

# HERITAGE ROUTE PLANNING

Created in 1993, the Michigan Heritage Route Program was formed to identify and designate scenic roadways for the enjoyment of the traveling public in Michigan. Heritage routes serve as natural, social, cultural, and economic resources for the visitors to the state of Michigan, the people of Michigan, and the local communities in which the roadways are located.

The Michigan Heritage Route Program is related to the National Scenic Byways Program, and is a voluntary, community-based program administered through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) since 1991 to recognize, protect, and promote America's most outstanding roads.

The Michigan Department of Transportation Heritage Route program contracts with SWMPC for planning activities with community partners along the routes to:

- Preserve scenic, cultural, and historic resources
- Increase cooperation among communities
- Foster community economic development
- Collaborate on available grants
- Manage route activities
- Educate visitors about history, nature, and culture of the area
- Increase visitor participation along the route

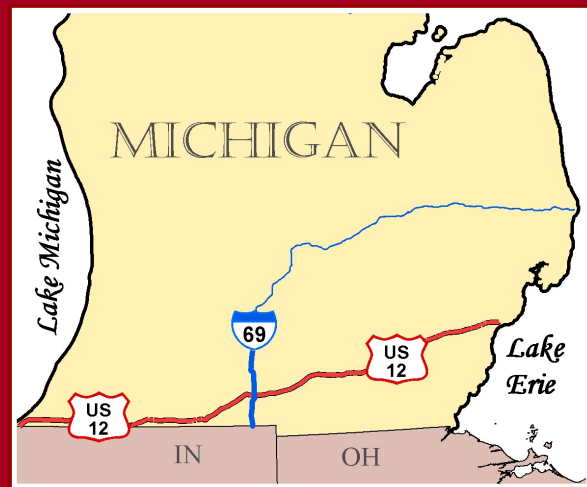
## LOCAL IMPACT



The US 12 Heritage Trail website offers a place to upload stories about the US 12 Garage Sale from sellers and buyers.

### **Three Oaks:**

*“My husband, my girlfriend and her husband set up two booths in Three Oaks at the elementary school. We had about 250-300 people come through on Friday, so much fun to talk with people and exchange stories. We both sold a lot. There were also 4 or 5 other booths near us. There were buyers from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, etc. They all seemed to be having a great time.”*



## Heritage Routes Administered by SWMPC

- **US-12 Historic Heritage Route**  
A 212 mile network of interdependent communities whose concerted actions reflect their commitment to protect and conserve the unique and inherent natural, historic, and cultural resources that are the foundation upon which they will build and maintain a diverse, prosperous and sustainable economy.
- **I-69 Recreational Heritage Route**  
A two-county, eighty-mile storybook telling stories about the connections between people and the land.

### **Niles:**

*“These sales are giving people the opportunity in the tough times we're facing right now. It's a chance to come out and pick-up those items that people can use. This is my fourth year participating in the U.S. 12 Garage Sale. Although I could turn a profit with my sales, I donate my earning to homeless veterans in Niles”.*

### **Visitor:**

*“It was fantastic. We are already planning our trip next year. We do several sales like this. One being the 127 a weekend earlier. This sale was better than that even. The prices were perfect. There were so many sales we could not stop at all of them. Great job guys!!!”*

**2011 US 12 Garage Sale Dates  
August 12th-14th**



[www.us12heritagetrail.org/](http://www.us12heritagetrail.org/)

### Marketing and Education Highlights

- 430 percent increase in traffic on the US 12 Heritage Trail website from the same time period in 2009. The site saw nearly 10,000 visitors, almost 75 percent of which were new visitors.
- Additional interactive elements were added to the US 12 website to encourage interaction between visitors and community members hosting garage sales. Community members entered key information about their garage sales into an online form, which staff uploaded to an interactive online map and a printable list of sale addresses for the event. Over 350 people entered sale information onto the site, which helped organically grow interest in the sale.
- Print publications, television stations, websites, social media and word of mouth contributed to awareness of the US 12 Garage Sale. Attention from traditional media saw an increase in 2010 including coverage from the following new sources: AnnArbor.com, the Niles Daily Star, the South Michigan Tribune, WNDU, WSBT, the Livingston County Daily Press, the Heritage Newspaper, and the Sturgis Journal.



- Contributed to editorial content for five page article highlighting US 12 in Michigan Travel Ideas

### Strategic Planning

Discussions were held with the following organizations to build support for an increase in non-motorized traffic and electric vehicles:

- DTE regarding future charging stations
- Michigan International Speedway to discuss partnerships in their green initiatives and new events to support track during slower periods.
- US Bike Route System and presentations to key stakeholders on feasibility of US 12 becoming part of the official US Bike Route System.



[www.discoveri69.org](http://www.discoveri69.org)

### Marketing and Education Highlights

Contracted with travel writer to create four press ready articles featuring attractions along the I-69 Recreational Heritage Route that supported the following topics:

- **Locavore Tour** — highlighting farm stands, U-picks, meat producers and processors, Amish farms and restaurants featuring local fare.
- **Amish Tour** — highlighting Amish working farms, trades, retail outlets, and bakeries.
- **Michigan Heritage Routes** — overview of attractions and experiences in Branch and Calhoun counties that are along I-69, US 12, and Marshall Heritage Routes.
- **Recreation** — Overview of the best outdoor experiences in golf, fishing, boating, camping, and hiking.

Designed, created, printed and distributed brochure highlighting the top experiences and attractions along the I-69 Recreational Heritage Route. Created a complimentary poster to be displayed in Michigan Travel centers and visitor centers.

### Strategic Planning

Held a workshop in Coldwater, Michigan, called “Maintaining our Rural Natural Heritage”, which gave attendees the opportunity to learn about a variety of conservation easement programs.



Formed working groups and held meetings to create and prioritize projects along the route that addressed the following:

- Creating and promoting experiences that build awareness and value of resources.
- Planning and promoting economic development strategies that capitalize on and enhance quality of life.
- Recognizing, protecting, and maintaining resources along the corridor.