to be a lot of work and information that is going to need to be shared between the commission and the stakeholders to make sure that things are running smoothly. Asked if there are any other thoughts about the new road versus the old road.

Member Gutierrez stated he appreciates the perspective and the more communities we can include and embrace and let them benefit from what is going to happen whether it is investments or tourists coming in. Through the Main Street program, there are communities on both ends, so any way we can include to the broadest perspective we have is going to be beneficial to the state and those communities.

Vice Chair Mondragon, success is all of us working together to form economic development and tourism, look at the film industry, the potential, and possibilities. One of the quotes I use a lot, "In order to predict the future is to create it", we have to create something substantive and something positive and something good with this group. Let's celebrate it all. Let's put our stakeholders together. I am excited, I am holding back, the possibilities are endless with what this group can put together. We have a great group. I brought some commemorative coins from Clovis' centennial. I will pass these around so you can take a look at that. Thinking subcommittee for coin, subcommittee for stamps and so forth. I am excited and the possibilities are endless, there are a lot of good people out there that want to help.

Chair Lee notes that part of the focus of the stakeholder group is, what do you want to see NM do? Where would you take this? This is not about the 12 people sitting up here, this is about the people who are invested in this route. *Chair Lee*, Certainly, I consider myself to be part of that and I think we all do. We want to listen to those ideas, plans and projects that are out there.

Secretary Adams, TD is administratively attached to the group to get an online input form set up. Get the input from this group as well as the public to map out and organize these themes that we are looking at. Hone in on what are the themes of the stakeholder groups, are they going to be tasked with coins, or a group assigned to roads, or a group assigned to events because events are going to be a huge part of this. How are we going to structure the initial input so that going into the next meeting we have themes to look at and how they work

with our stakeholder groups, making sure we are being efficient? How do we organize this? NMTD will work to support this, whatever is decided as we are the repository of that information and that is received and shared officially with you all.

Secretary Serna proposed the next step, to identify the corridor and identify the partner at the local government, municipality, county, tribal government, whatever it is. To identify a point of contact with this is critical. Go to the mayor, county manager, tribal governor and introduce the group, ask for an invitation to host a stakeholder engagement interaction. We are looking for a community to host a stakeholder engagement activity. Those points of government would be essential in identifying what is going on, what has been done, what has been proposed. Start compiling historical activities that revolve around the route itself.

Chair Lee agreed with the recommendation, and mentioned contacts like Route 66 association, not just governmental contacts, or maybe the governmental contacts will send us to the best contacts in their communities.

Secretary Serna agreed, he thought a downtown group, a Mainstreet group, a chamber group as well.

Chair Lee noted that he is not hearing any pushback about loving every bit of the mother road. He thinks it is appropriate to entertain a motion to incorporate all of the mother road as this group looks into things. Due to this not being listed as an action item on the agenda, the Group could not entertain a motion but make it a point of discussion to be adopted at our next meeting. It was also mentioned there is no money attached to this group from the federal side or the state side. It is going to be incumbent on this group to make sure that they are active during the next legislative session and get stakeholders involved to advocate for dollars to be put towards this centennial celebration and the work that needs to be done. Imperative to talk to legislators about funding this, so we can carry out the objectives that have been laid out in the executive order. We also need to be mindful that if we get these dollars what is the dynamic scoring process that allows us to distribute funds to each of the communities applying for them. How are we going to deal with that fairly and equitably across the state for all the communities. We need to fight for that.

Secretary Adams asked if during public comment Secretary Schroer could provide any information about dynamic scoring and if there has been any movement on that.

Chair Lee has asked Secretary Schroer to be at our next meeting to provide a full defined update on what is happening on the national level and if there were any other questions.

Vice Chair Mondragon asked what is suggested regarding funding, a meeting with the chair of Senate Finance or the chair of House Finance or House Appropriations. Asked Secretary Adams for his thoughts.

Secretary Adams suggested conversations with both the state side and congressional delegation. Stating that we will know a lot more in the next few weeks about the Executive and Legislative recommendations for the budget, which will provide us with a good understanding of where the floor and the ceiling will be on this. This was presented at our (NMTD) legislative committee hearing and there was a lot of interest on the funding.

