



*Corridor  
Management  
Plan*



## **A. INTRODUCTION**

### ***Background and Public Input Process***

Jasper County is a scenic and historic gem located in the heartland of middle Georgia. This area of gently rolling hills, sweeping valleys and broad summits provides a cherished quality of life for its residents and a growing economic resource as more and more visitors make the countryside and historic towns their destination.

Growth and land use have long been areas of concern in Jasper County, Georgia. While the progress growth brings is desirable, many citizens realized that the quality of life enjoyed by this community might be compromised if not protected and enhanced. Also, the quality of life and rural character of the region have started to provide economic development through tourism. In 1996, the Monticello City Council contacted the Georgia DOT concerning protection for the scenic highways leading to this historically important city. Subsequently, the Scenic Byway Program was initiated at DOT and assisted the local committee and community in preparing the nominations for State Highways 11 and 83. This nomination, along with adjustments to local development regulations and land use plans, will help preserve the scenic and historic nature of these highways and help Jasper County in promoting tourism.

Since beginning work on this Corridor Management Plan, Monticello has been designated as a Georgia Better Hometown by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs—a process that involved broad-based, community-wide strategic planning. During the same period, Jasper County updated its a ten year land use map. The Scenic Byway nomination was broadly discussed with committees working on both Better Hometown initiatives and the county and city's comprehensive plan update and received tremendous community involvement and support from both groups. Indeed, about 2% of Jasper County's total population have had direct involvement in this project with many more being informed through coverage in the local newspaper and newsletters. (See newspaper article in Appendix.)

While the Department of Transportation did not require the individual written notification of all property owners along the byway regarding the proposed designation, affected billboard companies and property owners who leased land for billboards were notified in writing. Certification of this is provided in the appendix.

The following organizations and interested parties participated in the discussions that led to the application:

- Jasper County Board of Commissioners
- City of Monticello
- City of Shady Dale
- Jasper County Scenic Byway Committee

- Georgia Scenic Byway Project
- Development Authority of Jasper County
- Monticello-Jasper County Chamber of Commerce
- Monticello Better Hometown Program
- Monticello Downtown Development Authority
- Monticello Garden Club
- Monticello Kiwanis Club
- U. S. Forest Service
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Industry Trade and Tourism
- Jasper County Future Land Use Committee
- Jasper County Zoning Office
- City of Monticello Zoning Office

Many interested individuals also participated in discussions at the three public meetings held to prepare the Corridor Management Plan. The meetings were advertised in the local paper and through Chamber of Commerce flyers. The local paper also ran an article on the Scenic Byway Program. (See Appendix.) As mentioned, the proposal was also extensively discussed in conjunction with the Jasper County Future Land Use Plan Committee and the Scenic Byway route was adopted as part of the Jasper County Land Use Plan and presented to the Jasper County Board of Commissioners in December, 1998.

An application for consideration of a Scenic Byway designation was prepared and approved by the three local governments with jurisdiction— Jasper County, the City of Shady Dale and the City of Monticello. A Georgia DOT team visited the proposed byways and, following their recommendations a revised application was approved by the DOT on October 9, 1998. A final public meeting was held on January 7, 1999 to present the revised Corridor Management Plan. This current revision to the Corridor Management plan reflects additional recommendations from DOT's new byway consultants, as well as ideas coming from an additional strategy session facilitated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and attended by representatives from DOT, the City of Mansfield, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology and Law.

### ***Proposed Routes***

The Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway consists of two highways, Georgia 11 and Georgia 83 starting at the northern borders of Jasper County, crossing at the City of Monticello Square, and continuing to the southern city limits of Monticello and from there up Highway 83 through the historic town of Shady Dale. The "U" shaped 40 mile route is currently mostly rural and zoned agricultural and residential. The community has determined its greatest asset is this rural character and plans to exploit its tourism potential.

## ***Vision***

The community's vision for the Byway is to preserve the rural character of these roads while opening the tourism potential of this serene area so close to three major Georgia urban areas, Atlanta, Macon and Athens.

