



DESIGNATION ANNIVERSARIES

At the start of the year, there are four designation anniversaries to celebrate! We take this opportunity to thank the scenic byways' past and present board members, volunteers, and community supporters for all their hard work, dedication, and commitment to preserving and enhancing the beauty of Florida's intrinsic resources.

January

1/28 - Martin Grade Scenic Highway (2015) - 11th Anniversary

February

2/16 - The Ridge Scenic Highway (2005) - 21st Anniversary

March

3/12 - River of Lakes Heritage Corridor (2009) - 17th Anniversary

April

4/9 - Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway (2008) - 18th Anniversary

4/9 - Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Scenic Highway (2008) - 18th Anniversary

4/9 - Scenic Highway 30A (2008) - 18th Anniversary

4/17 - Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway (2008) - 25th Anniversary

4/24 - Pensacola Scenic Bluffs Highway (1998) - 28th Anniversary

4/30 - J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway (2010) - 16th Anniversary

Background Image: Bradenton Beach Scenic Highway



DEAN'S CORNER

opportunity to connect and exchange ideas, but for those who joined us virtually, we are glad to have offered that option again. Thank you to all who participated in the Annual Meeting. We appreciate your engagement and hope you found the experience valuable!

Dean Stoddart
FSHP State Coordinator

Spring in Tallahassee is a beautiful time of the year. Azaleas, pigeon plums, saucer magnolias, and every sort of flowering tree and shrub, which are normally green most of the year, are suddenly all competing for attention. It is an amazing blaze of color along nearly every road.

In the South, we have our palm trees, year-round tropical flowers, sunshine, and the Florida Scenic Highways Program Annual Meeting! This year, our annual meeting was held in Sebastian Inlet, and we were excited to welcome many of our byway leaders and friends.

In-person participation offers the best



BLOOMS ALONG THE BYWAYS

With winter coming to an end, it's a great time to get outside and explore one of the many gardens that call Florida home. From botanical gardens to state parks to Japanese gardens, there is something for every outdoor lover.

Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park

Location: Tallahassee

Nearest Scenic Highway: Big Bend Scenic Byway

Spanning 28 acres, the Alfred B. Maclay Gardens were donated to the State of Florida in 1953 following the death of the park's designer, Alfred Barmore Maclay. Maclay's goal was to incorporate both native and exotic plants in one design, which is still evident today. The park boasts a variety of camellias, azaleas, and dogwoods, as well as amenities such as swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, horseback riding trails, and hiking. Blooming season runs from January through April, and the historic Maclay family home is open for tours.



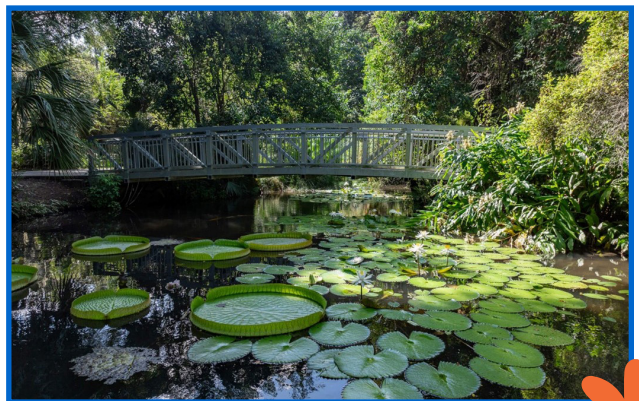
Source: [Florida State Parks - Maclay Gardens](#)

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

Location: Gainesville

Nearest Scenic Highway: Old Florida Heritage Highway

Named after Lake Kanapaha, the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens opened to the public in 1986. The site features 24 major garden collections, most notably the Giant Victoria water lilies, which bloom during the summer months, and the bamboo garden, the largest public bamboo collection in the state. Additionally, the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens hosts a variety of special events throughout the year, including the Camellia Show, the Spring Garden Festival, and seasonal plant sales and guided tours.



