

**2020**

***Amish Country Byway*** Corridor Management Plan (CMP)

Ohio Department of Transportation

Updated ***June 2019***



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## I. INTRODUCTION AND MAP

### A. Byway Introduction

The Amish Country Byway started as a grassroots effort in the spring of 1997 to maintain the “Scenic Highway” recognition for State Route 39 through the county and for US 62 from Millersburg to Brinkhaven in Holmes County, Ohio. Application was made, and designation was received for these two segments of the Byway in March of 1998 as the program was “rolled over” from the Scenic Highway program to the Byway program.

As of 1999, the Amish Country Byway is recognized as an Ohio Byway for 164 miles of state (12 routes) and federal highway (1 route, US 62), in Holmes County Ohio. The FHWA, National Scenic Byway designation is for 78 miles along multiple routes. The Byway is in northeast Ohio approximately halfway between Cleveland and Columbus.

In the beginning the Byway was named the ‘Scenic Byways of Holmes County’ since there was not clarification in the early years of the program in Ohio that multiple roads could be under the name of one Byway. In September of 1999, the remainder of the state route highways which had been requested for designation received the Ohio Byway status. In the winter of 2001, the Scenic Byways of Holmes County applied for National Scenic Byway recognition. The renamed ‘Amish Country Byway’ applied for and received recognition as a National Scenic Byway in June of 2004.

The primary intrinsic quality for the Amish Country Byway is *cultural*, with *historic* and *scenic* as secondary qualities documented in the state and national designation documents and the original corridor management plan.

Currently the Amish Country Byway organization continues to partner with the local community to protect and improve access to the cultural resources, experiences and stories which attract more than 4.5 million visitors annually along the Amish Country Byway (2013 ODTT).



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

### A. Vision and Mission

#### Vision:

To preserve the beauty of the countryside and villages while promoting business activity and maintaining a unique and pleasant experience for residents and visitors alike.

#### Mission:

To maintain our Byway corridor and enhance the visitor experience.

### B. Accomplishments since last CMP

Accomplishments since original CMP in 1999:

Accomplishment	Evaluation	Comments
National Scenic Byway designation	Applied 2001 and 2004, received recognition, June 2004	Maintain 'America's Byways' logo recognition through free online Amish Country Byway Map
Create Partnership with Destination Marketing Organization	Established and maintained visitor fulfillment needs	Visitor requests filled by Holmes County Tourism Bureau; free annual visitor's guide and map available online – visitamishcountry.com
Host partner site tour for the 2005 National Scenic Byway Conference	Tour and meal for 75 national byway representatives	Enhanced local partnerships
Maintain relationships with national and state organizations that advocate for the byway program	Joined National Scenic Byway Foundation as a life member for the Amish Country Byway. Attend all meetings and actively participate in Ohio Byway Links nonprofit.	Representatives from the Amish Country Byway are active and attend meetings regularly for the NSBF
- Killbuck Valley Natural History Museum - Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center - Victorian House Museum	Successfully supported local museums to expand interpretive exhibits and offer additional opportunities	Adult and youth programs offered by school and nonprofit organizations host museum tours.
German Culture Museum - Millersburg Glass Museum - County Line Historical Society Museum	Supported the establishment and expansion of new museums increasing access to the public, including posted hours hosted by volunteers	Through community support, new museums opened, and others relocated. Wrote and published the 20-page History of Millersburg Glass.

Private Tour offerings	Not offered on a regular basis in 1998, in 2004 three tour operators offering tour opportunities year-round are listed in the Amish Country map and directory	In cooperation with nonprofit organizations, tour offerings of various types have expanded to include multiple museum tours and catered meals
Amish Country Byway Map: Awareness of Byway through websites and print publications	Annually the Byway is promoted through the Amish Country map and directory, with electronic access to the directory at <a href="http://visitamishcountry.com">visitamishcountry.com</a>	In-kind support for the annual publication of this map and directory is coordinated by the Holmes County Chamber and Tourism Bureau
Bus Tour, small group offerings	Most frequent to the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center – formerly called the Information Center	Now, bus tours are visiting a wide variety of sites, including multi-county museum partnerships
Fairs and Festivals, along the Byway – Most noted: Antique Festival, Oct; Swiss Festival, Sept; Holmes County Fair, Aug; Harvest Fest, Sept; STEAM Days, July	Hard to find dates and information about festivals and events. The community has worked hard to organize and communicate over the past two decades.	A community calendar for annual fairs, festivals and other events can now be found at <a href="http://www.visitamishcountry.com">www.visitamishcountry.com</a> and on the Amish Country map and directory

C. Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans

**Goal I:** Increase local community outreach and partnerships that benefit the Byway.

Objective	Person/group responsible	Timeline	Action Plan	Funding
HCHS Volunteer and Membership Committee	Sharon Strouse will chair this HCHS committee	New committee in 2015 - ongoing	• Reporting to the HCHS board.	N/A
Volunteer Naturalists/TWC	Byway committee representatives	prior to 2015 – ongoing	• Attend planning meetings and most chapter events	N/A
Holmes County Tourism Bureau and Chamber	Representatives, especially Mark Boley	prior to 2015 – ongoing	• Regularly meet with HCTB and Chamber of Commerce	N/A
County Engineer/County DOT representatives	Byway committee to set up meetings	2016 - ongoing	• Maintain professional relationship with individuals of ODOT and other entities.	N/A

Local Partnerships	ACB Advisory Committee	2019 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with partners to tell their stories.</li> <li>• Build stronger relationship with the Amish Country Byway (ACB) designated DMO. Invite Tiffany Gerber to become a member of our Amish Country Byway Committee.</li> </ul>	N/A
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**Goal II:** Maintain and improve scenic viewshed along Byway corridor.

