

DECEMBER 28, 2022

# President Biden Announces Key Appointments to Boards and Commissions

WASHINGTON – Today, President Biden announced his intent to appoint the following individuals to serve as members on the Route 66 Centennial Commission:

- Caroline Beteta, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Danielle E. Blackshear, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Mark V. Falzone, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Tim J. Gatz, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Debbie Johnson, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Dale A. Oglesby, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Rod Reid, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Jen Paul Schroer, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- William M. Thomas, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Michael Wallis, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission
- Richard Ware, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission

## **Route 66 Centennial Commission**

The Route 66 Centennial Commission was established by Congress to study and recommend in a report to Congress activities that would be fitting and proper to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Mother Road of the United States, Route 66, in 2026. The Commission shall study activities that may be carried out by the Federal Government to honor Route 66, including potential ceremonies and celebrations, the production and publication of media or other materials, and the issuance of commemorative items.

**Caroline Beteta, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Caroline Beteta serves as President and CEO of Visit California, an industry-led nonprofit organization created to market California as a premier travel destination and increase the state's share of tourism-related revenues. She simultaneously serves as a strategic advisor for the Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz). Beteta is responsible for implementing Visit California's global marketing program on behalf of the organization's more than 18,000 investors while also serving as the lead spokesperson for California's travel industry.

Beteta currently serves as a member of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, which advises the Secretary of Commerce on issues that affect America's tourism industry. During a two-year term as National Chair of the United States Travel Association, she guided the successful merger of the Travel Industry Association with the Travel Business Roundtable and the creation of Brand USA. Beteta currently serves on the Executive Committee of the World Travel and Tourism Council. She has been inducted into the United States Travel Association's Hall of Leaders and holds a Bachelor of International Relations from the University of California, Los Angeles and a Master of Public Administration/Intergovernmental Affairs from the University of Southern California. Beteta also completed the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Marketing Management Program.

**Danielle E. Blackshear, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Danielle Blackshear is a transportation specialist with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Human Environment. As the National Scenic Byways Program lead, she provides program and policy direction for the designation of roads to the collection of America's Byways® and twenty-two million dollars in National Scenic Byways discretionary grants. Blackshear also provides leadership and technical assistance to transportation practitioners to advance multimodal transportation systems planning. She also specializes in the areas of transportation equity, mobility innovation and emerging technologies, and meaningful public involvement. Prior to her position in the Office of Human Environment, Blackshear worked in the FHWA Florida Division Office, where she served as the liaison for the Florida Department of Transportation District 1 and District 3 Metropolitan Planning Organizations. She also provided oversight and technical assistance for the state of Florida's public involvement, bicycle/pedestrian planning, livable communities, climate change, and resiliency initiatives, as well as the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax, Congestion Mitigation, and Air Quality Improvement programs.

Blackshear graduated from FHWA's Professional Development Program, where she was sponsored by the FHWA Michigan Division Office, and completed rotational assignments at the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the FHWA Office of Human Environment. She received her Bachelor and Master's degrees in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia.

### **Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko has served as a museum leader for nearly 25 years and is currently the Director of the Illinois State Museum, where she has been since 2019. Prior to this, Catlin-Legutko served as President and CEO of the Abbe Museum, where she co-led their decolonization initiative and co-developed practices to ensure collaboration and cooperation with the Wabanaki people. Before joining the Abbe Museum, Catlin-Legutko was the Director of the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, where she led the organization to the National Medal for Museum Service in 2008. Catlin-Legutko has served on numerous national and local boards including the American Association for State and Local History and the American Alliance of Museums.

Catlin-Legutko is the author of numerous books and publications including *Museum Administration 2.0* and *The Inclusive Museum Leader*. In 2016, she gave her first TEDx talk, "We Must Decolonize Our Museums." Catlin-Legutko's personal interests include her research as well as her adventures on Route 66. As a child growing up in Claremore, Oklahoma, the Blue Whale in Catoosa was a familiar landmark every time her family travelled to Tulsa. While in graduate school in Arkansas she began researching and traveling alignments of Route 66, experiencing as many as possible. These adventures continue today as she gets to know her new state of Illinois.