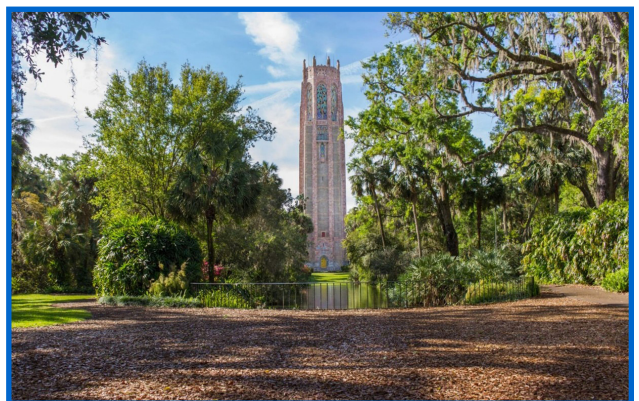
Source: [Visit Gainesville](#)

Bok Tower Gardens

Location: Lake Wales

Nearest Scenic Highway: The Ridge Scenic Highway

Designated as a National Historic Landmark and listed on National Register of Historic, Bok Tower Gardens was originally created by its namesake, Edward William Bok, as a 25-acre bird sanctuary. To create the sanctuary, the gardens and iconic Singing Tower were developed in collaboration with noted professionals such as landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., architect Milton B. Medary, tilemaker J.H. Dulles Allen, sculptor Lee O. Lawrie, and metalworker Samuel Yellin.



Source: [Visit Central Florida](#)

Florida Botanical Gardens

Location: Largo

Nearest Scenic Highway: Courtney Campbell Scenic Highway

Comprised of approximately 100 acres, the Florida Botanical Gardens features 26 distinct garden collections, including a Cactus/Succulent Garden, Native Plant Garden, Herb Garden, Topiary Garden, and Vinery. Composed of both native and exotic plant species, this free garden has plenty of places to explore. Be sure to check their [website](#) to see what is in bloom and what special events are happening during your visit.



Source: [The Florida Botanic Gardens Foundation](#)



Palma Sola Botanical Park

Location: Bradenton

Nearest Scenic Highway: Palma Sola Scenic Highway

The Palma Sola Botanical Park began in 1990 as a grassroots effort to preserve the land that was home to the former Manatee County Nursery. This 10-acre site is unique due to its warm microclimate and lack of frost during the winter months, making it a perfect environment for rare palms, exotic fruit trees, and subtropical plants. The park offers a variety of wellness workshops and horticulture classes, as well as an “Art in the Park” exhibit featuring local and professional artists.



Source: [Palma Sola Botanical Park Foundation](#)



Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Location: Sarasota

Nearest Scenic Highway: Tamiami Trail – Windows to the Gulf Coast Waters Scenic Highway

Founded in 1975, the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is now split into two distinct locations: the 15-acre Selby Gardens in downtown Sarasota and the 30-acre Historic Spanish Point campus outside Osprey, which was acquired in 2020. Between these two campuses, visitors can learn about horticulture, archaeology, and botany. Most notably, the downtown campus boasts their extensive bromeliad and orchid programs.



Source: [Marie Selby Botanical Gardens](#)

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens

Location: Delray Beach

Nearest Scenic Highway: Broward County A1A Scenic Highway

After World War II, George Sukeji Morikami, one of the last remaining settlers of the Yamato Colony, a Japanese agricultural community established in the early 20th century near present-day Boca Raton, donated his land to Palm Beach County. This land would eventually become the Morikami Park and Japanese Gardens, serving as a Japanese and Yamato Colony cultural and educational center. Unlike a traditional botanical garden, the 16-acre gardens, known as Roji-en (translated to Garden of the Drops of Dew), does not feature signage identifying plant species, similar to an authentic Japanese garden. The museum is home to more than 7,000 art objects and artifacts.



Source: [Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens](#)



McKee Botanical Garden

Location: Vero Beach

Nearest Scenic Highway: Indian River Lagoon – Treasure Coast Scenic Highway

Originally opened as McKee Jungle Gardens in 1922, the McKee Botanical Gardens reopened in 2001 on an 18-acre portion of the original 80-acre site. This 18-acre botanical garden is home to over 10,000 plants and features architectural icons like the Hall of Giants, Spanish Kitchen, and Bamboo Pavilion. As part of their Centennial Exhibition, McKee is hosting Florigami in The Gardens, an outdoor sculpture exhibit presenting a modern, large-scale take on origami, the Japanese art of paper folding (Note: exhibit closes May 24, 2026).



