

Announcing the first Scenic Ohio Awards

Across our great state, our cities, towns, villages and rural areas are losing their distinctive culture, historical and visual character. Slowly the visual quality of our state is being eroded in the name of “progress”. Sadly, we have grown used to this deterioration. A beautiful Ohio is important for our economic future. Therefore, to draw attention to the problem, Scenic Ohio has decided to award those communities who are working to improve and protect their scenic resources.

We invite our readers to nominate a community in Ohio that has protected and/or improved its scenic qualities through a well-conceived and well-managed plan that has been implemented. A good example is downtown Gahanna with its handsome restoration and signage.

The nomination should include:

- A brief statement, not more than one typed page describing the history of the project
- Map indicating size and location including buildings, parking, etc.
- Before (if possible) and after photographs
- A list of activities or supporting documents (ordinances, landscape requirements, sign and billboard control, printed articles) about your project
- Names and position of key participants, the organizations responsible, with address, telephone and fax numbers
- Name and phone number of the contact person

(By submitting a nomination, you give Scenic Ohio the right to use this information to advance its mission.)

We encourage:

1. Historic Preservation Restoration Projects
2. Landscape Design, trees, flowers, ground cover, evergreen plants, etc.
3. Good signage and billboard control, and streetscape design (seating, street lighting, furnishings, free-standing clocks, fountains, pools, streams, other amenities).

Deadline for nominations is May 1, 2006

Send nominations to:

Scenic Ohio

P.O. Box 5835

Akron, OH 44372

For more information call: 330-865-9715

Scenic Ohio will honor the recipients of our Community Awards at our Annual Meeting in July.

Scenic Ohio

CHAIRMAN

Christine Freitag

VICE CHAIRMAN

Sally Hoffman

TREASURER

Gary Meisner

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Bob Freitag

SECRETARY

Sandra Smith

DIRECTORS

Karen Doty

Betsy Freytag

Dewey Hollister

Cherie Lucks

James M. Kastelic

Thomas Mugridge

F. Eugene Smith

Connie White

John S. Vittum

ADVISORY

Ken Baldwin

David Beach

William A. Behnke

Frances Buchholzer

Murry Davidson

John Debo

Guy L. Denny

Jack Edwards

Lynn Garrity

Bridget Garvin

Ruth Gless

Bruce E. Goetzman

JoAnne Granzow

Joan Gretter

Robert Kent

David A. Meeker

Richard J. Meyers

David Minc

Lynn Quintrell

John Seiberling

Robert Teater

Ellen Tripp

The Scenic Ohio News is published twice a year by Scenic Ohio, Christine Freitag, Chairman. cdfreitag@sbcglobal.net

Chairman's Report:

Scenic Ohio is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the visual quality and scenic character of Ohio's towns and countryside. Our new awards program will draw attention to those who are protecting our distinctive landscapes and, we hope, encourage others to become involved and keep "Beautiful Ohio" beautiful. A beautiful Ohio is good for business and its citizens.

This newsletter is focused on Greater Ohio. We are proud to be a part of the GO Campaign Steering Committee. "The purpose of the Campaign is to promote – through research, public education and grassroots advocacy – public policy in Ohio to grow our economy and improve our quality of life through intelligent land use. To this end, Greater Ohio works to support the redevelopment of existing communities, strengthen regional cooperation and protect the countryside and Ohio's natural resources". The committee is working toward a commitment from all candidates running for office in November, to support our mission.

In response to the oversized billboards recently approved by the Columbus Downtown Commission I sent the following letter to the *Columbus Dispatch*:

To the Editor:

The over sized billboards that have been erected in downtown Columbus are examples of visual blight. Vinyl wrapped buildings and over-sized billboards are forms of visual garbage. They are disruptive barriers between us and the natural beauty of the American landscape.

Scenic Ohio is not against businesses directing customers to their establishments. We are not against signs. We want prosperity and progress, healthy communities and thriving businesses. We believe we can have all of that without sacrificing the beauty and character of our communities. Change is inevitable. Ugliness is not. When did blight become a selling point for community growth and development?

There is no evidence that removing billboards harms local businesses and there is no evidence that using billboards instead of other kinds of signage helps them. In fact, jurisdictions that have taken action to remove visual clutter have seen improvement in sales. States that have banned billboards entirely have seen an increase in tourism. People want to feel comfortable, find their way quickly and directly to shops and restaurants without picking their way through clutter.

Too bad America cannot ban visual spam like they can on phones and computers. Citizens can, however, remind public officials the cost of ugliness and visual blight far exceeds any benefits; that the visual quality of their community is a priority. Columbus should have a strong sign ordinance and take the important step of banning any new billboards.

Christine Freitag, Chairman
Scenic Ohio

In response to this letter, Harrison Smith, Chairman of the Downtown Commission called me to explain the super-sized billboards add visual excitement to an otherwise dismal and drab downtown.

The Problem: Ohio badly needs a cohesive land-use policy

If Ohio is to advance to Gov. Bob Taft's vision of a "Third Frontier" high-tech economy, the communities that make up that frontier need to be well planned. That is why organizations such as Greater Ohio and 1000 Friends of Central Ohio are asking Bob Taft and Ohio's legislative leaders to create a blue ribbon taskforce to comprehensively re-examine the state's land-use policies.

