

**2020**

***Big Darby Plains*** Corridor Management Plan (CMP)

Ohio Department of Transportation

Submitted ***February 2020***



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  | Page #   |
|--|----------|
| <b><u>I. INTRODUCTION</u></b>                                      | <b>1</b> |
| A. Designation Summary   |          |
| B. Byway Route Map   |          |
| <b><u>II. BYWAY STRATEGIC PLAN</u></b>                             | <b>2</b> |
| A. Vision, Mission and Beliefs                                     |          |
| B. Accomplishments since last CMP                                  |          |
| C. Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans                             |          |
| <b><u>III. BYWAY ORGANIZATION</u></b>                              | <b>6</b> |
| A. Structure and Organization                                      |          |
| B. Committees, Representatives, Partners, Stakeholders             |          |
| C. Leaders' Contact Information                                    |          |
| D. Level of Participation in State/Regional Meetings and Trainings |          |
| E. Byway Leadership Succession Plan                                |          |
| <b><u>IV. BYWAY CORRIDOR CONDITIONS</u></b>                        | <b>8</b> |
| A. Road Conditions and Signage                                     |          |
| B. Primary and Secondary Intrinsic Quality/Resources               |          |
| C. Changes in Intrinsic Quality/Resources since last CMP           |          |
| D. Accessibility to Intrinsic Quality/Resources                    |          |

**V. VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

**13**

- A. Interpretation since Designation
- B. Byway Story
- C. Future Interpretation
- D. Plans for Improving Visitor Experience
- E. Preservation

**VI. MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

**14**

- A. Current and Future Planned Marketing Activities
- B. Recommended Products or Attachments for Media and Public Relations

**VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**16**

- A. Ongoing Communication & Cooperation with Community Partners
- B. Public Meetings and Public Participation Opportunities
- C. Steps Taken to Update Byway Mission and Vision
- D. Narrative on Critical Issues and How They Will Be Addressed

**VIII. APPENDIX**

**17**

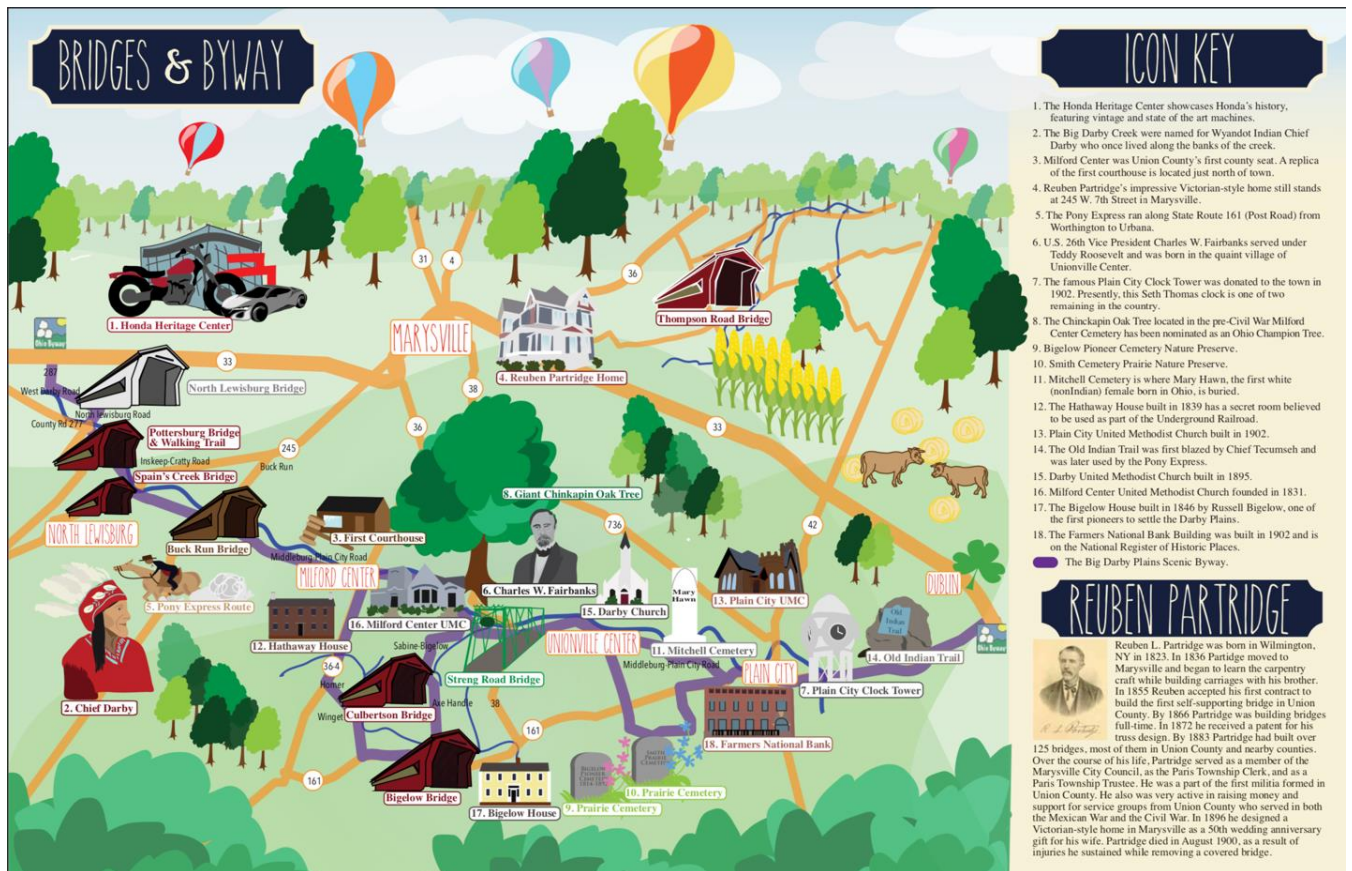
- A. Sign Inventory (Excel Spreadsheet of GIS data)
- B. Most Current Byway Map
- C. Maps Identifying Primary Intrinsic Quality/Resource Locations
- D. Seasonal Byway Photographs – 2 per season
- E. Marketing Material