Source: [McKee Botanical Garden](#)

FDOT TRANSPORTATION DAY 2026

On February 17, FDOT hosted Transportation Day 2026 at the State Capitol, bringing together members of Florida's transportation community for a day of celebration and collaboration. Programs and initiatives from across the state gathered in Tallahassee to highlight transportation projects, innovations, and progress, featuring interactive stations and simulators.

The Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) participated with a table showcasing program materials and episodes of *Florida Crossroads*, helping raise awareness of FSHP's role while providing a great opportunity to learn about the many programs within FDOT.



Dean Stoddart, FSHP Program Coordinator, at FDOT Transportation Day 2026

BYWAY DOINGS

William Bartram Sighting in Central Florida

William Bartram explored Florida in the 1770s under commission to document its plant and animal life, leaving behind a vivid account of his four-year journey in his book *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*. He and his father, John Bartram, had first visited the region in 1765 to survey the St. Johns River for the newly acquired British colony. When William returned alone in 1773, he embarked on expeditions that took him through the St. Johns River basin and Paynes Prairie, recording his observations with scientific precision, artistic flair, and deep respect for the natural world and Native American cultures.



"William Bartram"

Fast forward nearly 300 years, and Bartram made a surprising appearance this fall at the 49th Annual Fall Country Jamboree in Barberville! Looking remarkably spry for a man of his age, he mingled with visitors at the Florida Black Bear



"William Bartram" at the Florida Black Bear Booth

National Scenic Byway (FBB) Organization's information table. Throughout the day, he regaled guests with tales of his adventures in Florida, his encounters with wildlife, and his enduring love for the St. Johns River. His favorite pursuit - studying plants and animals - was a recurring theme as he described what he saw and experienced while traveling through Central Florida.



Jim Thorsen and "William Bartram"

An earlier Bartram sighting this fall was also covered by the *Outpost News*, the local community newspaper which detailed his efforts to spread wildflower seeds on the FBB along Highway 19 at Getchell's Curve near Pitman in late October.

Today, Bartram's legacy lives on through several Central Florida byways that celebrate

his journey and contributions, including the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway, William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway, River of Lakes National Heritage Corridor, and Old Florida Heritage Highway. Bartram's legacy also lives on through reenactors like Florida Black Bear board member Mike Cross who graciously brings William Bartram to life on a regular basis.

To learn more about these byways and how they honor Bartram's legacy, visit the Florida Scenic Highways Program website: [Florida Scenic Highways](http://FloridaScenicHighways.com).



Garage Sales Galore!

Fall is prime time for garage sales, and Florida's Scenic Highways didn't disappoint! Several byways hosted major events last fall, drawing crowds of bargain hunters and showcasing the beauty of their byways.

On November 1st, The Ridge Scenic Highway organization conducted its 18th Annual 39-Mile Yard Sale. This beloved tradition invites residents and visitors to explore the historic 39-mile stretch of S.R. 17 while hunting for treasures.



The event featured six official hubs: Lake Hamilton Town Hall, Dundee Methodist Church, Lake of the Hills Community Clubhouse, Lake Wales Woman's Club, Lake Wales Lutheran Church, and the Frostproof Chamber of Commerce. Beyond these official hubs, dozens of unofficial yard sales lined the highway. Hundreds of bargain hunters cruised the route, turning the byway into a lively corridor of deals and discoveries.



Garage Sale Participant

With growing participation each year, The Ridge Scenic Highway's Yard Sale continues to be a highlight for locals and visitors alike. More than just a shopping spree, this event connects people to the byway. Byway Chair Jennifer Nanek noted that funds raised help make each year's event even better, strengthening the byway's mission of community engagement.

Two weeks later, on November 15th, the Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway hosted the Super Scenic 150 Mile Garage Sale, now in its 17th year. Starting along the original 72-mile stretch of

Byway Doings (Continued)

A1A, the sale has grown to include neighboring byways, creating up to 150 miles of shopping opportunities. Shoppers explored the A1A Ocean Islands Trail (Nassau, Duval), A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway (St. Johns, Flagler), Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail (Volusia), and Halifax Heritage Byway (Volusia).