Commissioner Verhines thinks it might be valuable to reach beyond governmental agencies, to other groups that might have interest. Tribes, Pueblos and Nations, Ranching Heritage in NM, Transportation Industries, American Council of Engineering Companies, Mainstreet Organizations, identifying those other groups as well, we could get some good ideas.

Chair Lee asked that the group each bring a list of stakeholders to our next meeting.

Commissioner Williams thinks the national networks, transportation for instance, is important and asked if they are they doing signage, or if we should rename the road? Member Mondragon and Member Williams have COG's across the 8 states, getting NATO would be helpful.

Chair Lee asked that everyone come prepared with their lists for their areas for the next meeting.

Member Ortega appreciates the different perspectives, film, music, art, culture. Also suggests multi-generational, involving from our elders to our future. She also asked if it would be possible to have a 30–60-minute meeting to get to know each other prior to the Stakeholder meeting?

Chair Lee agreed and suggested a 9am meet and greet breakfast on the morning of the 29th in Tukumcari.

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting in Tukumcari, February 29, 2024. Stakeholder meeting from 10am-noon. Group meeting from 1:30-3pm.

Vice-Chair Mondragon tasked with planning the meeting in Tukumcari.

Chair Lee requested Secretary Adams put a call out on the NMTD website to ask communities interested in hosting a stakeholder meeting. Secretary Adams will be the lead person for questions regarding Route 66 and he can delegate those requests as needed. NMTD will also be looking into other avenues for posting notices and announcements.

Secretary Serna suggested a huddle regarding facilitation and before the February 29th meeting to agree what facilitation and responsibilities looks like. Set the stage for other communities to do the same thing so we have a productive conversation with stakeholders.

Chair Lee agrees and thinks this should be at the forefront and asked Secretary Adams to see about facilitating this meeting virtually if possible pursuant to OMA and by-laws.

Member Verhines agrees with Secretary Serna on how important the format is to get the feedback needed. In a smaller group setting you get good feedback. Suggested an open house format.

Secretary Adams will take this back to see what we can do to facilitate having a productive meeting.

Public Comment:

Melissa Beasley-Lee, President of the New Mexico Route 66 Association:

Aside from being the President I am also a board member of the National Route 66 Partnership. To celebrate Route 66, one must first understand its importance, as well as its needs. Route 66 communities were cut out with the coming of the interstate. Since then, those businesses and communities have worked twice as hard to simply survive. As we make plans to celebrate Route 66 lets also show our appreciation to Route 66

businesses and communities by addressing their needs and assisting them and succeeding. The Route 66 celebration is the perfect opportunity for the state to stand in solidarity with its struggling Route 66 communities. When they thrive, the state thrives. The Centennial Group Board is lacking one key component; that component is the Route 66 Association. We have been here for nearly 35 years assisting and promoting businesses and communities along the route as well as educating people about the important role the route has played in our nation's history and state's history. We have a wealth of information about Route 66, we are networked with 7 other Route 66 state associations, 3 national Route 66 associations, and over 25 international associations and groups. We solely represent Route 66 businesses, communities, and locations and understands their needs and what makes them thrive and prosper. We also understand the Route's complexity of being a moving entity stretching over 2400 miles through 8 states and how we in NM can capitalize on our 604 miles. Over the past 7 years I have been president of the Route 66 Association as well as a board member of the National Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership. We as the Road Ahead Partnership have worked tirelessly to lay the groundwork for Centennial celebrations. At the same time, we have been creating and conducting current programs that are helping businesses and communities prepare now, leading up to 2026. We created the bill introduced to our national legislation, acquiring the official acknowledgement of the Route 66 Centennial of 2026, as well as the paperwork which formed the federal Rout 66 Commission. Next, I as the representative within the board of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership, introduced a bill during the 2023 NM Legislative Session to create our state commission, which would follow the lead of our national, federal commission, while focusing on the needs and unique traits within our state. This bill was ignored during that legislative session with no explanation as to why. Leaving businesses and communities throughout the state bewildered and angry. Now that this Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group has been created, I am asking you, all of you on this board and that state to do the right thing for the route 66 citizens of NM. Assure them they are not being cut out, once again, by immediately providing a board member position for the nm route 66 association.

- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Ms. Beasley-Lee for her comments and gave each member a copy of the handout.
- Ms. Beasley-Lee provided a handout to the Group. They are included in the minutes as an attachment.

David Brenner, Owner of Roadrunner Lodge Motel in Tucumcari

First, I will start with an endorsement for the Route 66 Association. Second, I want to tell you about my story and why I am even here. Back in 2010, the person who is now my ex-wife told me I want a business on Route 66, and I said you have got to be kidding me. But I entertained her taking road trips and meeting me at conventions locations across the nation and she did her research. I started going on some of the trips with her and I learned how popular Route 66 is, particularly with the international audience, and I said okay! I told my corporate employer that I wanted to support this dream, and this is a dream that has happened hundreds of thousands of times throughout Route 66's history and will continue to happen.

Roadrunner Lodge Motel – when I arrived, it had been a vacant property for 5 years. When the wind would blow the roof would go with it, it had no power... It was quite the

undertaking. We have the distinction now of having won many awards. Over the past 4 years USA Today's Number 1 Top 10 Roadside Motels for the nation. We've been number 1 once, we been in the top 4 the last 4 years and many other awards and distinctions I won't go into.

I would like to invite you, across the street from number one breakfast spot in Tucumcari, so in Feb. I will lower my rates to your per diems and you can come on by and say hi and meet and walk to breakfast and dinner and enjoy the sites in Tucumcari. We also have the distinction we are coming up on our 10-year anniversary on July 24th. I am looking forward to what I can do with the placed now that I have an extra 2000 hours.

- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Mr. Brenner for his comments.

Tim Hagerman, Economic Development Department

- Mr. Hagerman welcomed the group to see an exhibit set up of historical trail documents.
- Mr. Hagerman commented that when looking at projects on how other states helped NM develop, we can look to the Old Trails Association, the Ozark Trail, and southern California Automotive Club. Neighboring states and partners will be very important.
- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Mr. Hagerman for his comments.

Mike Lee, Mike Lee, President & CEO, and co-owner of Fast TV Network Inc.

I'm Mike Lee, President & CEO, and co-owner of Fast TV Network Inc. along with his wife Melissa, and a board member of The New Mexico Route 66 Association. We are currently building a film studio in Carrizozo, NM and have purchased a property in Tucumcari to build our headquarters and studio space and are donating space for the Official State New Mexico Route 66 Association Museum and Welcome Center that will be housing their massive collection of Route 66 history. We have filmed episodes of our hit show "Legends of Route 66" across all eight Route 66 states. We have witnessed countless success stories as well as failures to small businesses on the Mother Road. Human stories. The one common thread is that these business owners have invested their hard-earned money, sweat equity, and countless hours a week bringing needed services on Route 66. New Mexico Route 66 businesses have been hit especially hard. After all, we were shut down longer than any of the eight states during COVID. The Centennial is our opportunity to invest in Route 66 communities and provide help to bring celebrations, restoration projects, and new life to our beloved road. It is good to see that we are finally forming this committee. However, it needs to be noted that we are extremely late to the party regarding the other seven states. We have a committee that is made up of political representatives and some who are here looking for money for their own projects. What I don't see is any representation from Gallup, Grants, we have the Pueblos that are located on Route 66, we have Moriarty, Santa Rosa, Tucumcari, San Jon, Bernalillo, Los Lunas. The need to be heavily involved in this whole process because their livelihoods depend upon it. I also don't see the President or a representative from the New Mexico Route 66 Association, who have over 30 years of expertise in preservation, promotion, and stewardship of Route 66. The same Association that has been a participant in the Road Ahead Partnership for the last seven years, which formed the National Centennial footprint to begin with that brought all this together. Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois,

Arizona, Missouri, and Kansas have been working on this for several years. The State of New Mexico, up to this day, has not done an awful lot for Route 66. "New Mexico True Magazine" from our Tourism Department, this isn't personal, barely mentions that Route 66 even exists. There is three mentions of it in that whole magazine, that's it, and two are naming a business. They cut the funding to our Association's quarterly "New Mexico Route 66 Magazine," the only Route 66 publication in the state. Yet we still went out and sold advertising to Route 66 businesses and communities who have precious few dollars to begin with. The magazine that I might note we are still delivering to the Sunport and to the I-40 corridor state welcome centers all on our member's dimes. So, I will ask you a question, and you partially answered it today. Are we here to help the communities and businesses of Route 66 across the entire 604 miles of the New Mexico stretch of the Mother Road? Or are we going to funnel funding to Albuquerque and Sante Fe concerns and let these communities go it alone? From what I am hearing today, that is not the case, it makes me feel really good to hear that.