## I. INTRODUCTION AND MAP

### A. Byway Introduction

The beautiful Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway is considered one of the most scenic views in the area, featuring historic covered bridges, new covered bridges, serene countryside, pioneer cemeteries, churches, early homes and unusual buildings. Catch picturesque views of Big Darby Creek while crossing several of the covered bridges. Many century farms and historic homes dot the landscape, one of these homes is even believed to have been a part of the Underground Railroad Movement during the Civil War. Other prominent features along the byway include beautiful churches and pioneer cemeteries and even an 85' tall Chinquapin Oak Tree, a state nominated heritage tree. Visit Unionville Center the hometown of Vice-President Charles W. Fairbanks. Then travel down the old Indian trail, blazed by Chief Tecumseh of the Shawnee tribe, to Plain City. Which is home to a Seth Thomas clock tower, one of only two left in the United States. Finish the byway in an hour or so, or spend all day taking in the sights.

### B. Byway Route Map



**II. BYWAY STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION, GOALS AND ACTIONS**

A. Vision and Mission

Vision: Why are we doing it.

It is the vision of the Big Darby Plain Scenic Byway committee that the byway will serve as an easily accessible sanctuary for some of Union County’s most valued sites. As transportation technology advances, the committee hopes to strategically position the byway to reminisce the charm of a country drive. The goal is for the byway to be an opportunity to enjoy natural scenery and explore new things.

Mission: How are we doing it

The mission of the Big Darby Plain Scenic Byway Committee is to promote the byway as a tourist destination through marketing strategies and programs. The committee works to balance economic growth with the need to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the byway.

B. Accomplishments since last CMP

- Created a Pottersburg Covered Bridge Preservation Fund
- Increased guided tours of the byway by 250% in the last five years
- Encouraged and supported festivals and events along the byway
- Developed a new byway brochure and map
- Updated the bridge information on the CVB website and visitors guide
- Promoted byway through various media and print publications
- Promote and sell merchandise of the Historic Union County Bridges
- A portable restroom is now permanently placed at the Pottersburg Covered Bridge Walking Trail
- A covered bridge bicycling tour was started along the byway

C. Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans

**Goal I:** Promote general funding goals and elements of the byway to gain more awareness.

| Objective  | Person/group responsible | Timeline | Action Plan   | Funding |
|--|--------------------------|----------|---|---------|
| Support local festivals and ongoing fundraisers in the area. | CVB Staff                | Ongoing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support fundraisers for the preservation of all covered bridges</li> <li>• Encourage and support festivals and events along the byway.</li> <li>• Encourage local business involvement at these events.</li> </ul> | N/A     |
| Increase the amount of guided                                | Caroline Hardman         | Ongoing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase amount of guided tours along the byway.</li> </ul>  | N/A     |

|                       |  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|
| tours along the byway |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain support from community and local businesses for the tours.</li> </ul> |  |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|

**Goal II:** Assist with the Trail and Greenway Master Plan

| Objective   | Person/group responsible | Timeline  | Action Plan  | Funding |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|--|---------|
| Assist as needed with Trail and Greenway Master Plan, which aims to create multi-purpose trails | Corrie Bott              | 1-4 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend quarterly NPS planning meetings, facilitate planning and enhance marketing.</li> </ul> | TBD     |

**Goal III:** Improve and continue to maintain infrastructure and transportation-related structures.

| Objective   | Person/group responsible                                     | Timeline  | Action Plan   | Funding |
|---|--|-----------|---|---------|
| To enhance infrastructure to accommodate for multiple types of transportation.  | Union County Engineer and Union County Economic Development. | 1-4 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate and support biking and paddling opportunities along the corridor (i.e. Trail and Greenway Master Plan)</li> <li>• Seek out potential grants or federal funding to achieve this integration.</li> <li>• Promote the byway to cycling, motorcycle, car clubs, etc. as part of our larger sports tournament marketing effort</li> </ul> | TBD     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market the byway as another element of our rich transportation culture</li> </ul>                        | Union County CVB Staff                                       | 1-4 years | With Union County having a reputation for transportation and rapidly advancing transportation technology, we plan to  | TBD     |
| Along the Pottersburg Bridge Walking Trail there is a gravel path which serves as a bypass to the bridge. The path veers from the pavement down a | Union County CVB and Union County Engineer                   | 5-9 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Union County Engineer's office to develop a plan and coordinate installation.</li> </ul>  | TBD     |

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| steep hill, around the bridge, up another steep hill then rejoins the paved trail. The combination of the steep grade and gravel make for a treacherous footing. We hope to install steps on the path to make the path safer. |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|

**Goal IV:** Improve recreational opportunities along the byway.

| Objective  | Person/group responsible                               | Timeline | Action Plan   | Funding |
|--|--|----------|---|---------|
| Support the enhancement of the existing recreational areas of the corridor.    | Union County Economic Development and Union County CVB | Ongoing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage expansion of public parks and trails along the byway</li> <li>• Partner with the local parks department, ODNR, and local naturalist organizations.</li> <li>• Research potential sites for public parks and trails.</li> </ul> | TBD     |
| Explore the possibility of connecting water sports and the waterways together. | Union County Economic Development and Union County CVB | 5-9      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore locations of potential put ins for non-motorized watercrafts</li> <li>• Promote this idea to gain a following and</li> </ul>   | TBD     |

**Goal V:** Future Marketing Strategy

| Objective  | Person/group responsible | Timeline | Action Plan   | Funding |
|--|--------------------------|----------|---|---------|
| In contrast to autonomous transportation (self-driving cars), one of our strategies is to market the byway as a place to drive your car for enjoyment. | Corrie Bott              | 5-9      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate this strategy into our current marketing efforts.</li> </ul> | TBD     |

**Goal VI:** Promote preservation along the byway in multiple forms.

| Objective   | Person/group responsible | Timeline  | Action Plan  | Funding |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|--|---------|
| Strongly discourage developers from demolishing or relocating historic structures |                          | Long-term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine zoning laws to see what protection historic structures have.</li> <li>• Partner with the Union County Historical Society to promote preservation</li> </ul> | N/A     |

Group tour – Caroline Hardman - Union County Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Union County group tour market has been increasing exponentially and has gained a reputation as a unique and enjoyable trip. The most popular attractions for the visitors are the covered bridges along the byway. The goal is to continue to sustainably increase the number of tours.