According to Byway Administrator Dani Anderson, more than 400 sellers participated, and thousands of visitors converged on the corridor from Daytona Beach to Fernandina Beach for a day of bargains, scenic views, and local flavor. Even local media took notice, with FOX 35 Orlando covering the event. [17th annual A1A Super Scenic Garage Sale | FOX 35 Orlando](#)

As Dani put it: *“The Super Scenic Garage Sale is more than a shopping event - it’s a celebration of our vibrant byway communities and small businesses. We love seeing the community come together and enjoy everything the A1A corridor has to offer.”*



Local Business Promoting the A1A Garage Sale



A1A Garage Sale Volunteers

Want to learn more or get involved? Visit the Florida Scenic Highways Program website for links to these byway organizations. [Florida Scenic Highways.](#)

J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway Celebrates America250 and More

On July 4, 2026, our nation will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This milestone offers a unique opportunity to reflect on our shared history, honor the contributions of all Americans, and envision the future we hope to build for generations to come. In anticipation of this historic event, the National Scenic Byway Foundation hosted a webinar in May 2025, featuring Heidi Schlag. Heidi is a marketing professional who helps heritage and cultural organizations build strong brands and expand their reach. She encouraged byway organizations across the country to



participate in the celebration in creative and meaningful ways and suggested, for example, events centered around the number 250.

Inspired by this call to action, the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway organization began brainstorming ways to celebrate both America250 and the 100th anniversary of the Penney Retirement Community (PRC), also occurring in 2026. The planning committee landed on a

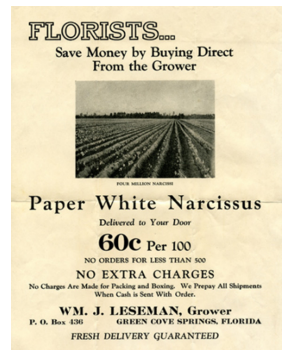


Daffodils

symbolic and heartfelt idea: planting 250 daffodil bulbs along the byway.

Daffodils hold a special place in the history of the Town of Penney Farms.

Founded by department store magnate James Cash Penney as a utopian farming community grounded in Christian values and self-sufficiency, the town once featured demonstration plots of ornamental and practical crops. One town business that thrived during the early years of the town was a flower bulb business owned by Bill Lesman. While several varieties of bulbs were grown, much of Lesman’s efforts focused on Daffodil bulbs. In fact, his business was so successful, the town’s leaders encouraged Lesman to relocate his planting fields closer to S.R. 16 to attract more visitors to the community.



Flyer for Bill Lesman’s Business

These spring bloomers have become a quiet emblem of the town’s enduring spirit. As the byway organization prepares to celebrate the country’s 250th anniversary and PRC’s century mark in the community, the daffodil planting serves as a living tribute to the town’s agricultural roots and



Bill Lesman

America’s story. This spring, visitors will be greeted by vibrant blooms, symbolizing resilience and renewal.

Learn more about the America250 celebration at [America250FL](#) and explore the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway here: [J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway.](#)



Florida Crossroads Hits the Road: Spotlight on South Florida Byways

Award-winning series captures the beauty and stories of Florida's scenic highways

Now in its fourth season, the partnership between the Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) and WFSU, Tallahassee's Public Broadcast Channel, continues to shine a spotlight on Florida's unique byways. Last fall, the award-winning documentary series *Florida Crossroads* headed south to film three more scenic corridors: Indian River Lagoon – Treasure Coast, Broward County A1A Scenic Highway, and the Florida Keys Scenic Highway.



Florida Crossroads is a half-hour program that captures the people, places, and stories shaping the Sunshine State. For this effort, the production team spent a week on location, filming breathtaking views and uncovering unique stories. As part of each visit, they also interviewed community members who help preserve these treasured routes. Because of the length of the byways and the travel distances involved, two film crews were deployed to ensure complete coverage. As in previous years, each crew dedicated a full day to filming the intrinsic resources along each corridor. This was followed by interviews with key representatives from local byway organizations and community partners.



Florida Crossroads Filming

The new episodes have been released and can be viewed on *The Florida Channel* and on the FSHP website ([Document Library | Florida Crossroads](#)). These videos continue to celebrate Florida's scenic highways and the communities they connect.