Objective	Person/group responsible	Timeline	Action Plan	Funding
Decrease trash and debris	Byway committee, with Volunteer Naturalist partners	2016 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to regularly maintain byway appearance and encourage locals to do the same.</li> </ul>	N/A
Deer crossing signs	Holmes County Highway Safety and Byway committees	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install and maintain deer crossing signs in all areas that may have high volumes of deer activity.</li> </ul>	\$8,000
Slow moving vehicles (buggy traffic, tractors)	ODOT and State Highway Department	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that buggies and non-motorized are safe and can share the road.</li> </ul>	N/A
Adopt a Highway program expansion	Byway organization, HC Highway Safety Committee and county service organizations	2016 – 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Adopt-a-Highway in Holmes County.</li> </ul>	TBD
Sign maintenance	Landowner partnerships with byway organization	2018 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with ODOT and county entities to keep up with signage.</li> </ul>	\$8,000
Viewshed improvement plan	HCHS Outreach Committee and Volunteer Naturalists	2018 - 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly update the viewshed improvement plan</li> <li>• Keep up with members of the plan to assure the plan is executed efficiently.</li> </ul>	N/A

**Goal III:** Increase Byway awareness and support.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Person/group responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Create and post "Amish Country Byway" signs	Byway committee with Tom Barrett and District ODOT	2016 - 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to update a unique Amish Country Byway sign with the reliable group.</li> </ul>	\$8,000
Marketing and mapping with Holmes CVB and Chamber	Byway committee and Mark Boley CVB representative	2015 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to market byway through multiple resources.</li> </ul>	TBD
Museum support	Byway committee and community representatives, with HCHS volunteer com.	2015 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for Holmes County Historical Society strategic plan update in 2020 to coincide with the CMP update for ODOT.</li> </ul>	TBD
State and National Byway Programs	Byway committee	2015 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay current with the Ohio and National Scenic Byway program updates at the state and federal level, respectively.</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Wayfinding plan	Byway committee with Tom Barrett, State Byway Coordinator	2017 - 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that wayfinding is easy and accurate to resources.</li> <li>• Keep signage up to date.</li> </ul>	TBD
Social Media Outreach	ACB Advisory Committee	2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a social media strategy that directs users and travelers to specific destinations along the byway.</li> <li>• Complete three blogs that feature and target family travel along the byway.</li> <li>• Complete the ODOT ACB video along the ACB.</li> </ul>	TBD

**Goal IV:** Create interpretation to increase authentic experience opportunities.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Person/group responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Interpretive signs and pull-offs improvements	HCHS Program committee, SS with Mark Boley	2017 – 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with ODOT and the district to obtain new signage.</li> </ul>	\$8,000

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research areas of potential wayfaring improvement.</li> </ul>	
Partnerships for more stories	HCHS Volunteer and membership committee, SS chair	2016 – 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with more local businesses to improve any authenticity in the Amish Country Byway story.</li> </ul>	TBD
Support nonprofit museum organizations and projects	HCHS Volunteer and Membership committee, SS chair	2015 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate events with nonprofits entities that the byway is involved with.</li> </ul>	N/A

**Goal V:** Future & Miscellaneous goals

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Person/group responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Conducting research	ACB Advisory Committee	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research regarding future needs and opportunities to support the completion of our five-year goals in early 2020 to update the CMP.</li> </ul>	TBD
Continuing education	ACB Advisory Committee	2019-2020, ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the ACB Advisory Committee will stay current with byway best practices by attending educational opportunities sponsored by the National Scenic Byway Foundation and ODOT/Ohio Byway Links, Inc.</li> </ul>	\$1,000
Miscellaneous Memberships	ACB Advisory Committee	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership support for various nonprofits in partnership with the Amish Country Byway.</li> </ul>	\$300
Project match money	ACB Advisory Committee	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to accept donations for future projects as match money for interpretive projects in partnership with nonprofit organizations in Holmes County.</li> </ul>	\$1,000-\$10,000

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

#### A. Structure:

Structure: Our Byway organization is a group of people representing the active public and private institutions that maintain the Byway's designation and carry out the vision and mission of the Amish Country Byway.

Meetings: Held as needed, in conjunction with the Holmes County Historical Society Volunteer and Membership Committee or as byway organization sub-committees, approximately four times each year. The ODOT Byway Annual Report is reviewed before submission in March each year. Meetings are generally held at the Castle Club meeting room on the Holmes County Historical Society campus.