Our intention is not to completely halt development along the byway, but to ensure that landowners make wise choices—including high quality design and land uses that preserve the scenic and environmental qualities of the corridor. There must be widespread support for and recognition of the benefits of enhancing the Byway's potential as a regional tourist attraction. Achieving this goal will involve a strategy that combines public education, a range of housing programs and financial incentives targeted at property owners and carefully considered regulatory tools designed to minimize the visual impact of growth on the corridor.

A list of vision statements gathered from the public meetings include:

- Protect the natural beauty
- Maintain rural character
- Plan gateways for Monticello
- Educate the community to promote the Byway
- Provide for buffers along the Byway
- Complete the Perimeter Truck Route
- Have protection for Byway like historic districts
- Form a Byway Commission
- Complete a driving brochure
- Build a Welcome Center
- Have a web of county roads connected to the Byway

## **The Role of the Byway Commission**

Successful realization of the community's vision for the Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway will require creation of a local entity that can provide focus and continuity to the many projects envisioned. While elected officials will remain heavily involved in the various byway initiatives, creating a Byway Commission will give the Byway a more distinct community identity, provide a sounding board and political buffer for public reactions to the Byway initiative and ensure detailed project management regardless of changes in local government elections and staff.

Members will include:

- a byway's property owner appointed by the Jasper County Commission
- member from each participating community's planning/ zoning board
- member from the Historic Preservation Commission
- member from the Jasper/ Monticello Chamber of Commerce
- member from the Jasper County Economic Development Authority
- ad hoc representatives invited to attend from byway gateway communities such as Social Circle, Newton County and Mansfield.

Because the work program proposed is so complex, intensive, and time-sensitive the commission needs to be staffed by a part-time paid program coordinator within the first six months of operation. Grant funding will be sought to help fund this assistance. While someone from the community might be hired, an alternative would be to contract with a planning consulting firm for a certain number of staff hours per month.

### **Responsibilities of the Scenic Byway Commission**

- Implement the corridor management plan;
- Serve as a clearinghouse and public education provider for all corridor-related initiatives;
- Advise local planning and zoning boards on corridor issues;
- Assist local governments in administering Byway related grants;
- Oversee staffing and maintenance of Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway Trailhead Center for visitors (open 40 hrs per week);
- Promote regional tourism efforts, and working with gateway communities, sell the importance of the Byway as a regional asset and seek regional grant funding to carry out byway initiatives;
- Maintain corridor web site;
- Work with local Chambers on festivals, bike and run, and other events to publicize the byway;
- Serve as an early warning system to monitor the corridor for changes (i.e. land ownership, development permits, inappropriate land clearing);
- Help local governments set priorities for land acquisition and public investments in corridor enhancements;
- Under proposed new development regulations, review and render findings on all major development proposals within the corridor management zone, including any infrastructure extension proposals;
- In collaboration with the local KAB chapter, monitor and mitigate litter along the byway;
- Spearhead negotiations with property owners on billboard removal and conservation easements
- form a local land trust and/or identify a state non-profit to hold conservation easements;
- Oversee design and installation of bike trails, corridor landscaping, wildflower program;
- Promote the creation of a Jasper Co. Scenic Byway network emanating from the

- Provide access to small business resources to property owners cooperating with the Byway goals and objectives.

Local governments participating in the byway application are concerned that sprawl and inappropriate development at the gateways to the bypass between both ends of the Byway and I-20 could discourage exploration of the Byway by visitors. One of the primary goals of the Byway Commission will be to work with neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate land uses, signage and development proposals that protect the gateways to the Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway. The ideal scenario would be to eventually revise the byway designation to extend at least through the City of Mansfield on Hwy. 11 and perhaps further along both roads into areas of Newton County that still remain rural in character. If this were to occur, these governments would appoint members to the Byway Commission. However, even if the Byway is not formally extended, much can be done to coordinate rural heritage tourism efforts at the regional level, beginning with inviting Social Circle, Newton County and the City of Mansfield to appoint ad hoc representatives to attend Byway Commission meetings.