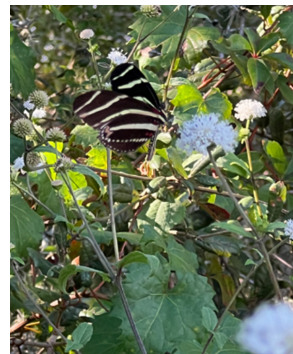
A Garden Blooms Along the Byway: Green Mountain's Viva Florida Success

Back in Fall 2023, the Green Mountain Scenic Byway team jumped at the chance to apply for the Florida Wildflower Foundation's Viva Florida Landscape Demonstration Gardens Grant. As Byway Chair Greg Gensheimer said, "Talk about perfect timing!". The byway secured a \$700 Viva Florida Grant and added \$600 of its own funds to create a community demonstration project. The project's goal was to promote native plants and highlight Florida wildlife - all while connecting ongoing community initiatives and celebrating Florida's natural beauty.



Viva Florida Garden Sign

The Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead project, designed to showcase the Lake

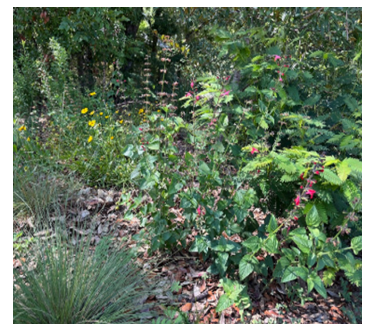


A Butterfly with Wildflowers

Wales Ridge ecosystem, began with a native plant rescue over a decade ago. The plants were saved and replanted after the original overlook structure was constructed in 2014. The organization has now added an elaborate birdbath. The Viva Florida grant gave the byway the chance to refresh those original plantings and enhance the water feature.

Local Native Plant Society members teamed up with byway volunteers to create and maintain the garden, contributing about 250 volunteer hours to complete the project. Here's where the magic happened: months after installation, the "demonstration garden" name really came to life. Visitors started stopping to admire the blooms and butterflies.

To learn more about the Green Mountain Scenic Byway or their Viva Florida Grant project, contact Greg at greggensh@comcast.net.



Wildflower Garden

Treasure Coast Byway Shines at Indian River Lagoon Science Festival

The Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Byway proudly returned to the Annual Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Science Festival in Fort Pierce on October 25, bringing fresh energy and new ways to engage visitors. This year's byway table was even better than last year's, with more volunteers and additional byway-themed materials designed to engage event participants.



With the festival's focus on the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem, it was the perfect opportunity for the byway organization to get involved in the community.

Armed with FSHP sunglasses, byway brochures, and other promotional materials provided by FDOT's Scenic Highways Program had a fun day talking with dozens of event goers who learned about the Treasure Coast Byway and the Florida Scenic Highways Program.



Byway Table at the IRL Science Festival



Kids Painting Seashells

The booth attracted steady crowds throughout the day, with kids painting over 200 ceramic seashells. By the end of the day, the organization had met dozens of event participants, gained new followers on

the byway Instagram page, and connected with community partners.

To learn more about the Indian River Lagoon - Treasure Coast Byway, visit the Treasure Coast Scenic Highway website or contact Stephanie Torres at torress@stlucieco.org



Byway Volunteers at the IRL Science Festival

Bartram's Big Ideas Taking Shape

The William Bartram Scenic Highway leadership team had an exciting and productive fall, marked by generous support and bold initiatives.

A Major Gift to Advance Education

In 2025, Byway Chair Joe McAnarney received a call that changed everything - an anonymous donor offered an extraordinary gift: \$10,000 to support the scenic highway's mission. The donor commended the byway's dedication to preserving the region's natural beauty and educating the public about William Bartram's legacy.

Joe noted that this gift will help bring community education about Bartram's travels through St. Johns County to life. The development of educational tools that tell the byway's story is a cornerstone of the organization's Corridor Master Plan 'Big Ideas,' and the team is eager to begin planning efforts with the county and donor to make this long-hoped-for vision a reality.