If that is the case, then we got some problems. I am here to ask you respectfully to prove me wrong about thinking that was even going to happen. We need to help these communities make this centennial a success story. We need to listen to the people in these communities and include those who have invested their lives making Route 66 a better place – people like that man who just spoke to you (David Brenner). His motel was in bad shape when he bought it, and it is literally a show piece today. He is one of thousands of people, and those are the people we need to be helping... You've got two years to make these decisions, find the money and implement all these things.

- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Mr. Lee for his comments.

Debbie Pough, Owner of Sunset Motel in Moriarty

- Debbie and her husband Mike Pough own the last original Route 66 motel still owned and operated by the family that built it on all the 2440 miles of Route 66. Thanked the Group for having the good sense to include this iconic hotel. Would have been wiped off the map had you decided Route 66 only went through Santa Fe. She is also the President of Retro 66 in Moriarty and Edgewood, NM, a 501(c)3 put together by 2 Mayors and a Senator, charged with improving the economic situation of small businesses on their part of the corridor.
- They spent 7 years raising people's knowledge and IQ of our part of Route 66 by putting on a 3-day event that brought north of 2700 people into Moriarty. This was done by 3 people in a town of 1800 population. There were 14 events in 3 days.
- Debbie mentioned the meeting people traveling Route 66 everyday traveling from around the world. She proposed that the hospitality industry is the ear to the world. These travelers are seeking small Route 66 businesses out and they can tell us a boatload. She hopes we will act really quickly because with all our help we have the knowledge.
- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Ms. Pough for her comments.

Janine Stern

- Wanted to congratulate everyone for putting this community together. It is up to us to celebrate Route 66 the Mother Road and bring her back.

David Nodel, Route 66 Hotel Zazz

- Mr. Nodel stated 2026 is a culmination but also a springboard for revitalization for economic development and restoration of route 66 along the way. Not just NM but other states around us, and it is important we work together. It is important we do everything we can with this effort to preserve the tourism dollar and these livelihoods.
- No questions were asked by the members of the Group. Chair Lee thanked Mr. Nodel for his comments and that the group's efforts should revitalize and revise the next 100 years.

Yvette Kent, Jewel Management – Tucumcari, NM and Fort Worth, TX

- Ms. Kent is a real estate developer from Fort Worth whose family is originally from Tucumcari. She presented her business plans for her cannabis location in Tucumcari and explained the need for infrastructure. She has invested 2 million dollars and wants to bring destination traffic and tourism dollars back into the area.

Adjourn: Motion was made by Member Pena to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Torres, motion carried. Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at 3:28pm.

Approved by Coordination Group vote at public meeting held on February 29, 2024.



Coordination Group Chair Bill Lee



New Mexico Route 66 Association

Dedicated to education, promotion, and preservation of New Mexico's Historic Route 66 Scenic Byway and economic revitalization along its 604 mile stretch throughout the state since 1989. Est. 1989. A 501-(c)3 Non-Profit.

- 2004 New Mexico Heritage Preservation Award Winner
 - National Scenic Byways Best Practices Recognition
 - 2003 Preservation Project of the Year: New Mexico Route 66 Magazine
- Regional Emmy Award Winner: Best Cultural Documentary "Rt 66 The Neon Road"**

President: Melissa Lea Beasley Treasurer: Jennifer Lazarz Secretary: Connie Loveland

November 1, 2023

An open letter from the New Mexico Route 66 Association regarding New Mexico Governors recent executive order to create state Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group.

Recently I awoke to this headline in the Santa Fe New Mexican: "New Mexico prepares for Route 66 centennial — but which route will be celebrated?" It was at this point my heart sunk, because I knew the State had completely ignored the New Mexico Route 66 Association in preparations for the centennial celebrations.

From the onset of discussions, we were to play a role in the state's celebration, a public/private partnership of individuals and organizations. Alas, as I read the article, nowhere was the Association even mentioned. The State was forging ahead without us.