## **B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### ***Condition of Roads***

State Highway 11 and State Highway 83 are under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Department of Transportation. However, Georgia DOT assumes no financial or other legal responsibilities as a result of these roads being designated a scenic byway.

The road surface and rights-of-way are currently in excellent condition. Although the shoulders of the highways are not particularly wide, highway 11 is built on a 60-foot right-of-way that allows tree-shaded tunnels at several locations.

Two DOT projects (PI#231730 and #p231730) currently have the potential to impact the Byway either positively or negatively depending on design factors. The first proposal (PI#231730) calls for adding a passing lane for 1.7 miles near Murder Creek. No funding has currently been set aside for this project. Any action on PI#231730 is scheduled at least four years in the future. Thus there should be plenty of time to coordinate the project with the other long-term projects included in the Corridor Management Plan.

The second project intersecting the Byway is the Monticello truck route/bypass. It is being funded through the DOT Commissioner's office and is a short-term project now entering the environmental review phase. Construction is expected to commence by the year 2000. DOT's regional office in Tennile has been contacted and will meet with the Byway Commission to discuss project details. Current plans call for an at-grade "T" intersection. Since very little state money is available for landscaping, the DOT Regional Office has recommended including landscaping and trail access at this intersection be

included in a future Scenic Byway Discretionary Grant.

Traffic along the road is currently light to moderate and no major safety issues exist. Minimization of future driveways and curb cuts is an issue of concern to Byway advocates. DOT has been queried as to whether it can impose special access limitations or design requirements for curb cuts or require specific egress lane designs on State Scenic Byways that might conceivably be more restrictive than on other state roads. The community is awaiting an answer to this question and will consider the answer in revising byway land development regulations.

Maintenance issues on the road, such as trash pick-up, grass cutting, etc. have been discussed at county meetings. The corridor is relatively clean of trash, but as it becomes a more recognized tourist attraction it will become even more important to keep it pristine at all times. Plans call for enhancing the Adopt-a-Mile program. The Byway Commission will also arrange for a "SWAT team" to be called out in case of trash spills and the public will be able to report littering either by calling the Commission or via the Byway's website.

There are also some isolated sites along the byway that could benefit from visual screening with plantings or enhancement with wildflowers.

## **D. INVENTORY OF INTRINSIC QUALITIES**

*Note: Detailed location of scenic, natural, historic and recreational features along the byway will be provided on the GIS map which will be inserted in Appendix A. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has agreed to help generate this mapping tool, which will be completed forwarded to DOT by the end of June, 1999.*

### **Scenic Qualities**

North Jasper County, where both scenic byways originate, is an area of rural beauty with woodlands, pasture lands and historic farmhouses around every curve. Entering Jasper County on Ga. Highway 11 S. the driver is surrounded by rolling grasslands, reminiscent of Ireland, that is part of the 2200 acre Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center. The roadway passes through tree-shaded tunnels, pasture land, tree farms, stately houses, historic churches, pecan groves and abandoned country stores. Highway 83 S. contains scenes of unsurpassed pastoral beauty with high and low lakes nestled in the rolling pastureland framed by forests along the edges. Both roads crest several hills with vistas of the countryside stretching out to the horizon.

### **Preservation and Enhancement Strategies:**

To preserve and enhance the scenic intrinsic qualities of the Scenic Byway the

Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway Commission will have to address the following issues with the local governing agencies:

- Review zoning and land development regulations to promote cluster and add planned unit development alternatives to discourage "cookie cutter" housing developments;
- Consider creating a corridor overlay-zoning district that would require a higher level of design review along the corridor and possibly official review and approval of development proposals by the Byway Commission
- Encourage and promote best management timber practices to leave appropriate buffer on Byway;
- Update sign ordinances to ban billboards and off premise signs and set reasonable standards for on premise signage;
- Negotiate buy-out of existing billboards;
- Work with DOT to minimize scenic impact of road widening and new intersections on Byway;
- Establish a wildflower planting program;
- Develop and implement a landscape masterplan for the corridor aimed at preserving historic tree plantings such as orchards and ornamental plantings planting a diverse range of native species and screening development that distracts from the overall rural character of the Byway.