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

Name	Role	Representation
Chris Sieverdes	Committee Chair; Ohio Byway Links Marketing	The Wilderness Center, Millersburg Glass Museum
Mark Boley	History Liaison; Group Tours, Historical Documents and Artifacts	Holmes County Historical Society; Victorian House & Holmes County Genealogical Society
Lucille Hastings	Education Liaison, Farmland Preservation	Schools, Libraries - local and state; Ohio Farmland Preservation Committee
Sharon Strouse	NSB Foundation Liaison; Byway Peer Advisor Network; Ohio Byway Links Education	State and Federal Government; National Association for Interpretation
Bob Porter	Natural History Liaison	Killbuck Valley Natural History Museum
Fran Mast	Communications	Graphic Publications, Ohio's Amish Country Magazine
Bonnie Coblenz and Danara Wallace	Visitor Request Fulfillment; Event Coordinator; Cookie Tour of Inns, Harvest Fest, Classic in the Country, etc.	Holmes County Tourism Bureau; Chamber; Amish Country Annual Map and Directory
Jan Fuchs	Research	Community Recreation; Amish Country Road Apple 5K
Carrie Elvey	Ohio Natural Resources Liaison; Natural Resources Interpretation	The Wilderness Center; Shreve Migration; Ohio Volunteer Naturalists
Marcus Yoder	Cultural Resources; Director AMHC	Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center
Chris Young	Local Roads, Safety, County Government	County Engineer
Larry Miller	Cultural Resources	German Culture Museum
Jen Halverson	Recreation and Natural Resources	Holmes County Trail and Park District

Candi Barnhart	Historical Research	HCHS representative
Eldon & Bonnie Trubee	Religious and Education Community	Education outreach advocates

The current byway members include: Mark Boley, Tiffany Gerber, Susan Helal, Camille Nowels, Chris Sieverdes, Sharon Strouse, and Leah Yoder.

C. Primary and Secondary Byway Leader Contact Information

Name	Role	Email	Address	Phone
Chris Sieverdes	ODOT Primary Contact; NSBF committee member	csieverdes@gmail.com	7501 Whitehill Ln, Millersburg, Ohio 44654	330.231.8576
Shasta Mast	Executive Director, Holmes County Chamber and Tourism Bureau	info@visitamishcountry.com	6 West Jackson St. Millersburg, Ohio 44654	330.674.3975
Sharon Strouse	Original Ohio Byway and NSB Nomination Chair; NSBF Board member	sharonstrouse@gmail.com	8955 County Road 393, Millersburg, Ohio 44654	330.231.3468
Mark Boley	Executive Director, Holmes County Historical Society, original ACB committee member	info@holmeshistory.com	PO Box 126 484 Wooster Rd Millersburg, Ohio 44654	330.674.0022

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

Dates	National/Regional/State Meetings	Representatives/Comments
Monthly 2015-18	National Scenic Byway Foundation Board meetings	SS
Monthly, ongoing	NSBF committee meetings; 2 reps – for the NSBF new byway leader training, August 2015	SS, CS
Feb, May, Oct 2015; then ongoing	NSBF Webinars, 3 times/year; topics vary; 2015 examples: Social media success, Using Constant Contact for	SS, CS or MB

	communications, Virtual Byway Tours	
Biannual; 2014 – Savannah	Historic Roads Assoc Conf co-sponsored by NSBF	CS, SS, SG
1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011	National Scenic Byway Conferences	SS, CS
Annual 2002 – present	Ohio Byway Meeting with Ohio Byway Links	CS, SS or another representative
As needed, 2x year	Ohio Byway Links committee meetings	CS, SS
Annual	Ohio Museum Association Meeting/Training	MB
Annual	Ohio Historical Society Meeting/Training	MB
Annual	National Association for Interpretation	SS, life member

Meetings for the 2019 Scenic Byway Committee are on the following dates:

- March 29, 2019 @ 10:30
- July 26, 2019 @ 10:30
- October 25, 2019 @ 10:30

E. Byway Leadership Succession Plan

The Holmes County Historical Society standing ‘Volunteer and Membership’ Committee retains leadership of the local Byway organization and has incorporated the Byway CMP into its annual plans. Current Executive Director of the Holmes County Historical Society (HCHS) is Mark Boley, phone number 330.674.0022.

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

A. Road Conditions and Signage

Byway Route	Link and Current Conditions	Comments and Needs
US 62 EW	Primary Hwy; links Brinkhaven, Wilmot; good condition; working on road improvements and parking in Berlin through 2016; wide buggy lanes maintained East of Millersburg	Heavy commercial development between Millersburg and entire Berlin area
SR 39 EW	Primary Hwy; links Loudonville, Nashville, Millersburg, Berlin, Sugarcreek, major corridor; excellent condition; links Nashville, Millersburg, Berlin, Walnut Creek; three lanes at some intersections; buggy lanes maintained east of Millersburg	Rest area and small picnic area maintained by ODOT east of Berlin; need buggy lanes W of Millersburg & in Berlin
SR 514 NS	Secondary Hwy; links Wayne Co Line-Gateway thru Shreve, Nashville to Danville; forested & farming area; no buggy lanes	Needs widening for buggy lanes in high traffic areas, slow moving vehicles
SR 754 NS	Secondary Hwy; links SR 39, SR 60, Shreve, Killbuck; forested, marsh & farming area; NS linking road, no buggy lanes	Risk of slow-moving vehicles, commuters, livestock trucks
SR 179 NS	Secondary Hwy; links SR 3, Lakeville, Nashville, SR 39; serves as NS shortcut to NW Holmes Co, no buggy lanes	Risk of slow-moving vehicles, commuters
SR 226 EW	Secondary Hwy; links Lakeville, Big Prairie, Shreve, SR 179; farming area bordering Wayne Co, no buggy lanes	Risk of slow-moving vehicles
SR 60 NS	Secondary Hwy; links Loudonville on SR 39, Nashville, Welcome, Killbuck, US 62; heavily traveled; agricultural area with slow moving vehicles; no buggy lanes	Risk of slow-moving vehicles, heavy commuter traffic
SR 520 EW	Secondary Hwy; links SR 514, Glenmont, US 62, Killbuck; forested and agricultural area, no buggy lanes	Risk of slow-moving vehicles