All along the plan was for the Association to be part of New Mexico's organizing committee, just like in the other states through which 66 traverses. Bill Thomas, Chair of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership, has done a wonderful job organizing and preparing all of us on the board for this prestigious point in history for Route 66. Now that it is time for me to assist our State, the Association is being cut off, and I would like to know why.

I have been involved with the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership from the beginning as the New Mexico State representation board member. In 2017 we held our first meeting to prepare for the Mother Road's 100th Birthday Celebrations. The plan was to have each state representative from Road Ahead on their collective state committee. It makes sense to have us help the commission fully understand and achieve its goals.

It is beyond reproach that we are being pushed out. It is disheartening to have to fight the Tourism Department and the Governor to represent our Association, of which I have served as President for eight years, to prepare for the centennial. We have been ignored repeatedly by the State, and now the Governor has assembled this group without informing the public of it, as well as us.

The State has a growing history of such actions and omissions. I have reached out to the tourism department various times as President to discuss ways to promote Route 66. They weren't interested. They pulled our funding to help produce our quarterly publication, New Mexico Route 66 Magazine, and refuse to let us receive our portion of the Route 66 license plate sales. Even after providing documentation showing this money does not go against their state anti-donation clause because the money is coming from the individual purchasing the plate, who are entrusting the state to pass on their donation to us - not the state, we were denied.

The frustration we have felt—and kept from the public—has been building over the years, and it continues to get worse. The New Mexico Department of Tourism has been completely out of touch with Route 66 tourism. I have attempted to work with them toward promoting Route 66 for years and received no cooperation. Their marketing materials throughout the years have little, if any mention of Route 66.

We were the first Route 66 state association to produce a magazine and a license plate, something our state should be proud of. Instead, we receive no recognition for it, nor any assistance from them. Other Route 66 states have followed in our footsteps and created a license plate to recognize their stretch of Route 66, while raising needed funds for their association. Their state officials have gladly partnered and helped them by providing them their portion of license plate sales, as well as partnering on numerous other Route 66 related activities.

It has left the New Mexico Route 66 Association to be the sole promoters of the Mother Road throughout New Mexico.

Beyond the insufferable omission of the Association, the State is losing sight of the broader goal, which is to celebrate Route 66! Their concern of which alignment to feature is little different from rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. It doesn't matter. In fact, none of the other seven states along Route 66 are worried about this in the slightest.

Yes, purists know which alignment was the original. They know which alignments came later, and they know where original alignments are no longer accessible, either by virtue of tribal lands, private property, or having been destroyed in the name of Progress. But no one is concerned about this, because it is the Mother Road we are celebrating, all of it, every inch of it, whether it was there in 1926, or down to the bitter end in 1985.

Dismissing the contributions of the Association is also little different from ignoring medical advice when they are the experts in their field. No one knows Route 66 in New Mexico better than we do, but they are effectively saying, "Stand back and let us run this show." They may know event management and tourism, but we know the Mother Road, not just where the pavement lay, but also its people, its cultures, its history, and its traditions. That's something you can't just cobble together with people living and working in ivory towers.

The New Mexico Route 66 Association has been here for 35 years, promoting our 604 miles of Mother Road to people all over the world. We have also been helping communities preserve as much as possible so communities can thrive, and tourists have something to experience and see when they visit. In addition, we have been assisting businesses with their physical and economic growth.

And we've continued to do these things with little to no help from our State. Why do we do these things? Because we care about our communities and take pride in the importance Route 66 has played in our State's and American History.

I want to see centennial funds distributed fairly, especially when it comes to the smaller Route 66 communities through New Mexico, where Route 66 is a vital economic engine for them. To be excluded from the New Mexico State group implies the State has other plans for the funds that should be going into communities toward restoration, revitalization, and promotional opportunities they have needed desperately for so long.

On behalf of the New Mexico Route 66 Association, I hereby file my displeasure, disappointment, and disgust with how things have turned out. This could have been a mutually beneficial arrangement for all...the State and its constituent cities and towns, the Association, and, more importantly, the people of Route 66.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Lea Beasley-Lee".

Melissa Lea Beasley-Lee | President
president@nmrt66.org | melissa@melissalea.com