General Marketing – Corrie Bott – Union County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Future marketing strategy - With the Marysville area gaining attention for autonomous vehicles it gives us an opportunity to market the byway as a contrast to this new form of transportation. If cars become autonomous there will be more of an interest in driving for enjoyment.

Parks and trails – Jason Stanford – Union County Economic Development

Union County has created a map called the Union County Trails and Greenway Master Plan. This map was put together by Union County organizations, leaders and residents under the supervision of the national parks service. Per this map there are bike lanes and multi-purpose trail improvements proposed along the byway. Our goal is to assist this group with their trail initiatives.

### **III. BYWAY ORGANIZATION: STRUCTURE, COMMITTEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND PARTNERS**

#### A. Structure:

The Big Darby Plain Scenic Byway is overseen by the Union County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Union County CVB board of trustees and staff and on the committee, which includes the following:

- Karen Eylon, Union County CVB
- Corrie Bott, Union County CVB
- Caroline Hardman, Union County CVB
- Toni Sara, Union County CVB
- Angie Venable, Union County Chamber of Commerce and CVB
- Mallory Leiter, Union County Chamber of Commerce and CVB
- Kim Heminger, Marysville Art league, CVB Board Member
- Shelly Detwiler, Mitchell's Berries, CVB Board Member
- Barb Miller, Union County Historical Society, CVB Board Member
- Mattie Berbee, Dutchmill Greenhouse, CVB Board Member
- Mark Patel, Luxe Hotels, CVB Board Member
- Josie Wills, Fashion Factory, CVB Board Member
- Anna Krutowskis, City of Marysville, CVB Board Member
- Tim Dawson, Dawson's Pizza Group, CVB Board Member
- Tonya Mabry, Dalton Union Winery, CVB Board Member
- Sue Irwin, Allen Center Resident
- Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioners
- Jane and Ron Payne, Milford Center Residents
- Jeff Parren, Insurance Broker

#### B. Description of Current and Future Byway Committee Representatives, Partners and Stakeholders

##### Union County Commissioners

- 233 W 6<sup>th</sup> St Marysville, OH 43040
- 937-645-3012
- [commissioners@co.union.oh.us](mailto:commissioners@co.union.oh.us)
- <https://www.co.union.oh.us/commissioners>

##### Union County Chamber of Commerce

- 227 E 5<sup>th</sup> St Marysville, OH 43040
- 937-642-6279
- [info@unioncounty.org](mailto:info@unioncounty.org)
- <https://unioncounty.org/>

##### Union County Engineer – Jeff Stauch

- 233 W 6<sup>th</sup> St Marysville, OH 43040
- 937-645-3018
- <https://www.co.union.oh.us/engineer>

##### Union County CVB – Corrie Bott

- 227 E 5<sup>th</sup> St Marysville, OH 43040
- 937-642-6279
- [cbott@unioncounty.org](mailto:cbott@unioncounty.org)
- <https://www.visitunioncountyohio.org/>

Union County Historical Society

- 128 S Main St Suite 114 Marysville, OH 43040
- 937-645-4177
- <http://www.historyohio.com/index.html>

Union County Genealogical Society

- PO Box 438 Marysville, OH 43040
- <https://www.uccogs.org/>

Village of Plain City

- PO Box 167 Plain City, OH 43064
- 614-873-3527
- [village@plain-city.com](mailto:village@plain-city.com)
- <https://www.plain-city.com/>

C. Primary and Secondary Byway Leader Contact Information

| Primary Contact   | Secondary Contact   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Corrie Bott<br/>           Union County Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau<br/>           Email: <a href="mailto:cbott@unioncounty.org">cbott@unioncounty.org</a><br/>           Phone: 937-642-6279</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Karen Eylon<br/>           Union County Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau<br/>           Email: <a href="mailto:keylon@unioncounty.org">keylon@unioncounty.org</a><br/>           Phone: 937-642-6279</p> |

D. Level of Participation in State/Regional Byway Meetings and Trainings

Ohio Byway Leadership Academy

- Corrie Bott – Welcome Center and Design Manager, Union County CVB
- Ashton Bailey - Tourism Services Coordinator, Union County CVB

Midwest Byway Conference

- Tina Knotts – Director, Union County CVB
- Corrie Bott – Welcome Center and Design Manager, Union County CVB
- Ashton Bailey - Tourism Services Coordinator, Union County CVB
- Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioner
- Sue Irwin, Union County Resident

Ohio Byway Board Meetings attended by Corrie Bott – Welcome Center and Design Manager, Union County CVB. September 2018, March 2019, June 2019, December 2019

E. Byway Leadership Succession Plan

The byway will continue to be governed by the Union County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**IV. BYWAY CORRIDOR CONDITIONS: ROADWAYS, SAFETY, INTRINSIC RESOURCES, AND ACCESSIBILITY**

A. Road Conditions and Signage

With Union County being home to many transportation companies the County Engineers department does an excellent job of maintaining the roads.

i. Existing official ODOT byway signs.

See appendix.

ii. Local byway signs

The BDPSB does not have its own branded signage.

iii. Interpretive signs.

See appendix.

iv. Future sign needs.