SR 83 NS	Primary Hwy; links Wooster, Holmesville, Millersburg, Coshocton Co. Heavily traveled NS route for commuters, tourists; buggy traffic can use trail corridor linking Fredericksburg, Holmesville, Millersburg, Killbuck.	Risk of slow-moving vehicles, heavy commuter traffic buggy lane would increase travel safety
SR 241 NS	Secondary Hwy; links Millersburg, Mt Hope, to Mt Eaton; very heavy buggy, commuter and tourism traffic; No buggy lane in Millersburg area. Excellent buggy lanes north of Fryburg, Mt Hope area.	High risk of slow-moving vehicles along with commuters & tourists; need buggy lane leaving Millersburg
SR 557 NS	Secondary Hwy; links SR 39, Charm, Farmerstown, SR 643, Baltic. Heavy buggy and tractor traffic. Very heavy tourism traffic in Charm area; no buggy lanes.	High risk of slow-moving vehicles; Great need for buggy lanes
SR 515 NS	Secondary Hwy; links US 62 near Winesburg, Trail, Walnut Creek, SR 39.	Risk of slow-moving vehicles along; need buggy lanes
SR 643 EW	Secondary Hwy; links SR 93, SR 557, New Bedford; no buggy lanes available.	Risk of slow-moving vehicles

i. Existing official ODOT byway signs.

See appendix.

ii. Local byway signs

See appendix.

iii. Interpretive signs.

See appendix.

iv. Future sign needs.

Amish Country Byway signs to complement Ohio Byway signs, numbers and placements to be determined, using the Amish Country Byway logo (Appendix B). Goals/objectives in 5-year plan to determine future sign needs for wayfinding and interpretation. Recommendations for Ohio Byway signs included in the current sign inventory list (Appendix A).

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>Comments</b>
Cultural	Historic	Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center, northeast of Berlin (40.56741° -81.78157°)	Museum and Bookstore dedicated to Amish and Mennonite Heritage
Cultural	Scenic	Amish Country Byway and Holmes County Roads	across Holmes County
Cultural	Historic	Victorian House and Millersburg Glass Museum, Millersburg (40.55935° -81.91846°)	Holmes County Historical Society sponsored museums, open March-Dec, contact by request for other times
Historic	Natural	Killbuck Natural History Museum (40.498081° - 81.983436°)	Village of Killbuck, open on request
Cultural	Historic	German Culture Museum (40.54055° -81.72166°)	Village of Walnut Creek
Recreational	Recreational	Holmes County Trail	Renovated Railroad Depot Educational Center in Millersburg
Archaeological	Historic	Site of Martin's Creek mastodon excavation, next to Martin's Creek Mennonite Church	Excavated mastodon skeleton on display at Orton Hall, at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
Cultural	Historic	Cheese factories	Guggisberg: SR 557 Holmes Cheese: SR 39 Heini's: US 62
Cultural	Historic	Century Barns and Farms (4): <a href="http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/Cent_Farms/Reporting.aspx?cty=holmes">http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/Cent_Farms/Reporting.aspx?cty=holmes</a>	Current list found through the Ohio Dept of Agriculture
Historic		Millersburg National Historic District; interpretive sign on NE corner of West Jackson and Grant streets	Three-block district of Downtown Millersburg, a Main Street organization
Historic	Cultural	National Historic Registry: <a href="http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/">http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/</a>	16 site listings – see below

C. Changes in Intrinsic Qualities/Resources since last CMP

Holmes County and the surrounding counties maintain the largest Amish settlement in the world. Families, businesses and related services exist to support this thriving culture. Economic growth has continued countywide.

The small businesses owned by the Amish and Mennonites have made the Amish Country Byway in Holmes County a national destination. Bulk food stores that serve the local Amish community are now unique boutiques where busses with visitors stop to buy local meats, cheeses and eat hard dipped ice cream.

The Amish culture continues to prosper along with the economy. When people are working and products from the farm and home are valued, the Amish and English from rural Ohio can succeed in their spiritual and familial lifestyles. Building businesses and homes, the Amish and English in this community have been investing in their future for the past two decades.

With the continued prosperity and growth of local farms and entrepreneurial businesses, the Amish population is continuing to rise. With increased population there are more opportunities as well as pressures. When local English owned farms sell, the Amish often purchase this farmland. Many local farms are split into small parcels, supporting the needs of the Amish family who own horses and small livestock for personal use. Still there is not enough land to meet the needs of growing Amish families. Since the 1980's, many Amish church families band together and seek new settlements in Montana, Iowa, New York and Maine to name a few.

The Sugarcreek 'Budget' newspaper still serves the many Amish communities across the US and Canada by weekly publishing Amish settlement news. You can learn about births, illnesses and deaths through the correspondence of local community reporters in these Amish settlements, mostly with their familial roots from Holmes County, Ohio.

While fascinating, the Amish people are very friendly and approachable. We welcome visitors from all US states, all Canadian provinces and over 100 countries worldwide each year as recorded at the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center annually.

