

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND PARKS.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Becky Hutchins at 3:30 p.m. on January 29, 2003 in Room 243-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present: Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes' Office  
Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Russell Mills, Legislative Research Department  
Sarah Samuelson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Mary Allman, Exec. Director, KS State Historical Society  
Jeff Boerger, President, Kansas Speedway

Others attending: see attached list

Chairperson Hutchins asked for bill introductions from committee members. Representative Peterson requested a bill clarifying regulations of the pursuit of wounded game onto private property. According to this bill, hunters would need to make reasonable efforts to obtain permission from a private landowner before pursuing wounded game onto that landowner's property.

The bill was introduced as requested, without objection from the committee members.

Chairperson Hutchins asked for requests for bill introductions from the gallery. No bills were requested.

Mary Allman, Executive Director of the Kansas State Historical Society, gave an informational hearing on Kansas State Historical Markers Program (Attachment 1). She discussed the history of the Marker program, reported its present status, and presented the Historical Society's plans for the future.

Chairperson Hutchins asked when the last markers were placed; Ms. Allman replied that she is uncertain of when the last new marker was placed; most recently, the focus has been on updating the language of existing signs for political correctness. The most recent of these changes was completed in the summer of 2002.

Chairperson Hutchins asked who pays for the refurbishing of markers; Ms. Allman replied that it is the Department of Transportation.

Representative Osborne suggested a new silhouette design for some of the new signs along the Santa Fe Trail. Ms. Allman expressed interest in considering any suggestions proposed to the Historical Society.

Representative Peterson asked who makes the decisions for a new sign; Ms. Allman replied that the Historical Society has that authority.

John Bottenberg, representing Kansas Speedway, introduced Jeff Boerger, President of the Speedway.

Jeff Boerger gave an informational hearing on the Speedway's success. He discussed the following upcoming events:

- June 1: BPU 200, the ARCA RE/MAX series, an entry-level race comparable to baseball's AAA league; it will be combined with a barbecue and cash prizes.
- July 5: O'Reilly Auto Parts 250; combined with the Aventis Racing for Kids 100 and the IRL IndyCar Series Kansas 300.
- Oct. 3-5: Winston Cup weekend, including the Mr. Goodcents 300 and the Kansas 400; this event attracts 120,000-130,000 visitors, 70% of whom are from outside of the metropolitan area.

In addition to these main events, the Speedway is used for many other events; the facility has over 200 revenue-generating days per year. Some uses are:

- Other professional motorsports events
- Pre-event testing
- Driving schools
- Classic car shows

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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- Sponsor appreciation days
- Car club meets
- Concerts
- Community functions
- Track tours
- Walk-a-thons

Mr. Boerger then discussed the economic impact of the Speedway. It was created from approximately \$250 million in private and public funding, and it currently seats 80,187 with planned expansion to 150,000. One advantage of the Kansas Speedway over other racing venues is its excellent highway access, unparalleled in the industry. Also, it is over 450 miles from the nearest NASCAR Winston Cup venue, allowing it to draw from a wide population base of about 42 million people in a six-state area.

The economic benefits of the Speedway include:

- 2000 construction jobs, generating \$50 million in payroll
- 42 full-time employees and 3000-5000 event-day staff members
- \$150 million generated in first year of full operation
- Countless hours of television exposure for Kansas

Additionally, the Speedway has made possible the nearby development of Village West, a complex of hotels, restaurants, and retailers. Village West is estimated to generate 3300 jobs and to have annual sales of over \$440 million.

The 2003 Season is already sold out; the sellout dates have been getting earlier every year since the Speedway opened. This indicates the increasing popularity of the track.

Representative Novascone inquired the price of season tickets; Mr. Boerger replied that they are \$175-330 for five races.

Representative Novascone asked if there are any tracks to the northwest; Mr. Boerger said there are not, and that NASCAR is not planning to expand the schedule.

Representative Long asked whether the new seats are already sold out; Mr. Boerger said they are.

Representative Long asked whether any tickets are reserved for sale at the door; Mr. Boerger said they are not.

Representative Long asked whether the suites would also be expanded; Mr. Boerger said that they did have possible plans for that in 2004.

Representative Merrick commended Speedway on a first-class operation. He said in his experience the facility is kept clean and is a pleasant place to be.

Representative Osborne asked whether the Speedway leases areas for selling drivers' merchandise. Mr. Boerger replied that the space is not leased but that the Speedway receives a percentage of sales. Also, all merchandise sold on the premises is subject to sales tax.