### **Mark V. Falzone, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Mark Falzone is the President of Scenic America, a national nonprofit organization that serves as the leading advocate for the National Scenic Byways Program. Under Falzone's leadership, Scenic America authored legislation passed by Congress in 2019 to revive the National Scenic Byways Program. Since then, Scenic America has led the way in Congress to secure funding for the program in the FY21 and FY22 Appropriations Acts, with more funding anticipated in FY23. In addition to preserving and promoting scenic byways, Scenic America tackles other scenic conservation concerns, such as protecting highways from billboards and other visual blight, encouraging utility undergrounding, advocating for parks and open spaces, championing community character, and responsible development.

Prior to his arrival at Scenic America in 2017, Falzone served as Deputy Director of the National Immigration Forum, and before that was a five-term elected Member of the House of Representatives in Massachusetts. As a member of the National Conference of State Legislatures, he was twice elected to the Executive Committee. Mark holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston College and a Master of Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He resides in Prince George's County, Maryland.

### **Tim J. Gatz, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

In 2019, Tim Gatz was appointed Secretary of Transportation and the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) by Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt. Prior to that appointment, Gatz was named the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) in 2016 and previously served for more than two decades at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. Gatz started his career at ODOT as a Drafting Technician in 1990. He eventually became Division Manager of the Project Management Division in 2000 where he was instrumental in the development of ODOT's eight-year Construction Work Plan. Gatz was promoted to Director of Capital Programs and Information Management in 2006 and led the department's coordination with county governments to develop and deliver the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges Program, which dedicates funds to high-priority county transportation projects statewide. He served as Deputy Director of OTA from 2013 until his appointment as Director in 2016.

Gatz earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Oklahoma State University in 1989 and is a registered professional landscape architect. He has received several honors including the Governor's Public Service Award and the Federal Highway Administration's Partners in Quality Award. He is a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the International Bridge, Tunnel, and Turnpike Association.

### **Debbie Johnson, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Debbie Johnson has built her nearly-30 years of tourism experience in Arizona, where she currently serves as the Director of the Arizona Office of Tourism. Her tourism career began in 1995 as President & CEO of the Valley Hotel & Resort Association. In 2003, she became the President & CEO of the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association. In 2012, she led the effort to merge the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association with the Arizona Tourism Alliance, making the Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association the leading tourism advocacy organization in the state. Johnson was then appointed by Governor Doug Ducey in 2015 to her current role as Director of

the Arizona Office of Tourism, where she plays an integral role in shaping Arizona's tourism industry.

Johnson has served on numerous boards and committees and received statewide recognition for her leadership. Born and raised in Wyoming, Johnson is a 35-year Arizona resident and an Arizona State Sun Devil, where she received her Bachelor of Science in Marketing.

### **Dale A. Oglesby, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Dale Oglesby has spent his life on Route 66 and served as a mayor, business owner, and community builder along the Route. Oglesby was born on Route 66 in Oklahoma City and lived in Yukon, Oklahoma, Joplin, Missouri, and eventually Galena, Kansas. He spent 25 years as Mayor of Galena, where he actively promoted the city and grew its economic developmental success around Route 66. Galena, a city of just over 3,000 residents, invested over one million dollars in restoring the road, which ushered in the first instance of multiple major private investments in the city's downtown.

Oglesby has founded five businesses in Galena over the years, and still owns a building material business on Route 66 in Galena. His goal is to help inspire other cities and towns along the Route through the work of the Commission and the upcoming centennial celebration, so that they, too, can reinvigorate and revitalize their cities with the help of this historic route.

### **Rod Reid, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Rod Reid is the Co-Owner of Shepherd Hills Factory Outlets, a family owned and operated business on Route 66 in Lebanon, Missouri that was established in 1972. He previously served as the President of the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce and is currently serving on the executive boards of Associated Industries of Missouri and Compass Health Network.