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

Intrinsic Quality Sites and Resources	Accessibility Review	Comments
Killbuck Village	Off US 62 and SR 60	Parking on street
Millersburg Village	Intersection of SR 83/US 62 and SR 39 and terminus of SR 241	Public rest rooms outside Village office and in County Courthouse
Nashville Village	Intersection of SR 514 and SR 39	Parking on street and at school park
Berlin – Berlin Township	Intersection of SR 39 and US 62	Rest room outside of retail on SR 39, parking in lots behind retail and on street, sidewalks to downtown retail and school

Winesburg Village	US 62, SR 515 nearby	Parking on street, sidewalks
Holmesville Village	SR 83	Parking at school and on street, limited sidewalks to school
Charm	On SR 557	Parking at retail
Walnut Creek	Terminus of SR 515, off SR 39	Parking in retail lots and on streets, current plan to extend limited sidewalks
Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center	Just off SR 39/US 62	Parking in large open lot, public rest rooms during museum hours Mon-Sat.; wheelchair access
Holmes County Historical Society and Victorian House Museum	On SR 83 in the Village of Millersburg: Limited handicapped access to historic building, sidewalks to all campus buildings from parking.	Parking in large open lot behind building – HCHS office and Castle Club meeting rooms have wheelchair access, Historic Victorian House not wheelchair accessible, public restrooms in both when open
Millersburg Glass Museum	On SR 83 in the Village of Millersburg: on the HCHS campus	Wheelchair accessible and public rest rooms available when open
German Culture Museum	4877 Olde Pump St, off SR 515 and SR 39 in Walnut Creek, sidewalks from parking to building	Part of the community library building, wheelchair access and public rest rooms when open
Killbuck Valley Natural History Museum	Downtown Killbuck: on SR 60, off US 62, sidewalks from street parking to museum	Wheelchair accessible, public rest rooms in rear of building, street parking
Holmes County Trail Depot	West of Historic Downtown Millersburg	Depot offers picnic area, public rest rooms and parking in an adjacent lot

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

### A. Interpretation since Designation

#### Media –

Numerous publications, booklets, magazine articles, photographs and printed resources have been initiated by the byway organization to increase awareness about the Amish Country Byway story. Additional partners have created marketing materials including Amish Country maps, photographs and interpretation of Amish Country.

#### Museums –

1998: Three museums\*\* in Holmes County, along the Byway were open seasonally to share the cultural, natural and historic stories of our area. Numerous small businesses where Amish worked, including the Mt. Hope Auction, Coach Carriage, Hershberger Furniture and Guggisberg and Heini's Cheese factories, roadside bakeries and produce stands were open regularly for commerce among both locals and visitors.

2015: Seven museums\* in Holmes County, along the Byway are open either full time or with longer seasons, to share the cultural, natural and historic resources and stories of our area. Our entrepreneurial business numbers have grown, including a produce auction from April to Oct near Mt. Hope along Rt 241, making Holmes County Ohio's center for locally produced food. Visitors now have more options for overnight stays in the area. Since 1998, four 50+ room hotels have opened. While this has reduced the number of Bed and Breakfast offerings, overall there are more people staying overnight than ever before. With increases in overnight visitation, there are also increased options for restaurants and traveler amenities.

\*\*Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center (formerly the Information Center)

\*\*Victorian House Museum (Holmes County Historical Society)

\*\*Killbuck Valley Natural History Museum

\*German Culture Museum

\*Millersburg Glass Museum

\*County Line Historical Society Museum (along the Wayne/Holmes County line, SR 3)

\*West Holmes Civil War Museum (At West Holmes High School, with permission)

#### Hospitality Training –

The Holmes County Tourism Bureau conducts hospitality training on a regular basis. They have also initiated the 'Ambassador Ask Me' program in 2011 which provides face to face interaction along the Byway, to answer questions about the area and provide information from a trained 'Amish Country Ambassador Ask Me Program'.

## B. Byway Story

*Authentic tastes, goods and culture of Amish Country*

*(2014 Amish Country Ohio Map and Directory)*

*Past ~*

*The Amish and Mennonites are an outgrowth of the 16th century Anabaptist movement in Europe. During the Swiss Protestant Reformation, this group of people was considered radical for rejecting infant baptism and mandatory military service. They immigrated to America in hope of religious freedom. Having crossed the Alleghenies by covered wagon, here they settled, farmed and grew, until today their descendants in Holmes and the surrounding counties constitute the largest community of Amish in the world.*

*From Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the first people of Amish faith came to Ohio and settled in Sugarcreek in 1808. Amishman, Jonas Stutzman was the first white man to settle in eastern Holmes County, making his homestead in Walnut Creek in 1809. Today 36,000-38,000 Amish live in a five-county region (Holmes, Wayne, Ashland, Tuscarawas, and Coshocton) with their population doubling about every 16 years.*

*The Mennonite faith began first, with the Amish sect splitting 150 years later, led by Jacob Amman, to enforce the stricter discipline regarding communion and excommunication. Although the Mennonite movement came first, most Holmes County Mennonite churches were formed by former Amish community members.*

*Holmes County, formed in 1824, is named for a young officer of the War of 1812, Major Andrew Hunter Holmes, who was killed while leading an attack in the Battle of Mackinac.*

*Present ~*

*Holmes County Ohio is home to the world's largest Amish community, and the cultural experiences available here are unlike any elsewhere.*