Corridor Master Plan

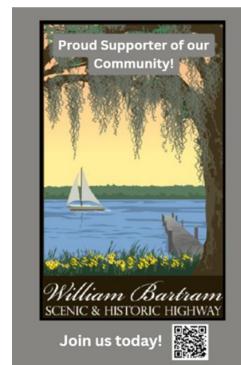
Building Stronger Business Partnerships

The byway team is also laying the groundwork for stronger ties with local businesses. A new outreach strategy invites business plaza owners along the highway to join a Byway Community Planning Council - a collaborative effort to help businesses thrive while preserving the scenic and cultural character of the corridor.

The byway leadership team also recently created a Bartram-branded window cling for participating

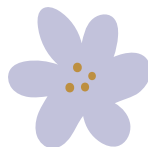
businesses. These clings showcase community pride and connect businesses to the byway's growing social media presence, driving more visitors and shoppers to local stores.

Much of the organization's 2026 work plan centers on these partnerships, reinforcing the idea that the scenic highway is a shared economic and cultural asset.



Window Cling

To learn more about the projects or the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway, contact Joe McAnarney at joemcanarney@yahoo.com.





Start Your Journey Here: A1A Gateway Monument Restored

Friends of the A1A Scenic & Historic All-American Road are thrilled to announce the completion of the restoration project for their northern gateway monument!

Sarah Carrigan, a well-known mosaic artist from St. Augustine and her dedicated team have done an outstanding job repairing and restoring the monument's beautiful tile mosaic face.

This project was originally conceived in the early 2000s and received a National Scenic Byway grant in 2007, with design and construction beginning soon after. Strategically located at the Duval/ St. Johns County line, the monument welcomes travelers entering the byway from the Jacksonville area - reminding visitors and locals alike that they are on a National Scenic Byway.

After nearly 20 years, the monument had lost its luster due to extensive tile damage and stains on the base of the monument. Before restoration work could begin, Friends of A1A board members Bob Samuels and Rick Belhumeur meticulously cleaned the monument, careful not to cause additional damage to the structure. Once complete, Sarah and her team worked to color match the tiles, reseal the entire monument's tile work, and repaint the exterior, restoring the monument to its original beauty.



A1A Gateway Monument Before Restoration

Today, the rehabilitated monument proudly stands at the northern entrance to the All-American Road, ready to welcome all who travel the byway.



A1A Gateway Monument After Restoration

Next time you're near the Duval/St. Johns County line, take a moment to admire this piece of byway history!

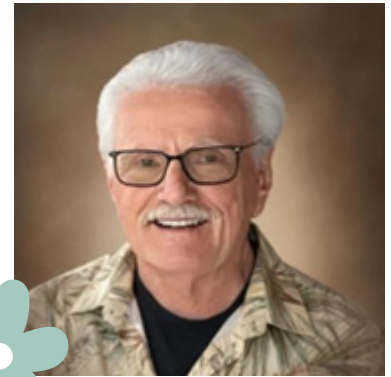
To learn more about the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway visit their website: <http://www.scenica1a.org/>

Goodbye to a True Friend - Dan McCormic

We say goodbye to a true friend and visionary, Dan McCormic, whose passion helped shape the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway Organization. Dan was a proud Florida native and devoted member of the Sumter County community. As a founding member of the byway organization, he helped tell the story of the byway and its significance to the region. He was responsible for helping to assemble the designation application providing much of the historic and cultural story.

Dan originally coined the phrase "Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway" that became the official name of the byway upon designation. Later in his time with the byway organization, he helped develop our National Scenic Byway nomination application and the Wahoo Swamp Byway Extension application, again helping to define the significant, exceptional, and distinctive resources of south Sumter County.

Dan's legacy lives on in every mile of the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway. His knowledge, passion, and humor will be deeply missed.



Dan McCormic



Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway

Visit Us Online!



DISTRICT SCENIC HIGHWAY COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

Name: Amy Roberson

District: 2

Tell us about yourself:

I don't usually share my age, but this year I'm turning 50 – and talking about it makes it feel less like a big milestone. Honestly, I feel blessed. I'll be celebrating 50 as America celebrates 250, which is pretty amazing. Happy Birthday to America and me!