There are also many signs missing along the byway. This creates difficulty in wayfinding along the byway and leads to a necessity of new signs being installed to alleviate confusion. These sign locations include but are not limited to:

1. Missing arrow at Stokes Road and West Darby
2. Remove Buck Run Spur. Replace turn arrow with straight arrow.
3. At Co Hwy 57 and US 36, missing signage of directions going E on Co Hwy 57
4. Install an end sign after the Culbertson Bridge.
5. Missing right hand turn sign at 161 and Homer
6. Install an end sign at Bigelow Pioneer Cemetery
7. Missing a sign at Middleburg Plain City road and 38, needs to have an arrow that points left and right
8. Missing a sign at Unionville road (CR 55) and Middleburg plain city, missing sign coming from Unionville road
9. Kramer road and 161 is missing the whole signpost
10. No sign on 161 and Middleburg Plain City
11. Start sign at 161 and 33

B. List of Primary and Secondary Intrinsic Qualities/Resources

| <b>Primary Intrinsic Quality</b> | <b>Secondary Intrinsic Quality</b> | <b>Site and Location (GPS when available)</b>   | <b>Description</b>   |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Historic                         | Cultural                           | North Lewisburg Bridge<br>(40.24923, -83.53328) | In 2006, this new covered bridge was built over Big Darby Creek Scenic River. It is a modified Pratt Truss with sub-structures built out of the creek. The bridge is 135 feet in length with two lanes to accommodate recent increases in traffic. |

|          |          |   |  |
|----------|----------|---|--|
| Historic | Cultural | Pottersburg Bridge<br>(40.24071, -83.52867)                           | This bridge, formerly in the location of the North Lewisburg Road Covered Bridge, was designed and built by Reuben Partridge in 1868. In 2006, this Partridge Truss Bridge was moved, rehabilitated and now rests on a multi-use trail, near Inskeep-Cratty Road.  |
| Historic | Cultural | Spain Creek Bridge<br>(40.22873, -83.52305)                           | This covered bridge spans 64 feet over Spain Creek. The bridge was designed and built by Reuben Partridge in the 1870s. Spain Creek currently achieves criteria associated with the Exceptional Warm Water Habitat and Cold-Water Habitat use designations by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.  |
| Historic | Cultural | Remnants of the Stately Miller Sisters' Farm<br>(40.21553, -83.50911) | The Miller Sister's Farmhouse was a large, two-story home with a ballroom on the second floor. Their father was nicknamed "Mexican Miller" because he made his money in the silver business in Mexico. Neither of the sisters ever married. Both the farmhouse and the barn were eventually burned by the fire department for fire practice. The farm was sold out of the family in the late 1970's.     |
| Historic | Cultural | The Howard Family Home and Farm<br>(40.20881, -83.49713)              | The date of the settling of William and Nancy Howard dates to 1830. They came upon a 500-acre farm and had three children. This estate is now comprised of 1,800 acres and has been named "Indian Field Farm".   |
| Historic | Cultural | Buck Run Bridge<br>(40.20996,-83.48876)                               | This bridge replaced a steel Pratt bridge that was constructed in 1914. This new bridge, built in 2006, is a modified Pratt Truss and spans an impressive 160 feet in length. This bridge is currently the longest single-span wooden bridge in Ohio. The new two-lane covered bridge was built to stand proudly for generations. From the bridge one can enjoy beautiful vistas of the Big Darby Creek. |
| Historic | Cultural | First Union County Courthouse<br>(40.17932, -83.43415)                | The first county courthouse was created in Milford Center in 1816. Today, there is a ¾ scale replication of the courthouse on display in Liberty Park.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Milford Center United Methodist Church<br>(40.17796, -83.43323)       | The Milford Center United Methodist Church was founded in 1831. The church building was originally dedicated in 1906. The church went through extensive interior and exterior renovations in preparation for the church's 100th anniversary.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Milford Center Cemetery<br>(40.17731, -83.42979)                      | Located in the Milford Center Cemetery stands the approximately 85' tall Chinquapin Oak Tree. This tree has been nominated as an Ohio Champion Tree. The cemetery contains graves of veterans from every war beginning with the Revolutionary War forward. The tall veterans' monument was originally dedicated in   |

|          |          |  |   |
|----------|----------|--|---|
|          |          |  | 1873 to Civil War Veterans. It now stands as a proud symbol of remembrance to veterans of all wars.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Civil War and Veterans Monument<br>(40.17722, -83.42972)           | The Union Township Civil War Monument was erected in 1873 as a commemoration of all fallen soldiers of Union Township in the Civil War. A total of 37 men from Union Township fought and died in the war and their names are engraved in granite tablets that flank the monument. The monument was refurbished in 2003 by the Monument Association of Union Township. The location is designated by an Ohio Historical Marker.  |
| Scenic   | Natural  | Milford Center Prairie State Natural Area<br>(40.15769, -83.45736) | This reserve supports at least 57 different species of prairie plants including big bluestem, royal catchfly, smooth rose, and gray-headed coneflower. The best time for viewing the wildflowers here is late July through august.  |
| Historic | Cultural | Dr. Hathaway Historic Home<br>(40.15497, -83.45549)                | In 1817, Dr. Nicholas Hathaway and his family came from Massachusetts by horse and wagon and stopped in Union County where he purchased 1,000 acres. The bricks of this house were made on-site and it still has the original flooring, plaster, woodwork, staircases, and five fireplaces. Inside the home there are hidden compartments which are believed to be a part of the Underground Railroad Movement during the Civil War.  |
| Historic | Cultural | Culbertson Bridge<br>(40.13812, -83.45237)                         | Also known as the Winget Road Bridge, this 94' bridge built in 1868 by Reuben Partridge spans Treacle Creek. The bridge was originally located on State Route 4 and was moved to its current location prior to 1953. In 1961, the bridge underwent repairs and piers were added to give extra support. In 1977, a "run around" was constructed for farm equipment and other large, heavy vehicles to use as a bypass. In 1987, the bridge was rehabilitated.                                |
| Historic | Cultural | Bigelow Bridge<br>(40.11581, -83.42518)                            | Also known as the Axe Handle Bridge, this historic bridge was built in 1873 and spans 114 feet over Little Darby Creek. The bridge was named in honor of Eliphas Bigelow, a nearby resident. In 1990, the bridge underwent an extensive renovation. Massive nail-laminated arches were seated into new concrete foundations. The arch system now carries the weight of traffic on this bridge. Be sure to examine the inside of this remarkable bridge. The bridge was painted red in 2008. |
| Historic | Cultural | The Bigelow House<br>(40.1146, -83.42443)                          | The Bigelow House was built in 1846 by Russell Bigelow, one of the first pioneers to settle the tall grass prairie of the Darby Plains.   |