### ***Natural Qualities***

Jasper County is located in the central part of Georgia and the Piedmont region. The rolling land has low ridges and moderate slopes. All waterways that flow through the county originate in the county. This watershed is a pure and valuable resource that must be protected.

Oak and pine forests originally covered most of the county. Small parts of the original forest are still seen around the oldest homesteads and a large tract is in the Murder Creek wetland area along Highway 83. The diverse natural qualities of the land support a huge number of wildlife including, deer, wild turkey, geese, raccoon, skunk, bobcat, and a large number of predator fowl. In particular, the Red Cockaded Woodpecker is known to inhabit areas along the Byway.

Although to protect them animal habitat and endangered species sightings are typically not show on public maps, these areas will be inventoried with the assistance of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. DNR will be consulted about wildlife preservation strategies and asked to make recommendations for priority conservation areas and means of encouraging natural diversity along the Corridor.

### **Preservation and Enhancement Strategies:**

To preserve and enhance the natural qualities of the Byway will require the commission to:



- Complete and map a more intensive inventory of sensitive lands such as wetlands, flood plains, wildlife habitats and unique ecosystems and address protection of these areas in all participating governments' Comprehensive Plans and development regulations;
- Work with the Jasper County Water and Sewer Authority to protect the watersheds on the Byway;
- Develop and promote nature preserves and bird trails throughout the Byway, including planting native plant materials that will attract birds, butterflies and other species to viewing areas along the corridor; and
- . Work with DNR on a wildlife habitat protection strategy for the Byway including indentifying natural areas used for wildlife breeding and foraging and ensuring that these are connected by protected migration corridors.

### ***Historic Qualities***

Georgia Highways 11 and 83 loosely follow the paths of old Native American, pioneer and Methodist Circuit Rider routes. Indeed, on Highway 11 N. there is a large boulder named Dow's Pulpit for the famous Methodist evangelist that used the rock for a worship platform. Highway 83 crosses and follows the Seven Island Stage Coach Road which connected Augusta to Mobile, New Orleans and the Natchez Trace. Highway 83 also bisects the historic town of Shady Dale and the small community of Machen. Jasper County is currently pursuing National Register listing for the Seven Island Road.

Both Highways eventually climb the "little hill" where Monticello is located and make up half of the four highways that come together at the historic Square. This important central Georgia crossroads is dedicated to the historic preservation of its residential and downtown areas. The City of Monticello was recognized for its beauty and efforts in historic preservation by being listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1997. Four individual structures listed on the register are visible from the Scenic Byway; the Monticello Civic Center, the Jasper County Courthouse, the Monticello Presbyterian Church and the Jordan Bellew House.

The Central Business District enjoys local designation as well as the Forsyth Street District on Highway 83 S and the Eatonton Street Area District on Highway 11 S. (See Appendix for additional information on the county's historic resources.)

While this plan highlights some of the most well-known historic resources associated with the Byway, all significant historic sites within three miles of the byway will be inventoried by the year 2000 and located on the GIS Corridor Management Map. These attractions will also be used in marketing the Byway to visitors.

### **Preservation and Enhancement Strategies:**

To preserve and enhance the historic qualities of the Scenic Byway will require the

Commission to address these following issues:

- Encourage the formation of a Jasper County Historic Commission or expand the present Monticello Historic Commission to cover the entire county;
- Adopt county-wide historic preservation plan and ordinance;
- Conduct additional inventory research into the major and more obscure historic sites as a basis for interpretive materials and programs;
- Create a property improvement facade grant program for historic structures on the Byway;
- Educate through workshops the benefits of tax incentives to owners of historic property; and
- Work with Jasper County Public Works to monitor trash pick-up and mowing along routes.