*Our region is perhaps as famous for its Amish and Mennonite heritage as it is for its home-style food. The rich flavors and recipes that have been passed from one generation to the next are reminiscent of family feasts.*

*Our quilts, most of which are locally made and one-of-a-kind, are world famous for their wonderful patterns. With a wealth of craftsmen, our region is also a great place to find art pieces and wood furniture. From the store-lined streets of Berlin to the eclectic shops of Millersburg and Winesburg to the handmade items found in towns throughout the county, you can expect a memorable shopping experience in Holmes County.*

*It is quite safe to say the Amish would feel keen disappointment if visitors leaving Holmes County would remember them only for their thrifty farms, quilts and crafts.*

*Instead they would desire a deeper understanding of their Christian beliefs, which is silently portrayed by their simple lifestyle.*

*Charming bed and breakfasts, friendly people and scenic drives throughout – the comfortable pace in Holmes County is reason enough to visit and stay awhile.*

*Future ~*

*There is every indication that the Amish and Mennonites living in our communities will continue to thrive. Since the 1980's the population has been increasing, new schools built, and business opportunities have expanded.*

*While specifics of practice and culture differ, five elements of belief direct all Amish and Mennonites in their lives. (2014 Amish Country map and directory)*

- *They are Biblicists who live in simple obedience to the word of God.*
- *Voluntary, adult baptism is seen as a person faith commitment.*
- *Peace and reconciliation are central to Christ's life and message; defending oneself with violence is not an option.*
- *There must be separation of Church and State.*
- *Christians should live in distinction from the world around them.*

### C. Future Interpretation

Towns and Villages –

Expand history available online for the towns and villages along the Amish Country Byway.

<http://www.holmeshistory.com/>

Museums –

Against the national trend, our local museums have increased in number and continued to thrive. The Byway organization will continue to support the membership, projects and fund-raising for our local museums. Through these efforts their interpretive programs offered will continue to expand and improve. Opportunities for online interpretation, mobile applications for special exhibits and increases in docent interpretation on site are goals for the future.

Group Tours –

Bus tours continue the upward trend as well as the total number of visitors and overnight stays since 2004. Partnerships to expand tour offerings to include cultural and historic attractions before, during and after Amish Country experiences are being explored. These group tours would be multi-day tours allowing for more dining experiences and longer personal interactions in Amish Country.

Small Businesses -

Tourism-related businesses continue to offer additional exhibits and authentic experiences especially oriented to the visitor. Examples include the Walnut Creek Farm (hands on experience with animals); Rolling Ridge Acres (driving experience among exotic animals); Coblenz Chocolates (viewing area for handmade chocolates); and numerous Cheese factories (providing viewing areas and tours) including Guggisberg Cheese, home of the Original Baby Swiss (photo right).

#### D. Plans for Improving Visitor Experience

1) Improve scenic viewsheds along the Byway corridor (Goal Two). This includes decreasing trash and wildlife debris along the Byway, increasing the mileage covered for the “Adopt a Highway” program, and working to write a “viewshed improvement plan” for our next 5-year CMP update.

2) Increase Byway awareness and support (Goal Three). This includes creating and posting “Amish Country Byway signs” along the Byway to complement the Ohio Byway signs, increasing the number of publications that identify the Byway on their maps and writing a “wayfinding” plan for needs within 40 miles of the Byway.

#### E. Preservation

##### Preservation: How Intrinsic Quality/Resources Will Be Protected and Sustained

##### Culture:

Preservation of the Amish and English lifestyles, co-existing for over 200 years, continues most successfully during a strong rural economy cycle. The increased emphasis on local foods, the value of farmland and farm product production, as well as skilled farm labor have kept the Amish Country community strong.

##### Farmland:

The Ohio Farmland Preservation Program offers individual farm landowners the opportunity to be paid (with matching funds) to put development deed restrictions on their property. Many farms along the Byway have applied for funding support from a special state program to preserve local farmland for future generations. Two farms in Holmes County have gained protection under this program since 2001. Reports are annually prepared for the state by the Holmes County commissioners verifying compliance with the program requirements.

##### Public access to interpretation:

Several nonprofit organizations exist to share the story of the Amish settlement and thriving communities that exist along the Amish Country Byway today. These nonprofits interpret the story and share cultural and historical interpretations.

##### Private access to interpretation:

Many private businesses exist to enhance the visitor experience while in Ohio’s Amish Country. Examples are the Amish Country Theatre, Warther’s Carvings, Amish Country Tours, Amish home dinners and bakeries.

