

By Marlys Barker
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Everybody seems to love vintage cars, and when it comes to vintage cars, this year's Lincoln Highway Days has a very special treat to offer local residents.

Between 8:30 and 9 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29, the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association's River To River Motor Tour will travel through and make a stop in Nevada to be part of this year's Lincoln Highway Days celebration. Residents are invited to see the cars in one of two ways: 1) By getting your parade seat along the Lincoln Highway early that morning and watching the cars slowly drive past, starting around 8:30-9 a.m.; or 2) By going to the fairgrounds that morning, around 9 a.m., to get an up-close look at the cars, while the tour participants enjoy breakfast. Community members are also invited to breakfast.

Tour participants are staying overnight in Boone and plan to leave Boone around 7:30 that morning. They will stop in Nevada on their way to a lunch time in Marshalltown.

Coordinating a way for the River To River Motor Tour to be part of the Lincoln Highway Days celebration has been the mission of Jeff Starnes, treasurer of the LHD Committee. He has been working diligently with Jeff LaFollette, state director of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, to accomplish the stop in Nevada.

"I think it's a wonderful opportunity to be able to include the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, these vintage cars and their River To River event into our Lincoln Highway Days celebration. Their tour, as well as our celebration, is all about preserving the Lincoln Highway. There is certainly a common bond between the Association and our celebrating the Lincoln Highway named after one of our most-honored presidents," Starnes said.

Starnes is working to have LHD vendors open for breakfast early that Saturday morning at the fairgrounds, and also plans to open the craft area and some other buildings early, so the visitors will have things to look at and do.

LaFollette said the tour participants are looking forward to the Lincoln Highway Days stop in Nevada. "We really appreciate Jeff and the effort he has put into it to help coordinate this stop," he said.

Because the River To River Tour will be traveling from the west, and because Starnes wants them to be able to travel the parade route in Nevada, which runs from east to west, Starnes has decided to create a detour for the motorists, who will go off of Lincoln Highway at Airport Road, take new 30 to 19th Street, and then come into Lincoln Highway to go through town from east to west on the parade route.

LaFollette said about 75 percent of the cars driving on the River To River Tour are classics, and this year, in addition to Iowa participants, the Tour has guests from Colorado, Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin, who have signed up to take part.

The tour

This is the second year of the Iowa LHA's River To River Motor Tour, which starts at DeSoto Bend and ends at Clinton. Last year the tour, according to LaFollette, had 60 participants. "We're right on par (with registrations) for that (amount) this year," he said.

Having a motor tour is not a new concept, they've been sponsored by other groups along the Lincoln Highway and LaFollette, who used to be involved with the Route 66 Association while living in Illinois, said there have been many motor tours of that historic highway, too. But, last year and this year's Iowa Lincoln Highway Association River To River Motor Tour is the first time the ILHA has sponsored such an event.

"The main purpose (of the tour) is to let people know, especially those who live in Iowa, about their own little piece of history, to educate them and to have fun while we're doing it." LaFollette said he also believes that showing people a little of the history of the road helps to bring in new members to the Association. "People will join the tour, and for a few bucks extra, we sign them up as (ILHA) members."

Last year, LaFollette said, the tour became more like a caravan of "Follow the Leader," and there were some great stops. "One town, Lowden, had a live band for us. People really enjoyed the historic town of State Center." In all the communities, he said, people came out and put on meals or welcomed them. "We enjoyed the generosity of people, taking time out of their day ... good-old-fashioned Iowa hospitality."

Tour participants ranged in age last year from as young as 6-8, the children of a family that came on the tour, to a person who was 85.

This year, LaFollette explains, the tour, which runs three days, Aug. 28, 29 and 30, will start out a little differently, with some Thursday, Aug. 27, pre-tour activities. They will do a tour of the DeSoto Bend area and then go to a wine shop in Creston. They will also tour an association member's personal collection of vintage cars.

On Friday, Aug. 28, the tour will pull out from the Harrison County Welcome Center, east of Missouri Valley.

LaFollette said there are some great things to look forward to on this year's tour, like a stop at the Donna Reed Theatre and Museum in Denison, the stop in Nevada and a stop in Colo.

LaFollette encourages any residents who would like to be part of the River To River Tour to sign up. "There's still plenty of time to register, and people can also join the tour at any point (along the route)," he said. For more information, go online to: www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/iowa.

As for the stop in Nevada, LaFollette hopes that it's the beginning of other stops for the group in Nevada, and he hopes many Nevada residents will take the opportunity to enjoy seeing the River To River Tour. "If nothing else, come to see the old classics, and to maybe get a feel of what we're doing as a group. We're actually promoting the highway and promoting Nevada, because Nevada is part of that ribbon of communities ... communities that have a rich Lincoln Highway heritage."