

CHAPTER 306D
SCENIC ROUTES

Referred to in §307.26

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306D.1 Statement of purpose — intent.

- 1. The general assembly finds that:
a. The state offers numerous regions through which people can drive for the pleasure of viewing unusually scenic and interesting landscapes; however, routes to and through these areas have not been adequately identified for Iowans and state visitors.
b. Among those things that attract motorists to the state’s landscape are agricultural lands, forests, river basins, distinctive landforms, interesting architecture, metropolitan areas, small rural towns, and historic sites.
c. The landscape qualities of unusually scenic routes throughout the state have not been protected from visual and resource deterioration particularly along routes which pass near the state’s nationally significant areas such as the bluffs of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, the Amana colonies, the Herbert Hoover national historic site, federal reservoirs, communities surrounding the state’s natural lakes, the Des Moines river greenbelt, the great river road, and many others.
d. A principal goal of economic development in this state is to increase the influence which travel and tourism have on the state’s economic expansion.
e. Iowans and visitors should be encouraged to travel to and through unusually scenic areas of the state.
f. A program should be established, following a statewide plan, to identify and promote highways and secondary routes which pass through unusually scenic landscapes and to protect and enhance the scenic qualities of the landscape through which these routes pass.
2. In addition to other goals for the program, it is the intention of the general assembly that the scenic highways program be coordinated with the state’s open space program under chapter 465A.

87 Acts, ch 175, §1; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §64

Referred to in §306D.2

306D.2 Statewide scenic highways program — objectives and agency duties.

- 1. The state department of transportation shall prepare a statewide, long-range plan for the protection, enhancement, and identification of highways and secondary roads which pass through unusually scenic areas of the state as identified in section 306D.1. The department of natural resources, the economic development authority, private organizations, county conservation boards, city park and recreation departments, and the federal agencies having jurisdiction over land in the state shall be encouraged to assist in preparing the plan. The plan shall be coordinated with the state’s open space plan if a state open space plan has been approved by the general assembly. The plan shall include, but is not limited to, the following elements:
a. Preparation of a statewide inventory of scenic routes and ranking of relative uniqueness for each route. The degree to which these routes suffer from negative visual intrusions shall be documented.
b. Recommended techniques for preserving and enhancing the scenic qualities associated with each route.
c. Forecasts of significant changes in traffic volumes and environmental, social, and economic impacts if scenic routes are publicly identified and promoted as tourism attractions.
d. Recommended techniques for incorporating scenic highway routes in state and local tourism development and marketing programs.

e. Landscape management needs including maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvements to scenic areas.

f. Funding levels needed to accomplish the statewide scenic highway program.

g. Recommendations of how federal and state transportation programs can be modified or developed to assist the state's scenic highway program.

2. The preparation of the plan is subject to an appropriation by the general assembly for that purpose. The plan shall be submitted to the general assembly by January 15, 1988. Prior to submission of the plan to the general assembly, the department shall request comments on the proposed plan from state agencies, federal agencies, and private organizations with interests in scenic highways. The comments shall be submitted to the general assembly.

[87 Acts, ch 175, §2](#); [2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1021, §64](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §2111](#)

306D.3 Plan recommendations and pilot projects.

1. The department's recommendations to the general assembly shall include proposed legislation for the state to acquire and protect scenic landscapes along public roads and highways.

2. Before January 1, 1989, the department shall identify four pilot scenic highway routes across two or more counties each for trial promotion in the state's tourism marketing program.

[87 Acts, ch 175, §3](#)

306D.4 Scenic highway advertising.

1. The department of transportation shall have the authority to adopt rules to control the erection of new advertising devices on a highway designated as a scenic highway or scenic byway in order to comply with federal requirements concerning the implementation of a scenic byways program.

2. Notwithstanding [subsection 1](#), if an advertising device was lawfully erected along an interstate highway within the corporate limits of a city prior to designation of the highway as a scenic byway and, after such designation occurs, the advertising device is displaced due to the reconstruction, improvement, or relocation of the highway, the advertising device may be relocated to a location determined by the department to be substantially the same location, subject to approval by the federal highway administration, and shall not be considered an erection of a new advertising device, if all of the following apply:

a. The location conforms to the requirements of [chapters 306B](#) and [306C](#).

b. The materials, number and type of supports, lighting, face size, and height of the advertising device remain the same.

[95 Acts, ch 135, §4](#); [2013 Acts, ch 140, §22](#)

Referred to in [§306C.11](#)