In addition to being a Charter Board Member of the Lebanon Route 66 Society, he is the Chairman of the Lebanon Tourism Board and the Missouri Transportation and Development Council, an organization founded in 1920 as The Good Roads Federation, whose motto was "Get Missouri Out of the Mud!" He has seen many changes along Route 66, as he has spent most of his life either living on or working along Route 66 since 1961. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Missouri and resides in Lebanon with his wife, Rebecca.

### **Jen Paul Schroer, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Jen Paul Schroer was appointed as Secretary of Tourism by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in January 2019. Since her appointment as Tourism Secretary, Schroer spearheaded the landmark Lodgers' Tax legislation, which brought more equity to New Mexico's lodging industry and created more channels for local and state tax revenue. Schroer also successfully advocated for a \$19.6 million budget for marketing and tourism promotion for FY23, the largest-ever amount for the agency. Schroer also guided a successful refresh of the New Mexico True brand and entry into the Los Angeles market.

Prior to her appointment to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Cabinet as Tourism Secretary, Schroer served as the President & CEO of New Mexico Hospitality Association, where she led the merger of two state level trade associations and went on to pass key legislation that helped to boost tourism development for her state.

### **William M. Thomas, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

William (Bill) Thomas is from Atlanta, Illinois and is the Chairman of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership, a non-profit founded in 2016. The Road Ahead works to speak with one voice for all of Route 66, through programs focused on preservation, promotion, research, education, and the economic development of the road. His interest in Route 66 began in June of 1964, when he was nine years old and joined his family in their new Chevy Bel Air station wagon to venture from Central Illinois on a vacation to Disneyland. The Chevy had no air-conditioning or seat belts, and Thomas had never before ventured outside Illinois. This road trip left a definite impression on him, but at the time, Route 66 itself was nothing special. For a 9-year-old boy, it was simply the way to reach Disneyland.

Thomas experiences both the realities and the potential of Route 66 in his day job as Economic Development Director of Logan County, Illinois. Many of its towns still struggle following its decommissioning in 1985, but many are also learning to leverage its potential to revive their local economies. Thomas' history degrees from Eureka College and the University of Chicago help him recognize the special place Route 66 has played, and continues to play, in the United States' national story. Thomas is excited to be a part of the Route 66 Centennial Commission and the opportunity it provides to celebrate the road's special anniversary while positioning its next 100 years.

### **Michael Wallis, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Michael Wallis is an award-winning author of several best-selling books, including *Route 66: The Mother Road*, which was published in 1990 and considered to have reignited the nation's interest in the historic highway. Wallis co-founded the Route 66 Alliance, a non-profit

organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the road. His work and expertise led him to serve as a consultant on Pixar Studio's award-winning animated motion picture, *Cars*, another major influence in the resurgence of Route 66. In fact, Wallis led eleven Pixar animators on two different road trips across the Mother Road to research the Route and he voiced the car "Sheriff" for the movies.

Wallis has written seventeen books and has been inducted into the Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame, Writers Hall of Fame of America, and Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame. He was the first inductee into the Oklahoma Route 66 Hall of Fame.

### **Richard Ware, Member, Route 66 Centennial Commission**

Richard Ware is Chairman of Amarillo National Bank. He is the former Chair of the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce and the Amarillo Area Foundation. Ware chaired the Downtown Planning Committees for Amarillo in 1992 and 2006, which resulted in the transformation of downtown Amarillo, the largest city on the Texas portion of Route 66. His involvement in the Amarillo community has helped sustain the Route 66 Historic District in Amarillo.

Ware and his family were named "Texas Bankers of the Century" in 1999 by *Texas Monthly* magazine and he was named "Banker of the Year" in 2017 by the publication *American Banker*. Ware is also the longest serving outside Board Member of Atmos Energy and serves on the Boards of numerous civic and nonprofit groups.

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