### ***Recreational Qualities***

Highways 11 and 83 pass through areas of great recreational possibilities including state and federal park and forest land that is open for fishing, hunting and special activities for children and the disabled. Bicycling is a growing sport on these roads and just driving the road is a pleasurable recreational experience. A trailhead-Welcome Center is presently being planned in the center of Monticello that would serve as a museum, planning and rest stop for Scenic Byway visitors. The Benton Building, probably the most imposing architecture represented on the Monticello town square, is being restored to accommodate these uses. The citizens of Monticello have already demonstrated a significant commitment to this project by approving a 2.1 million-dollar bond issue to help renovate the building. This will be supplemented by a TEA-21 grant and, hopefully, assistance from the Scenic Byway Discretionary Grant program. Government offices will be housed upstairs; the trailhead center will occupy the first floor and open onto a pleasant, shady outdoor courtyard in the interior of the block.

A high-tech interactive interpretive exhibit will feature attractions to be found along the byway and show city and county trails and historic tours and other regional attractions. In addition the facility will provide public meeting space, a parking and public restroom facilities to serve bikers and hikers and motorists. The facility will be designed to accommodate larger groups such as BRAG (Bicycle Ride Across Georgia) and equestrian groups that will organize annual events utilizing the proposed local and regional trail system.

Not all of the amenities and attractions along the Byway will be provided by the public sector. As part of a regional eco-tourism strategy, some investments to be encouraged along the corridor and in the participating towns would include roadside attractions such as bed and breakfast facilities, camp grounds, gift shops, folk art galleries, equestrian and livery stables, hunting clubs, outdoor outfitters, plant nurseries, fruit and vegetable stands, restaurants, etc. Special focus will be placed on saving and reusing deteriorating historic structures for commercial ventures. There has also been discussion of a Trisha

Yearwood museum to be located near Monticello. The Byway Commission will work with local Chambers of Commerce to encourage financial capacity building for local entrepreneurs. Programs such as Small Business Administration and USDA Micro-Incentive Loans will be publicized to property owners in participating towns and along the Byway.

To preserve and enhance the recreational qualities of the Scenic Byway will require the Commission to address these issues:

- Improve Jasper County entrances to recreational sites including the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center, Rodeo, and Jackson Lake;
- Promote and develop bicycling, equestrian, hiking and birding trails along the byway as well as adequate camping facilities;
- Inform and educate private sector investors about the kinds of recreational attractions communities wish to attract along the byway as well as the sorts of development deemed inappropriate;
- encourage non-invasive, tourism- related small business along the Byway
- Provide a wide range of financial tools and job creation incentives to private sector entrepreneurs; and
- Acquire and develop land for Seven Island Road Park at Smith's Mill crossing on the Ocmulgee River.

## **CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway has been created following the desire of the people in Jasper county to maintain the rural atmosphere and quality of life that may be endangered by unplanned growth and development. Our vision is that public transport and natural, scenic and historic beauty have coexisted on these roads for hundreds of years and can continue to do so with the proper planning and protection. The following section summarizes management issues that will be addressed primarily through the mechanism of the Bypass Commission.

### ***Future Road Projects***

This Corridor Management Plan calls for all future road projects along the Byway to be reviewed and approved by the Byways Commission and constructed using the alternate highway design standards established in the Federal Highway Administration's publication, *Flexibility in Highway Design*.

### ***Sign Standards and Building Improvements***

No single issue is as critical to preserving the scenic and rural character of the Byway as control of outdoor advertising. The community acknowledges that designation of the route as a scenic byway will subject the route to certain federal restrictions on outdoor

advertising. Jasper County's current zoning specifically prohibits billboards from all areas designated for residential and/or agricultural uses. In anticipation of participating in the byway program, the City of Shadydale has also banned billboards. Monticello is following suit by taking a comprehensive look at its sign regulations. The Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway does pass through downtown Shady Dale and Monticello. These cities have existing commercial zoning districts that contain important historic resources. The community does not intend to segment out these areas, but instead will work to refine graphics and sign standards to enhance the overall Byway driving experience. To be truly effective, sign controls in commercial and more urban parts of the byway will need to address not only billboards but all on and off-premise advertising as well as temporary signs, banners, etc.

The Byway Commission will serve as a forum for promoting fair, consistent sign regulations along the byway and even at its gateways at I-20. Discretionary grants will be sought in the year 2000 to assist local governments in amending any over-permissive ordinances and buying out the two existing billboards on the corridor.