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

A. Current and Future Planned Marketing Activities

2015 - 2020	Continue partnership with Ohio Byway Links, co-promoting all of Ohio’s Scenic Byways; update Ohio Byway program, ODOT website information: <a href="http://www.ohiobyways.com">www.ohiobyways.com</a> (links to the ODOT website for the Ohio byway program)
2015 - 2020	Continue to update information on National Scenic Byway federal FHWA website: <a href="http://www.byways.org">www.byways.org</a> (links to the national scenic byway program through the FHWA website)
2015 - 2020	Maintain visitor fulfillment partnership with the Holmes County Chamber and Tourism Bureau; support annual publication of the Holmes County Map and Visitors Guide, available free online - <a href="http://issuu.com/kleidon/docs/2015_hcmvg_final_1/1">http://issuu.com/kleidon/docs/2015_hcmvg_final_1/1</a> with printable Amish Country Byway Maps.
2015 - 2020	Continue to co-promote the Amish Country visitor website: <a href="http://www.visitamishcountry.com">www.visitamishcountry.com</a>
2015 - 2020	Enhance partnership with Holmes County Tourism Bureau through increased involvement in Ohio Byway Links marketing partnership.
2016 - 2020	Co-promote the “America’s Byways” brand and logo with the new Amish Country (Holmes County CVB) logo and tag: “Hand-crafted, Heart-felt”
2017-2018	Recommend and implement virtual experiences through ‘tagwhat’ or ‘fieldtrip’ similar app’s; in partnership with other Ohio Byways and the Holmes County CVB
2019-2020	Evaluate recommended goals/objectives and strategies for next CMP update

B. Recommended Products or Attachments for Media and Public Relations

i. Short description of byway for use in publications.

*“Experience the cultural lifestyle of the Amish and northern Appalachian people as you travel along the charming country roads.”* (30 words: from current Ohio Byway brochure)

*“Discover the cultural and historic treasures of the Amish and northern Appalachian people as you wind through curves and over the hills of the pastoral countryside. Experience simple living and sustainability along charming country roads, taking you to a bygone era still present, manifest in the people and their lifestyle.”* (50 words: from current FHWA/byways.org website)

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

Photo collage with captions on pages 29 and 30  
 Also see Appendix C, listing jpeg photo attachment files

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

#	Unique/Authentic attractions	Description and location information	GIS
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1	Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center	Pioneer Barn and One Room School House: Discover Amish education and its connection to one room public schools in our pre-Civil War era schoolhouse. Wall map depicts all the countries in the world where Amish and Mennonite settlements are documented.	40.56741, -81.78157
2	Behalt Cyclorama, Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center	30-minute tour of Behalt illustrates the history of the Anabaptist movement from its origins to the present day. Museum bookstore specializes in Amish and Mennonite publications.	40.56741, -81.78157
3	Victorian House Museum <a href="http://www.victorianhouse.org">www.victorianhouse.org</a>	Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this 28 room Queen Anne style home serves as the society's museum of Victoriana and collection of Holmes County history.	40.55935, -8191846
4	German Culture Museum	Focusing specifically on the history and settlement of Holmes County and Walnut Creek Township, the German Culture Museum strives to give you a snapshot of life in the 19th and early 20th centuries.	40.54055, -81.72166
5	Killbuck Valley Natural History Museum	The archaeology room has displays of recent digs prepared by Dr. Nigel Brush, professor of archaeology at Ashland University. Mastodon bones! Indian Artifacts! The geology room has rocks and minerals from the world over. Kids love our fluorescent minerals display. Reception hall has local history and historic school display, plus a gift shop and bookshop.	40.49808, -81.98343
6	Millersburg Glass Museum	This is the largest known public display of Millersburg Glass, the premier pressed glass ever made in America. The collection includes over 300 pieces of crystal and carnival glass bowls,	40.55935, -8191846

		vases, pitchers, plates and other rare collectibles. Docents provide interpretive tours on weekends. Glass manufactured in 1909-1912 and sold world-wide.	
7	County Line Historical Society and Museum	The historical record of the founding and development of the communities adjacent to the County Line of Wayne and Holmes Counties.	40.683135, -82.022474
8	Guggisberg Cheese	Home of the Original Baby Swiss Cheese, first factory on SR 557 between Berlin and Charm. Watch cheese being made.	40.524588, -81.804281
9	Heini's Cheese	Flavored cheese of many kinds. Watch cheese being made.	40.573895, -81.782105
10	The Farm at Walnut Creek	Yoder's Amish Farm provides insight into farm life and the choices in the economy and lifestyle as experienced by an Amish family.	40.521031, -81.735198
11	Colonial Homestead	Downtown Millersburg, handmade wood crafting, specializing in guns and furniture made from mechanical tools and implements.	40.554431, -81.918979

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

www.visitamishcountry.com  
www.oac.com

v. Marketing contact information:

Holmes County Chamber and Visitor's Bureau  
330.674.3975 and 877.643.8824  
[info@visitamishcountry.co](mailto:info@visitamishcountry.co)

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

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

Through the HCHS Volunteer and Membership Committee, the CMP of the Amish Country Byway is maintained and communicated. Recruitment and training of volunteers in partnership nonprofit organizations is a current goal of the Amish Country Byway committee.

### **B. Public Meeting and Public Participation Opportunities**

The Amish Country Byway organization operates as part of the HCHS Volunteer and Membership Committee. All committees of the HCHS are open to public participation, as well as the opportunities to participate in HCHS Board meetings and the annual organization meeting.

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

October 2013: A widely publicized, public focus group was held at the Holmes County Senior Center facility to gain input and information from the community. Newspaper reports were published about the meeting and those in attendance in December 2013.

2014: The Holmes County Historical Society conducted three focus groups and updated its strategic plan, a 9-month process, accepted by the HCHS Board in November 2014.

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

Through byway committee leadership and the HCHS Volunteer and Membership committee, critical issues will be identified, and solutions sought. Critical issues will be addressed through government, public or private partnerships as needed.

Signage segmentation requests, from ODOT – to be addressed by the segmentation sub-committee, including representatives from the public and private sector.