|          |          |   |  |
|----------|----------|---|--|
| Scenic   | Historic | Bigelow Cemetery State Nature Preserve (40.1098, -83.41923)     | This half-acre pioneer cemetery was dedicated by the State of Ohio in 1978 as an interpretive nature preserve. Its first known burial was laid in 1814 and last in 1892. It contains several significant prairie plants and supports one of the state's few remaining populations of the wildflower royal catchfly. The cemetery is open during daylight hours and the wildflowers are at their peak from late July through August.    |
| Historic | Cultural | Streng Road Bridge (40.1594, -83.39521)                         | The Streng Road Bridge is a 200-foot steel Pratt Truss bridge built in 1914. In 1993, Union County received special recognition for renovation and an Ohio Historical Marker was dedicated for the bridge in 2014. It is officially listed as an Ohio Historic Bridge.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Mitchell Cemetery (40.1517, -83.38212)                          | Mitchell Cemetery is the resting place of Mary Hawn, the first white female born in Ohio. She was born in a blockhouse near present-day Cincinnati in 1791 (Mary Hawn 1791-1861).  |
| Historic | Cultural | Unionville Center United Methodist Church (40.13969, -83.34244) | This historic United Methodist church was founded in 1820. After meeting in homes, a schoolhouse, and a store, a frame church was built in 1857. The present structure was built in 1895.  |
| Historic | Cultural | The Village Green in Unionville Center (40.13879, -83.33941)    | Unionville Center was the childhood home of Charles W. Fairbanks, the twenty-sixth Vice President of the United States, serving Theodore Roosevelt from 1904 to 1909. The village was founded in 1847. Fairbanks, Alaska and Fairbanks School District in Union County, Ohio are named in his honor.   |
| Scenic   | Historic | Smith Prairie Cemetery Nature Preserve (40.10307, -83.32395)    | Smith Prairie Cemetery Nature Preserve Lying within what was once known as the vast Darby Plains Prairie, the Smith Cemetery Nature Preserve was dedicated in 1982 as an interpretive nature preserve. This area, once considered to be undesirable by early settlers because of alternating extremes of wet and dry lands, now serves as a preserve for historic tombstones, prairie plants, and the elimination of invasive species. |
| Historic | Cultural | The Historic Horn House (40.10912, -83.27204)                   | The Horn House was constructed in 1908 by Adolph Horn. This structure is a replica of Adolph's home in Holyoke, Massachusetts.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Farmers National Bank Building (40.10772, -83.26727)            | The Farmers National Bank Building was constructed in 1902 in the center of Plain City, Ohio. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an example of a well-preserved 20th-century small town/rural bank. In addition to its commercial purpose, the bank served as a gathering place for community members to socialize. The bank's location, its architectural features, and the continued use as a bank and      |

|          |          |   |  |
|----------|----------|---|--|
|          |          |   | gathering place make this building a community landmark.   |
| Historic | Cultural | Plain City Clock Tower<br>(40.10778, -83.26671) | The Barto & Keiser Hardware Building was constructed in 1902 and is home to the town's clock tower. This Seth Thomas clock is only one of two remaining in the United States.  |
| Historic | Cultural | Old Post Road Monument<br>(40.10721, -83.25638) | The Old Indian Trail and Old Post Road Monument marks the trail first blazed by Chief Tecumseh and later used by the Pony Express. Richard Taylor, a well-known pioneer cleared the ground in 1809 that became Post Road. Post Road was created in 1811 by the Ohio Legislature. This plaque was placed in 1941 by the Ohio Society Daughters of American Colonists. |

C. Changes in Intrinsic Qualities/Resources since last CMP

- The Pottersburg Covered Bridge was painted in 2017.
- The Covered Bridge Bluegrass Festival event has evolved as well. The event had been a three-day festival with craft vendors, kids’ activities, horse-drawn wagon rides and a full line up of bands. In 2019 the event was downsized to consist of three catered dining experiences on the Pottersburg Covered Bridge and covered bridge tours.

D. Accessibility to Intrinsic Quality/Resources: Pull-Offs, Parking, Rest Areas, Visitor Amenities, etc.

All interpretation, Pull-Offs, and visitor amenities along with associated parking, public restrooms and amenities are to be accessible per the Americans with Disability Act. This includes accessibility for persons with mobility, hearing, sight, and cognitive impairments. The 2010 US Census revealed that at least 56.7 million or 20 percent of the US population have some level of disability, about 20 million of which are mobility impaired Americans. Therefore, for the story of the byway to be told to all, new programs and improvements need to be accessible while existing sites should have transition plans in place by those who own and maintain them.

The byway organization will have a hand improving accessibility by raising awareness about the need to remove barriers to access and by installing all interpretive signs or other improvements according to the United States Civil Rights ADA laws. For free information and guidance, please contact the Great Lakes ADA Center at 800-949-4232 (V/TTY).

## **V. VISITOR EXPERIENCE: INTERPRETATION, STORIES, AND PRESERVATION**

### **A. Interpretation since Designation**

Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway travelers can see many historic, scenic, and natural sites. There are seven Ohio Historical Markers along the byway. These markers are as follows:

- Pottersburg Bridge
- C.W. Fairbanks Birthplace (Village Green in Unionville Center)
- Spain Creek Bridge
- Bigelow Bridge
- Culbertson Bridge
- Iron Bridge (Steel Truss Bridge)
- Union Township Civil War Monument (Milford Center Cemetery)

Visitors can read the information listed on all these signs. The information tells about the history of each location and some have pictures from the past. People are also able to see eight other interpretive signs. These are not designed historical markers, but instead are signs that have been put up by either ODNR or local communities. These signs are as follows:

- Bigelow Cemetery
- Smith Cemetery
- Union County's First Courthouse (replica)
- Mitchell Cemetery Signs on rocks (there are two of these signs)
- Darby Township Cemetery
- Farmers National Bank
- Plain City Town Clock
- Post Rd/Indian Trail Monument on rock

### **C. Future Interpretation**

Many of the goals in section II letter C outline what is hoped to be achieved with the future interpretation of the Big Darby Plains byway. This includes future interpretation that involves byway tours, bridge tours, new bridge and byway maps, dining events on the covered bridge, and sharing general byway information with patrons at the Welcome Center.