In addition, participating communities have secured the services of a partnership between the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design and the Department of Community Affairs to provide private property owners with free design consulting services. Owners wishing to improve the visual appearance of their properties and businesses have free access to façade drawings. Consultations are also available regarding adaptive reuse of historic structures. The Commission will work toward developing a multi-government façade matching grant or revolving loan program to help property owners fix up and landscape their homes and businesses.

The community will work with the Georgia DOT to place scenic byway signs along the route. The community also requests that byway signs be placed on Interstate 20 at exits 47 and 50 to direct tourists to the Byway.

### ***Land Use and Development Issues***

#### **Comprehensive Plan Linkages**

The citizen's committees working on the Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway have already accomplished one important goal for maintaining the rural nature of the byway by getting the route designated on the Jasper County Future Land Use Map, a required element of all local Comprehensive Plans under Georgia's Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning. Comprehensive plans form the legal support for local development ordinances and provide the day-to-day guidance system for local government decision making in Georgia.

The Jasper Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan text also establishes policy regarding the Byway. Under *Land Use Needs Assessment: Policies and Goals* is the following statement:

*To protect Scenic Byways, development should be designed and properly sited to complement the Scenic Byways. Preserving the rural character of Jasper County is paramount to county residents. While growth is needed and anticipated, it should not be at the expense of the quality of life. Strip commercial development should be avoided. Use of access roads should be encouraged and development should be adequately buffered from the road so not to negatively impact Jasper County's rural character. Commercial development should be clustered.*

Once the actual viewshed boundaries are defined using GIS 3D modeling a more accurate overlay district can be designated and for the byway route and proposed trail and conservation areas will also be incorporated on the City of Shady Dale and the City of Monticello's Future Land Use Maps when these are updated next year. Areas that are currently zoned agricultural, but shown on the 20 year planning horizon to be converted to residential uses will be particularly scrutinized if they fall within the Byway's viewshed. Whether to create an overlay zone, a special byway zoning district or handle development guidelines under PUD designation will be the subject of a special study undertaken by the Byway Commission in collaboration with all participating government's planning commissions.

As the Corridor Management Plan matures and evolves, and as additional goals and tasks are identified by the Byways Commission, these tasks will be incorporated into the local plans of all participating cities and counties. This will give Byway standards official standing and help make funding for future initiatives part of the regular capital budgeting process that cities and counties engage in annually. A major advantage of incorporating byway information into local plans will be to ensure that public infrastructure investments support rather than work against Byway goals and objectives.

### **Current Zoning and Development Regulations**

The majority of the non-urban areas adjacent to and surrounding the Scenic Byway are zoned for Agricultural uses. Minimum lot size in this zoning is five acres per house. Some portions of the Byway are currently zoned for low to medium density residential development, the lack of infrastructure, notably sewer and water service, is likely to result in relatively low population density along the corridor in the short term. Unfortunately large lot zoning alone will not preserve rural character. On the outskirts of the Byway, 4000 square foot Georgian town houses are cropping up along the roadway in former pasturelands. If development pressures continue to increase as projected under the current development regulations, individual driveway cuts could create traffic congestion on the corridor.

While incorporating Byway initiative in local comprehensive plans is an important first step in protecting rural character, planning must result in 1) modifications to various development regulations and 2) successful implementation of public education programs to ensure adequate protection to the Byway resources.

The Byway Commission will also work with other governments in the region to negotiate a "level playing field" on development standards along highways 11 and 83, even beyond the formal boundaries of the Bypass. It is hoped that the potential to receive state Regional Assistance Grants for regional tourism efforts will motivate other governments to adopt similar land use and sign regulations.

The Commission will make voluntary design guidelines and technical assistance available to property owners and developers beginning immediately, but the long-range solution will likely have a regulatory component. While it is anticipated that the affected local governments will be open to updating and refining local development ordinances, some matching funds from Byway Discretionary Grants or other non-local sources will be needed to help defray the cost of amending and improving local zoning and subdivision ordinances.

