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## **Excellence Award Winner from Sumter County**

**Sumter County** – The acting secretary for the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway is this year’s recipient of the Florida Scenic Highways Program’s highest honor; the *Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award*. Ms. Dawn Cary was presented the award Oct. 17. The award by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Scenic Highways Program recognizes leadership, innovation, stewardship, and achievements that have made a significant and lasting impact on a scenic highway, scenic highway community, or the statewide program. The award was established in 2015 to honor the late Garry Balogh, a popular Department of Transportation employee responsible for the designation and successful implementation of many Florida Scenic Highways, including Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway.

Cary is a community leader and local business owner who’s been active in the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway organization since its inception in 2009. She has acted as the liaison and leading advocate of the program to Sumter County, and its Board of County Commissioners, as well as other local government and business partners throughout the life of the byway organization.

Cary’s advocacy with Sumter County, and outreach to local businesses has enabled several cooperative public-private-partnerships for projects along the byway including a series of kiosks containing interactive informational panels at various stopping spots along the byway. The kiosks reflect the organization’s mission of preserving Sumter County’s natural beauty and cultural heritage for residents, visitors and future generations while creating economic opportunity for local communities.

Balogh and Cary worked together for several years during the eligibility and designation processes of the Program that led to the successful designation of the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway in 2013. According to Scenic Sumter Chairman Martin Steele, **“Dawn’s integral leadership in laying the foundation of the byway organization will leave a legacy for Sumter County and the State of Florida.”**

Jeff Caster, State Scenic Highways Coordinator for FDOT says **“Dawn is the right person for the award. She epitomizes Garry Balogh’s passion and energy for the Florida Scenic Highways Program.”**

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