### **D. Plans for Improving Visitor Experience**

Any plans referring to the improvement of visitor experience along the byway can be found in Section II Letter C.

### **E. Preservation**

The Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway Committee and surrounding townships/counties have instituted the following protections for sustaining and preserving intrinsic qualities on the byway:

- Graffiti-proof paint on all covered bridges
- Fireproofing and heat sensing alarms on certain covered bridges
- ODNR regularly checks the water of the Big Darby Creek for water levels, chemicals, and status of wildlife in the water.

**VI. MARKETING: PROMOTION, FEATURED ATTRACTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS**

A. Current and Future Planned Marketing Activities

The Union County CVB advertises the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway to several travel markets, including motor coach, leisure, car clubs, covered bridge enthusiasts and cyclists.

- Union County opened a Welcome Center in 2017. Though the welcome center visitor’s bureau staff can interact with more visitors and direct them to the byway.
- The byway tours and dining on the Pottersburg covered bridge are the most popular attractions for group tours. Group tour advertising includes, major industry magazines and direct mail.
- General leisure advertising
- Magazines
- Social Media
- Website
- Events

B. Recommended Products or Attachments for Media and Public Relations

The beautiful Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway is considered one of the most scenic views in the area, featuring historic covered bridges, new covered bridges, serene countryside, pioneer cemeteries, churches, early homes and unusual buildings. Catch picturesque views of Big Darby Creek while crossing several of the covered bridges. Many century farms and historic homes dot the landscape, one of these homes is even believed to have been a part of the Underground Railroad Movement during the Civil War. Other prominent features along the byway include beautiful churches and pioneer cemeteries and even an 85’ tall Chinquapin Oak Tree, a state nominated heritage tree. Visit Unionville Center the hometown of Vice-President Charles W. Fairbanks. Then travel down the old Indian trail, blazed by Chief Tecumseh, to Plain City, which is home to a Seth Thomas clock tower, one of only two left in the United States. Finish the byway in an hour or so, or spend all day taking in the sights.

ii. Seasonal digital photographs (at least 300 dpi).

See appendix.

iii. Brief description of the top 5-10 unique/authentic attractions on the byway.

| # | Name                       | Description  | GIS                       |
|---|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | Pottersburg Covered Bridge | The Pottersburg Covered Bridge, formerly in the location of the North Lewisburg Road Covered Bridge, was designed and built by Reuben Partridge in 1868. In 2006, the 94’ Partridge truss bridge was moved a few miles down the road and rehabilitated. This historic bridge now rests on a multi-use trail stretching from North Lewisburg to Inskeep-Cratty Road.  | 40.24071,<br>-83.52867    |
| 2 | Big Darby Creek            | The Big Darby Creek begins its state and national scenic designation as it enters Union County in Allen Township. The Nature Conservancy has declared the Little Darby and Big Darby waterway as one of the Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere. The Big Darby Creek was by far the most important natural resource to the Native Americans and early settlers. The creek itself is named after Wyandot Chief Darby. | 40°15'48.6<br>-83°32'50.6 |

|   |                          |  |                        |
|---|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 3 | Milford Center Cemetery  | The Milford Center Cemetery contains graves of veterans from every war beginning with the Revolutionary War forward. The tall veteran's monument was originally dedicated in 1873 to Civil War Veterans. It now stands as a proud symbol of remembrance to veterans of all wars.   | 40.17731,<br>-83.42979 |
| 4 | Bigelow Pioneer Cemetery | Bigelow Cemetery exhibits significant elements of both cultural and natural history of west central Ohio. The first known burial was in 1814, and the last in 1892. The area is one of the few remnants of the once extensive Darby Plains. Bigelow Cemetery has never been plowed or grazed. It appears to be perched above the surrounding farm fields, a reflection of how much of the original prairie soil from these fields has been lost to wind and water erosion over the centuries. The Bigelow Pioneer Cemetery Nature Preserve contains several significant prairie plants including big blue stem, Indian grass, purple coneflower, scurf pea, whorled rosin weed, and rough leaved goldenrod. The cemetery supports one of the few remaining populations in Ohio of royal catchfly, one of the state's most spectacular wildflowers. | 40.1098,<br>-83.41923  |
| 5 | Bigelow Bridge           | The Bigelow Covered Bridge over Little Darby Creek is also known as the Axe Handle Road Bridge. The bridge was named in honor of Eliphas Bigelow, who was a nearby resident. The bridge was built in 1873 by Reuben Partridge and spans 114'. The bridge has undergone extensive renovation.   | 40.11581,<br>-83.42518 |
| 6 | Streng Road Truss Bridge | Just north of Middleburg Plain City Road on Streng Road is the historic Streng Road Steel Truss Bridge, built in 1914. Union County received special recognition for the renovation of this 200' steel Pratt Bridge in 1993. The bridge is officially listed as an Ohio Historic Bridge. An Ohio Historical Marker was installed and dedicated at this bridge in September of 2014.  | 40.1594,<br>-83.39521  |
| 7 | Mitchell Cemetery        | The Mitchell Cemetery on SR 38 near Burns Road is the resting place of Mary Hawn, the first female white child born in Ohio. Mary was born in 1791 and died in 1861. Adjacent to this cemetery is St. Paul Cemetery.   | 40.1517,<br>-83.38212  |

iv. Provide website/URL (if available) and local website/URL that manages byway.

- [www.visitunioncountyohio.org](http://www.visitunioncountyohio.org)
- [www.dineonacoveredbridge.com](http://www.dineonacoveredbridge.com)
- [www.historyohio.com](http://www.historyohio.com)

v. Marketing contact information:

- Corrie Bott, [cbott@unioncounty.org](mailto:cbott@unioncounty.org), 937-642-6279
- Karen Eylon, [keylon@unioncounty.org](mailto:keylon@unioncounty.org), 937-642-6279

## **VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: COMMUNITY PARTNERS, PUBLIC FORUMS, AND CRITICAL ISSUES**

### A. Ongoing Communication and Cooperation with Community Partners

- Maintenance with the Union County Engineers office
- Maintenance supported through the Union county commissioners
- Events supported by the Dine on a Covered Bridge committee
- Covered bridge bike ride hosted by the Union County Foundation
- Tours are arranged for business groups and tour groups.
- Weddings, receptions, rehearsal dinners, and graduation parties all take place on the bridge

### B. Public Meeting and Public Participation Opportunities

The Convention and Visitor's Bureau Board Meetings are held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month to the public.