Working in the Transportation industry has been an incredible journey, and I encourage anyone to explore the opportunities this field offers. Over the past 20 years, I've learned more than I ever imagined – from new roadway construction, contracts, federal/state grants, trail design/construction to innovations like drone technology. Of course, my most recent experience has been working with Florida's Scenic Byways. One of the most rewarding experiences in my transportation career has been working with incredible people, both internally and externally, and engaging with the citizens of District 2. Their collaboration and commitment have truly made a lasting impact.

How long have you been part of the Florida Scenic Highways Program?

I've been part of the Florida Scenic Highway Program since September 2024, which is included in my role as District Planning Supervisor. While my time as Scenic Highway Coordinator is just under two years, I bring over 20 years of experience to the program and have lived in North Florida my entire life.

It's truly rewarding to contribute to Florida's Scenic Highway Program and help preserve and showcase the beauty and history of our state's roadways.

Tell us about your experience volunteering with the Florida Scenic Highways Program:

Working with the six Scenic Highway groups in District 2 has been an incredible experience. The passion and dedication these volunteers bring



Amy Roberson at J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway

to preserving and enhancing the byways and communities is truly inspiring.

What are the intrinsic qualities throughout the byways in your District that have stood out to you?

Living in North Florida, I feel a personal connection to the Scenic Highways I work with. The All-American A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway and the A1A Ocean Islands Trail Byway are absolutely stunning. The ocean views and rich history never fail to take my breath away. I've visited these areas many times over the years and am never disappointed.

The J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway holds a special place in my heart. My mom worked at Penney Farms

Retirement Community for years, so as kids, my sister and I often visited the area. The canopy trees, they are like no others, you always know when you're in Penney Farms just by riding under them.

The William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway is also special to me. My grandmother lived on the southern end of C.R. 13, just south of the byway, and those "Granny memories" are the best.

I've been making new memories along the Old Florida Heritage Byway by visiting Paynes Prairie, a beautiful state park where you can see wild horses and buffalo roaming. And the town of Micanopy exudes history.

I'm also learning so much about the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway, which runs through the Ocala National Forest, a gorgeous route with plenty of rural scenery. Finally, congratulations to Jim and Nikki Thorsen, the 2025 winners of the Garry Balogh Award, such a well-deserved honor!

What has been your favorite part of being a District Scenic Highway Coordinator?

Getting out of the office and traveling the byways. There's no better way to get to know the needs of communities than to get out and visit them.

What is one piece of advice you would give to a byway organizations based on your experience?

Keep doing what you're doing, it takes special people to volunteer for the betterment of their community. Their dedication makes a lasting impact.

What does the future look like for the byways in your District?

I believe the future is bright for the byways in District 2. Each byway has strong representation and continues to work diligently to preserve the unique beauty of each route. While development will continue to be a key challenge, the dedication and collaboration among these groups gives me confidence that these scenic treasures will endure for generations to come.

Which byway would you most like to visit and why?

I've never been to the Florida Keys, so visiting the Florida Keys Scenic Highway is definitely on my list! As a true Florida girl, I love the outdoors and those hot Florida summer days are part of what makes exploring our state so special.

Any final thoughts?

It's an honor to work with the Byway community. All our volunteers are very special to me. I encourage everyone to volunteer it makes our communities a better place to live.



Amy Roberson at A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway

THE 2025 GARRY BALOGH INSPIRING EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS ARE...



JIM AND NIKKI THORSEN!



The Florida Scenic Highway Program is proud to recognize Jim and Nikki Thorsen of the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway as recipients of the 2025 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award (GBIEA)!

Named in honor of Garry Balogh, who served 20 years as District 5 Scenic Highway Coordinator and mentored byway leaders statewide, the GBIEA was established to celebrate exemplary service within the Florida Scenic Highways community. First presented in 2015, it is the Program's highest honor, recognizing outstanding leadership, innovation, stewardship, and lasting impact on Florida Scenic Highways and their communities.

Jim and Nikki have been involved with the FSHP since 2005, working alongside Garry Balogh to help establish the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway, which was designated in 2008 and later received national designation in 2009. Their long-standing dedication and commitment to the byway and the FSHP continue to inspire others.

Congratulations to Jim and Nikki on this well-deserved honor!



Recipients Jim Thorsen, Byway Chair, and Nikki Thorsen, Byway Secretary, being presented with the 2025 Garry Balogh Inspiring Excellence Award