

Testimony for House Bill 159

Benefits of the Welsh Scenic Byway

Welsh immigrants first came to this area from western Wales in 1818, and during the Great Welsh Tide of the 1830's-40's, Jackson and Gallia counties had an estimated 3000 people of Welsh descent. They organized their communities around chapel life and farming and both legacies remain on the cultural landscape. The Welsh Scenic Byway helps to preserve that cultural and historical imprint on the landscape of Jackson and Gallia Counties. The byway winds through these two counties, connecting settlements where Welsh culture abounds in the pastoral farms, wildlife areas, Welsh churches, ty capels and cemeteries.

Visitors often stop at the Bob Evans Farm in Rio Grande, with the Homestead Museum and Adamsville Village, and then come over to the campus of the University of Rio Grande to visit the Madog Center for Welsh Studies for help with Welsh genealogy. A short drive to the Welsh-American Heritage Museum, located in nearby Oak Hill, is always in order. Jackson is not to be missed with the Lillian Jones Museum and John Wesley Powell Memorial. In addition, for those who are interested in water sports, the Welsh Scenic Byway leads to the Ohio River. The benefits of having the Welsh Scenic Byway designated as part of the Ohio Scenic Byways Program are endless, and many visitors come to these two southern Ohio counties that might miss the attractions were they not advertised as a destination. The Welsh Scenic Byway supports the effort to encourage more people exploring the state's byways by naming May as "Drive an Ohio Byway Month".

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Welsh Scenic Byway