

Byway kiosk showcases Wetlands & Wildlife southern end State and local agencies mark opening with ribbon cutting

STAFFORD COUNTY — A new stop on the Wetlands & Wildlife byway was officially opened Friday, May 24, in Stafford County with a ribbon cutting organized by Stafford County Economic Development and the Wetlands & Wildlife Byway Committee.

According to Curtis Wolf, director of the Kansas Wetlands Education Center, the installation of the new kiosk at the U.S. 50 Highway rest stop was a pretty large project for the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway and had a lot of partners that helped make the project happen, so the committee wanted to recognize all those various cooperators with a ribbon cutting.



Wetlands & Wildlife Byway committee members attend a ribbon cutting for new signage in Stafford County. From left: Curtis Wolf, director of the Kansas Wetlands Education Center; Ashlee Bevan, program director for Stafford County Economic Development; Scott Shields, environmental programs administrator for Kansas Department of Transportation; Clayton Grimmatt, District 1 Stafford County Commissioner; Sue Stringer, Byways & Agritourism Manager for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism; and Bj Wooding, Barton County cartographer. COURTESY PHOTO Ashlee Bevan

For this specific project, Kansas Byways worked with the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway Committee, Stafford County, District 5 KDOT Area 1 office in Pratt, and Stafford County Economic Development Office. It was a culmination of the Kansas Byway's Interpretive Signage Project that was completed this past winter. "The U.S. 50 rest area has a lot of traffic, and being at the southern end of the W& W Byway, the committee feels like this is an excellent location to showcase the byway and provide travelers information about the wetlands that anchor the byway and the rich history and attractions of the seven byway corridor communities," Wolf said.

Scott Shields, KDOT Environmental Services-Kansas Byways and Sue Stringer, Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks & Tourism-Kansas Byways, spoke briefly at the informal ceremony.

Seven communities make up the Wetlands & Wildlife Byway corridor.

A committee made up of about 25 members representing each community meets every other month, rotating location among communities.

Barton County serves as the fiscal agent of the Byway and provides annual funding for the byway for website maintenance and various other annual expenses. Great Bend CVB has provided significant funds over the last couple years for marketing the Byway. Barton and Stafford counties have contributed to sign maintenance.

Recently, the byway has made a request to the member communities for extra funding in order to begin replacing some of the initial interpretive signs along the byway.

Most of the now weathering signs were installed 10 years ago and are due for a change. Individual and group donations are welcomed, and can be sent to the Barton County Treasurer, and noting on the check memo the funds are for the Wetlands & Wildlife Byway.

The Wetlands & Wildlife Byway is unique as it is one of only two byways in Kansas that are both state and national scenic byways.