On a positive note, about 70% of the land along the corridor is currently protected by some form of agricultural easement—usually related to timber production. These are not perpetual easements, however; they lapse at various times. One of the most pressing tasks to be undertaken by the Byways Commission will be to research these easements and determine which parcels along the corridor are most imminently threatened by subdivision development. After determining which areas are most likely to be affected by development, as well as which areas have the highest scenic and historic value, the Commission will seek grant funding to protect priority areas with conservation easements. There has been some discussion of contracting with UGA's Institute of Ecology and Law to negotiate easements with property owners and draft flexible agreements built around individual owner's financial goals and commitment to preserving their land. In a minority of cases some land may have to be acquired to protect it.

### ***Tourism and Economic Development***

Tourism is the second largest industry in Georgia and is a great part of the future economic development of historic and scenic Jasper County. The City of Monticello is already on the National Register of Historic Places and the Monticello Historic Preservation Commission monitors the local districts in place along the routes. Jasper County is beginning the process of having county historic districts and a Jasper County Historic Commission. This will add to the protection and promotion of historic and tourist sites along the routes including the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center and Dow's Pulpit.

The primary gateways connecting the byway to I-20 run through the jurisdictions of Newton and Walton Counties and Mansfield from Hwy 11 and Morgan County from Hwy 83. Incompatible or insensitive development along these gateways would likely reduce the tourism potential of the byway and establish a bad first impression of the byway. North of I 20 the City of Social Circle has expressed interest in a joint

tourism/marketing strategy focused on "smart growth" principals and adaptive reuse of historic assets. A primary activity of the Commission would be to set up facilitated meetings with these adjacent governments to promote compatible development regulations, signage standards and a regionally coordinated tourism and marketing strategy. Several restaurants, a winery and other potential tourist attractions are on these connecting routes. It is hoped that by joining with these governments to seek state tourism funding (in particular, a Regional Assistance Program from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs), a coalition for quality growth can be formed.

Along the actual byway there are several major tourist attractions, including the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center the Dow's Pulpit Preaching Rock and the Stagecoach Road. In order the increase public awareness of tourism activities and to foster rural tourism development a critical mass of tourist destinations must be created. Shadydale Rodeo, the largest rodeo east of the Mississippi attracts 12,000 each year and the Deer Festival in Monticello attracts about 5000 visitors to the town square.

As stated earlier in this plan, a welcome Center and Scenic Byway Trailhead Center is proposed for the Monticello Government Complex now being renovated in the former Benton Supply Building on the Square in Monticello. This will also be the site for tourist information and maps of not only the Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway, but also the Jasper County Scenic Byway System now under review and development. In the long term, it may also prove beneficial to create tourist welcome stops or rest areas closer to each end of the byway.

Access to state funding and cooperation from other governments will be increased by seeing the Bypass in the context of a regional economic development strategy. The Byways Commission will provide a means of coordinating the efforts of local Chambers, Recreation Departments and non-profit organizations to market this incredible rural resource.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE**

In order to address the numerous goals and projects discussed in this corridor management plan, the plan concludes with an implementation timetable. (See Appendix A.) This timetable prioritizes tasks described herein and sets forth proposed start and finish dates, responsible parties, estimated costs and potential funding sources. While real world events (such as failure to obtain grant funding) may affect the actual implementation schedule this spreadsheet will provide work program guidance to the Byway Commission and other project participants. It will be regularly updated and sent out to elected officials and interested parties as events unfold.

## **CONCLUSION**

The citizens of Jasper County have united over the proposed Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway and have already taken steps to protect this valuable resource. The local

governments have strongly supported the routes through zoning and the Future Land Use Plans. The designation of the route and the yearly DOT review will act as a catalyst to gauge the direction and purpose behind the local covenants.

The Monticello Crossroads Scenic Byway will be a shining example of cooperation on a local, regional and state level working to fulfill the wishes of the people of Jasper County and the State of Georgia through this important project. Hopefully, this will inspire other counties and cities to work together to protect and promote their scenic roads and other areas that add to their community's special quality of life.