### C. Steps Taken to Update the Byway Mission and Vision

None.

### D. Narrative on Critical Issues and How They Will Be Addressed

For critical issues, such as damage to a landmark on the byway, the possibility of adding a new leg or spur to the byway, or other such matters, a committee meeting will be called with 7-10 days' notice. After the committee has discussed their action plan and steps for handling the situation, the plan will be presented at a public meeting to members of the community. The members of the community can share their opinions, thoughts, and concerns and offer their support for implementing the plan.

## VIII. APPENDIX

### ***A. Ohio Byway sign inventory (Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, GIS information formatted as latitude, longitude as per ODOT guidelines)***

ODOT Signs:

| #  | Byway | Direction | Condition | GIS                   |
|----|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1  | BDP   | N         | Good      | 40.17853,<br>-82.4352 |
| 2  | BDP   | S         | Good      | 40.17806,<br>-83.4354 |
| 3  | BDP   | S         | Good      | 40.14948,<br>-83.4621 |
| 4  | BDP   | N         | Good      | 40.14699,<br>-83.4661 |
| 5  | BDP   | E         | Good      | 40.12194,<br>-83.4566 |
| 6  | BDP   | W         | Good      | 40.12196,<br>-83.4566 |
| 7  | BDP   | E         | Good      | 40.11554,<br>-83.4267 |
| 8  | BDP   | W         | Good      | 40.11477,<br>-83.4235 |
| 9  | BDP   | E&W       | Good      | 40.11327,<br>-83.4172 |
| 10 | BDP   | E         | Good      | 40.11543,<br>-82.3166 |
| 11 | BDP   | W         | Good      | 40.11541,<br>-83.3156 |
| 12 | BDP   | E         | Good      | 40.1143,<br>-83.2979  |
| 13 | BDP   | W         | Good      | 40.11267,<br>-83.2861 |
| 14 | BDP   | W         | Good      | 40.10712,<br>-83.2561 |

Local byway signs:

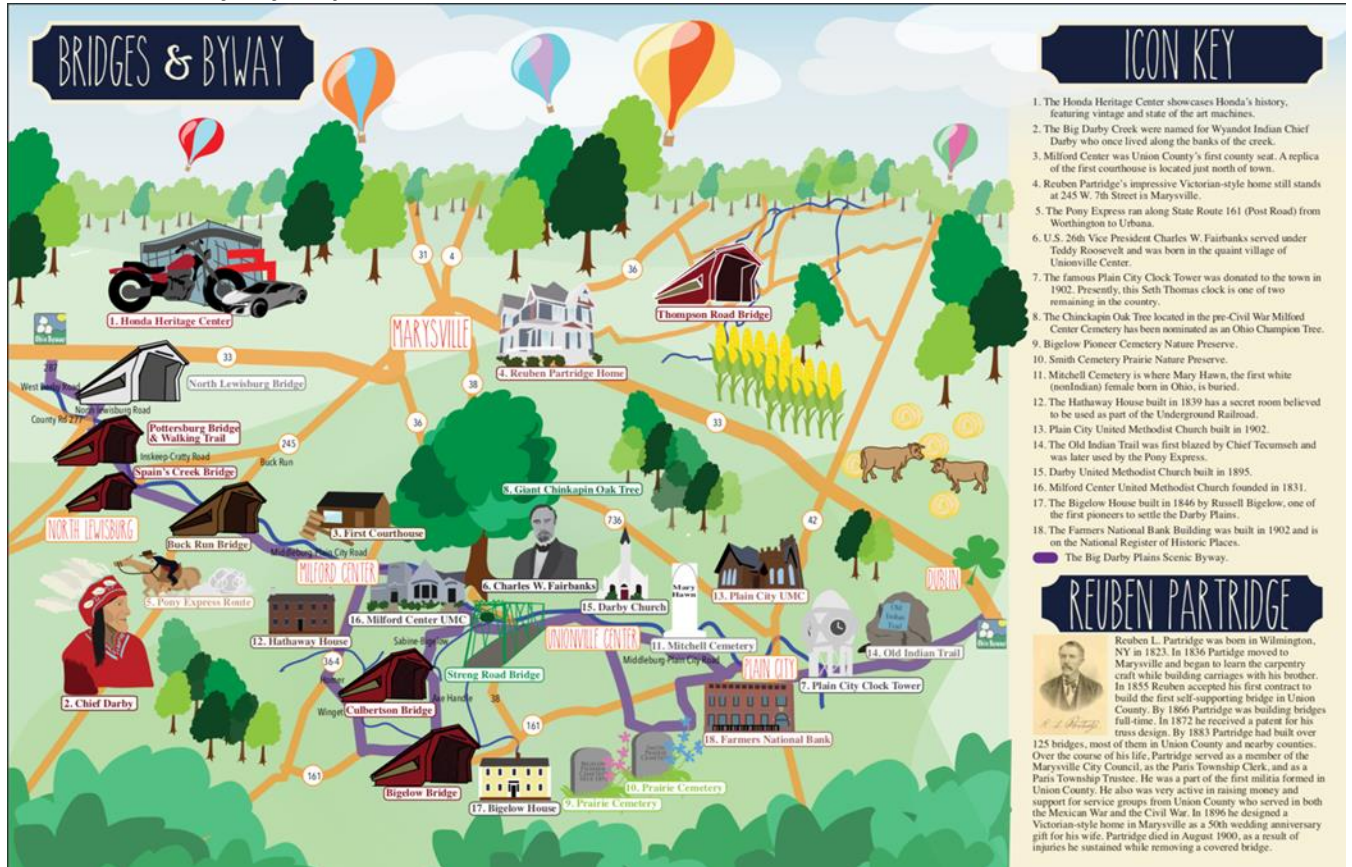
The BDPSB does not have its own branded signage