Representative Osborne asked whether the track is still popular with the drivers; Mr. Boerger replied that the only problem reported is the insufficient wearing in the second groove, which can only be remedied through more racing. Representative Schwab inquired as to when the grooves would be ready; Mr. Boerger said it would probably be the end of October.

Representative Morrison expressed her agreement with Representative Merrick that the Speedway has a beautiful facility. However, she suggested that smoking and non-smoking sections could be designated.

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Representative Ruff stated that her constituents in Leavenworth appreciate the Speedway and its economic impact on the area. However, she said that 42 full-time employees does not seem like a high number. Mr. Boerger said that 42 was fairly typical of similar venues.

Representative Peterson asked whether the Speedway was having any difficulty with scalpers. Mr. Boerger replied that there is some scalping, but if the offenders are caught, their tickets are revoked. There is no Kansas law against scalping, but Wyandotte County does have an ordinance against it.

Chairperson Hutchins thanked Mr. Boerger and the Kansas Speedway, saying she is amazed when she sees the growing development of Village West. She asked when more of the retailers are scheduled to open; Mr. Boerger replied that they would all be open by the Winston Cup weekend (October).

Chairperson Hutchins reminded the committee of next week's schedule:

Monday—meeting on call of chair

Wednesday—hearing on HB 2054; possible bill introductions

(Last day for non-exempt committees to request bills to be drafted)

The minutes from January 27, 2003 were distributed and approved without amendment.

Chairperson Hutchins adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2003 on call of the chair, or for February 5, 2003.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND PARKS

GUEST LIST

DATE: Jan. 29, 2003

NAME	REPRESENTING
Mary Allman	Kansas State Historical Society
JOHN C. BOTTENBERG	KS Speedway
William W Sneed	KS Speedway Corp
Jeff Boerger, president	" " "
Sandy Braden	TRAK
Stephanie Buchanan	DOB
Susan Paxson	
Rae Anne Davis	KIDDOCH



**KANSAS HISTORICAL MARKERS**  
**Presentation to the House Committee on Tourism and Parks**  
**January 29, 2003**  
*Mary Allman, Executive Director*

The Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) and the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) contracted with Heritage Research Center for a study of historical marker programs in ten mid-western states as a means to assess the Kansas program and making improvements to it. This study was funded using a Federal grant through KDOT.

### **History of the Kansas Marker Program**

The Daughters of the American Revolution secured funding from the Kansas legislature in 1905 to establish the first historical markers in the state though no official program for placing them existed. The legislature appropriated \$1,000 to erect monuments to mark the route of the Santa Fe Trail through Kansas.

The roots of the state's official marker program also lay in the desire to celebrate history and heritage, through marker placement. In 1934 the Kansas State Chamber of Commerce brought together a group of like-minded individuals to lay the groundwork for what would become the official program. This group was comprised of interested individuals, business people, and members of the Kansas State Historical Society.

Based in part on the work of this group, Kansas' marker program was inaugurated in 1938 with the placement of the state's first official historical marker. Following this initial success, the governor authorized the director of state highways to erect 50 markers beginning in 1940. The KSHS selected the first 50 from a list of 100 potential markers.

### **The Kansas Historical Marker Program Today**

Today, the state has in place a dynamic and functional historical marker program. There are over 120 official markers in place. The marker program in Kansas has continued the traditions of those who pushed for its creation. It is an inclusive program looking to many groups within the state for the sponsorship of the markers it places.

Kansas is also home to historical markers placed by a diverse group of individuals and organizations not directly affiliated with the state's official marker program. As part of the study of historical marker programs throughout the Midwest, Heritage Research Center is working with the KSHS to compile a database designed, in part, to recognize and promote markers that are not a part of the state program, but merit attention. To date, an inventory of over 1200 markers has been compiled. Patriotic groups, religious organizations and local historical societies placed these markers, throughout the State of Kansas. By summer, 2003, we intend to have this inventory of markers placed on the Historical Society web site, [www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org), as a searchable database.

The Kansas State Motto, "To the stars, through difficulties," could be a summary of the sense of human migration and movement that has been so significant in Kansas' history, and which is reflected in many of the state's existing markers. The motto also speaks to modern travelers, however, as they move through communities and along roadways. Historical marker placement, whether on buildings, in parks, or along streets and highways, is designed to invite those passing by to pause and reflect on the human and natural landscape. Reflection on the state's past can be a powerful component of setting the course for Kansas' future. Historical markers have a part to play in this process.