Annual report requests, from ODOT (currently March 31) – the byway organization will write and submit an update annually to reflect the progress on the CMP as well as address other issues as appropriate each year.

Marketing requests, from public – the byway organization is in partnership with the Holmes County Chamber and Tourism Bureau to answer travel and information requests. Response to requests are made during business days.

Contact with byway leaders, from ODOT and other byway leaders – the byway organization, especially the primary contact, will match requests with byway organization member expertise.

## VIII. APPENDIX

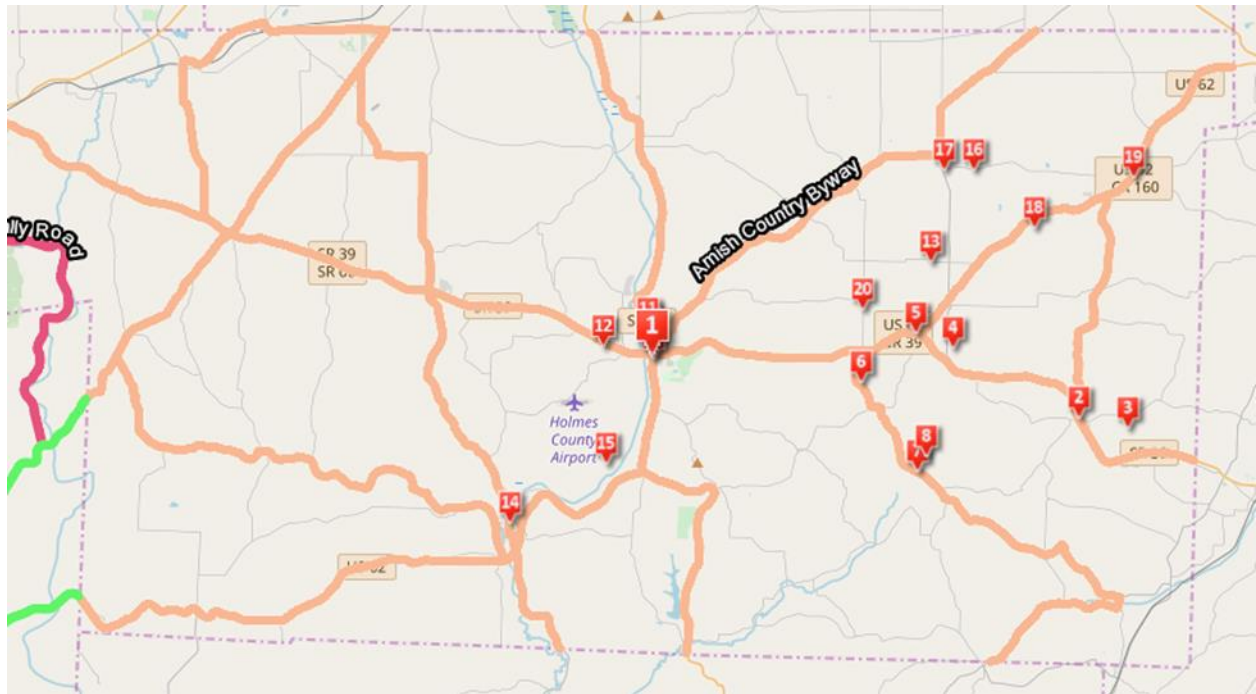
### A. Ohio Byway sign inventory (Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, GIS information formatted as latitude, longitude as per ODOT guidelines)

#	Byway	Latitude	Longitude	Direction	Condition
1	ACB	40.53711	-82.1818	E	Good
2	ACB	40.63499	-82.2201	E	Good
3	ACB	40.65733	-82.1351	S	Good
4	ACB	40.60248	-82.1254	N	Good
5	ACB	40.48168	-81.9868	N	Good
6	ACB	40.46481	-82.1797	E	Good
7	ACB	40.57575	-82.0216	S	Good
8	ACB	40.57766	-82.0213	N	Good
9	ACB	40.66807	-82.0413	S	Good
10	ACB	40.51976	-81.6874	W	Good
11	ACB	40.65533	-81.6494	W	Good
12	ACB	40.55443	-81.915	N	Good
13	ACB	40.63593	-81.9241	S	Good
14	ACB	40.47335	-81.6786	S	Good

### B. Most Current Byway Map



**C. Maps Identifying Primary Intrinsic Quality/Resource Locations**



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















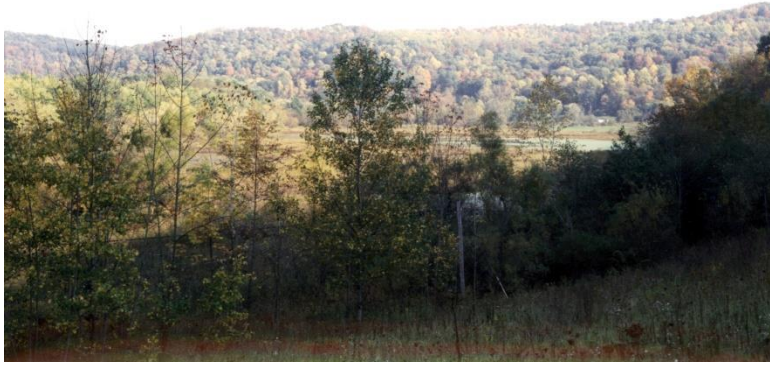














































**E. Marketing Materials- If applicable.**