Interpretive signs:

- Pottersburg Bridge Historical Marker (HM)
- C.W. Fairbanks Birthplace HM
- Spain Creek Bridge HM

- Bigelow Bridge HM
- Culbertson Bridge HM
- Iron Bridge (Steel Truss Bridge) HM
- Union Township Civil War Monument HM
- Bigelow Cemetery ODNR Sign
- Smith Cemetery
- Union County's First Courthouse (Replica)
- Mitchell Cemetery Signs on boulders (there are two of these signs)
- Darby Township Cemetery
- Farmer's National Bank in Plain City
- Plain City Town Clock
- Old Post Road/ Indian Trail Monument on boulder

## B. Most Current Byway Map

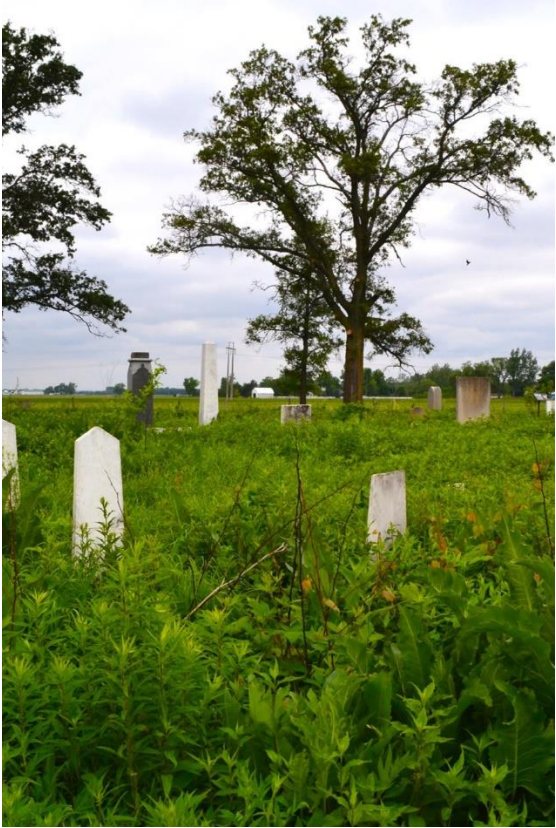




D. *Byway Photographs- Include several images of your byway, at least one from each season.*

















MARY  
HAWN

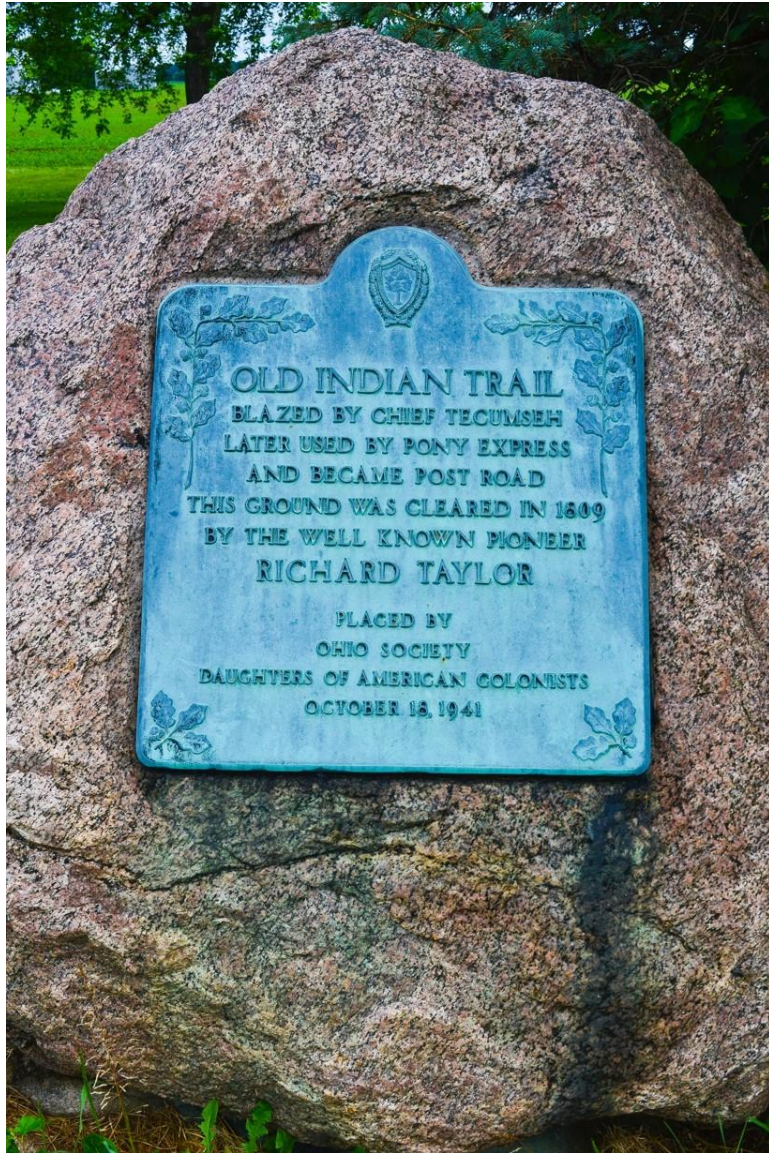
BORN  
MAR. 5, 1791  
DIED  
JUNE 21, 1867

BORN IN A BLOCK HOUSE  
ON THE CINCINNATI ROAD  
STANDS AND THE FIRST  
WHITE FEMALE CHILD  
BORN IN OHIO.









OLD INDIAN TRAIL  
BLAZED BY CHIEF TECUMSEH  
LATER USED BY PONY EXPRESS  
AND BECAME POST ROAD  
THIS GROUND WAS CLEARED IN 1609  
BY THE WELL KNOWN PIONEER  
RICHARD TAYLOR

PLACED BY  
OHIO SOCIETY  
DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN COLONISTS  
OCTOBER 18, 1941











***E. Marketing Materials- If applicable.***