

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Illinois State Museum Route 66 exhibit to open May 23**

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Museum (ISM) invites the public to get their kicks at a new “Miles of Memories: Stories of Route 66” exhibit opening Saturday, May 23. The exhibition brings to life the experience of living, working and traveling along U.S. Route 66 during its heyday.

The exhibit incorporates the museum’s [Route 66 Oral History Project](#), a collection of 100 interviews with people who experienced the road when it served as the primary route between Chicago and Los Angeles. Visitors can listen to excerpts from these firsthand accounts throughout the exhibit.

On display will be a range of Route 66 memorabilia, including vintage souvenirs, neon signs, fiberglass advertising figures and Burma-Shave signs.

“This exhibit is a must-see for any fan of Route 66,” said **ISM curator of history Erika Holst**. “What sets it apart is the opportunity to hear memories of the Mother Road in the voices of the people who lived it.”

Commissioned in 1926, Route 66 was promoted as the shortest, best and most scenic route between Chicago and Los Angeles. It served as a major corridor to the West Coast for decades until the development of the federal interstate system. Renewed interest in the late 20th century transformed Route 66 into a popular road trip destination, now attracting millions of visitors from around the world each year. The highway marks its centennial anniversary this year.

“Some of the stories featured in the exhibit cover topics that even seasoned Route 66 travelers may not have heard before,” said **ISM registrar of history Amanda Bryden**. “There is something for everyone, regardless of familiarity with the road.”

The project was made possible through support from the [Illinois State Museum Society](#), the Hanson family, Jane and Paul Ford and Loken Family funds at the [Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln](#), in partnership with the Lumpkin Foundation, Stifel and the [Cozy Dog Drive In](#).

“Miles of Memories” will be on view through April 4, 2027. The [Illinois State Museum](#) offers free admission and is open daily.

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### **About the Illinois State Museum**

Established in 1877, the Illinois State Museum is a dynamic institution that inspires the exploration of Illinois' past and present to inform and enrich everyday life and promote stewardship of cultural and natural resources. Headquartered in Springfield with branch facilities in Lewistown and Lockport, ISM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and a proud member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.