Historical markers have the ability to capture the imagination of children and adults, residents and visitors, and folks interested at any level in the environment and history. Markers help establish a sense of place for those who choose to stop and ponder the words and landscape. The Kansas historical marker program is in the enviable position of solidifying a network of partnerships built on the well-established and demonstrated interest of its populace in the state's history and environment. Partnerships grant all interested parties a voice in a program with wide appeal and interest. They are a key element in garnering the broad support necessary to a strong program.

Partnerships at a statewide level can generate interest, participation, and a broader vision for a historical marker program. The Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas Department of Transportation have teamed up for decades to present and manage Kansas' current historical markers. The existing highway markers give a broad overview of the state's history and culture.

### **The Future of the Kansas Historical Marker Program**

Kansas is now looking toward creating an expanded program, with the inclusion of numerous events, sites and places not addressed in the existing series of markers. The Kansas State Historical Society has the statutory authority to manage the state's historical marker program under its mandate to develop public interest in historic preservation and implement interpretive programs. The study, done with the assistance of the Heritage Research Center, points to numerous suggestions toward helping us to expand Kansas' historical marker program. A group of interested individuals convened at the Historical Society on November 26 to review the recommendations made by the consultant. This group included representatives from KDOT, KSHS, Travel and Tourism, the Kansas

AAA, the Kansas Sampler Foundation, local historical societies, and a member of the Kansas legislature, Representative Becky Hutchins. This panel agreed that there is a high degree of interest in marking additional historic sites throughout the state.

Partnerships with the local community and individuals are key to a successful marker program. For many states, the strength of their marker program is correlated with the extent to which they are able to involve the local community and individuals in the process. Kansas has a strong tradition of historical marker interest among civic and patriotic organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, Boy Scouts, and Eagle Scouts. In addition, the various trail organizations have been very active in placing and recording historical markers in the state. Local historical societies, tourism boards, and chambers of commerce have also been very active in placing historical markers within counties and cities. Groups such as these represent the Kansas populace, and their interest in recognizing and commemorating the state's history.

Tourism is reported to be the world's largest industry, with cultural and heritage tourism the fastest growing component within the industry. Historical markers, museums, historic sites, and cultural and historic events offer compelling venues for heritage tourists to explore the human and historic landscapes of communities and states. Local, in-state, and out-of-state visitors can explore these attractions and find an enriching experience. The communities and sites where tourists spend their time can benefit substantially from the tourism dollars spent there. Studies on the impacts of heritage tourism for local economies present a bright picture of its advantages. Heritage travelers are variously defined as those who include a historical site or commemorative event as one of their top priorities for travel.

Recent studies completed in Texas, Missouri and Virginia points to the advantages of heritage tourism and its financial benefits. These studies pointed to the facts that heritage tourists were more likely to be out-of-state rather than in-state residents, thus bringing new dollars to the local economy. They spent an average \$29 more per day than non-heritage travelers. Those engaged in day trips only spent an average of \$123 more per day than non-heritage tourists. The Missouri study reported that 13% of tourists surveyed qualified as heritage tourists, visiting historic sites and museums during their stay.

Visitors seek communities that are proud to display their cultural heritage, and want to learn as much as possible about the history and environment that created the community. Historical markers are an excellent way to present brief descriptive and interpretive history that makes the past come alive for visitors in the present.

Costs associated with a historical marker program include administrative costs to oversee the program, review proposals, and promote the marker program, as well as all costs associated with the acquisition of markers, site preparation, installation, and maintenance of existing markers.

Despite today's budget concerns, the future for an expanded historical marker program for the State of Kansas looks promising. In the short term, the Kansas State Historical

Society intends to complete the inventory of existing local markers and enter the inventory onto a searchable database at the Society's web site. A final draft of the consultant's recommendations should arrive by spring, and it will be distributed to our advisory panel for review and comment.

In the long term, the Kansas State Historical Society intends to continue its partnership with KDOT regarding any new proposals for historical markers. We will explore the possibility of a new style marker to be less expensive than the markers now in place. We will also maximize the use of Transportation Enhancement funds and private donations toward the placement of new markers.

The Kansas Historical Marker program reflects the pride of all Kansans in the history of the State of Kansas. Our marker program also offers a means to tie past events to plans for the future, through heritage tourism and quality of life.