Development in the state is increasing much faster than population: In the 1990's Ohio was eighth in the nation in conversion of rural land to development, but only 22 in population growth. Fifty years ago, Ohio had large factories and small farms. Most people lived in the towns where they worked. Cities thrived, suburbs were smaller and townships were rural. But as people chose suburbs over neglected cities, Ohio grew steadily more suburban and less industrial. All of this required new roads and new schools, even as the old roads and schools had to be maintained. The size of government grew in the new communities and the old ones.

In this time of great transformation – a period that saw construction of the interstate highway system, the emergence of regional malls and industrial parks and the development of bedroom communities – the state made only piecemeal changes to its planning and zoning statutes. Now it must adapt to change and provide stewardship for Ohio's natural resources and its cities.

Central Ohio, for example, is one of the few places of the state experiencing job and population growth, but there is no way to plan for it. The region has a single economy, but it has seven counties, 80 municipalities, 116 townships, over 1.5 million people, and no formal, legal mechanism for them to cooperate on planning, public spending or tax policies.

Using taxpayers' dollars, communities compete to move companies and jobs around the area with no net gain to the regional economy. Older suburbs, such as Grandview Heights hunger for new economic development, while newer ones, such as Pickerington, struggle to manage the pace of growth, even resorting to moratoriums on new housing, which invite legal disputes and rarely solves problems. Such moratoriums arise only when planning efforts have failed.

Ohio once was a pioneer in planning and zoning. In 1925, Cincinnati became the first major American city with a long-range plan. And zoning became the norm nationally only after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Euclid zoning code in 1926.

The state has an opportunity again for leadership and vision. Ohio's leaders have a chance to revitalize cities, preserve farmland and open space, create transportation alternatives, promote safe and healthy neighborhoods, where people can walk to shops and businesses, and make the state attractive to young, well-educated people who will drive the 21st-century economy.

If sprawl meant jobs, Ohio would have full employment. Instead, our cities continue to spread as manufacturing jobs vanish and college graduates leave the state.

For the Third Frontier to succeed, Ohio will need more than dollars to create technology jobs. It also will need the commitment to keep the countryside alive with crops, forests and parks – and the cityscape alive with historic buildings in modern use, bustling shops, offices and nightspots. That's what has attracted workers to Seattle and the Twin Cities.

A statewide panel should keep the twin goals of stewardship and economic development in mind as it reviews Ohio's land-use policies. The task force could include developers, planners, bankers, environmentalists, farmers, Realtors, government leaders and citizens. It should have a broad mandate to look at urban revitalization, farmland preservation, cities, counties, townships, school districts, annexation, transportation, economic development and regionalism.

A grand framework for growth could be this administration's legacy and legislative leaders' contribution to the state's future.

This article was written by Ruth Gless, AIA, Board Member of 1000 Friends of Central Ohio and Advisor to Scenic Ohio. It was written March 26, 2005 as an Op-Ed for the Columbus Dispatch.

What's up with Greater Ohio? by Pat Carey, Greater Ohio

Greater Ohio is the statewide campaign to support state policy to grow our economy through intelligent land use. The campaign is well into its second year and has been working with a wide array of constituencies, making stories in the news media, and educating policy-makers.

Greater Ohio is already beginning to provide information to gubernatorial and legislative candidates, about how land use plays into critical issues of the election, such as economic development, job growth, preservation of green space and farmland, and redevelopment of cities, even paying for schools.

In the legislative arena Greater Ohio has been at the fore in discussions about how to react to the U.S. Supreme Court Kelo decision, which held that local communities can take property by eminent domain for the purposes of economic development, even if it means turning the property over to a private developer. Now legislatures all over the country are discussing broadly stated laws to ban the practice.

But there are circumstances – such as redevelopment of deteriorated strip shopping-centers – in which the use of eminent domain might make sense. Now, thanks to a suggestion by Greater Ohio state director Gene Krebs, a former legislator himself, there is broad bipartisan support for a bill in Ohio that would put a moratorium on the use of eminent domain for economic development while a special task force considers what, if any, circumstances might warrant it.

In another legislative effort, Greater Ohio is supporting a bill to provide a state tax credit for historic renovation of qualifying residential and commercial properties. On a larger scale, Greater Ohio wants to see a blue-ribbon task force to overhaul Ohio's planning and zoning laws, allowing better local and regional planning and decision-making.

Greater Ohio has partnered with the Home Builders Association Smart Growth Coalition to sponsor a conference on "Density by Design" – ways to develop that build healthy neighborhoods and conserve green space. On Dec.1, Greater Ohio will partner with the Ohio Lake Erie Commission, the OSU Extension Services and other agencies in a conference titled "The Future of Ohio's Lake Erie Basin: Balancing Land Use and Water Quality." (Go to www.greaterohio.org for details.)

Worth Noting

The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association's Transportation Finance Summit – November 15-17, 2005

Public officials and private sector organizations responsible for funding, maintaining and operating highway infrastructure won't want to miss the 2nd annual IBTTA Transportation Finance Summit. The Summit will bring together the world's leading experts in transportation finance and provide practical and workable solutions to meet today's very real transportation funding challenges. Co-sponsored by 16 transportation-related organizations. Learn more about the program, speakers and sponsors and register online today at: <http://www.ibtta.org/Events/eventdetail.cfm?ItemNumber=1309>

Scenic Ohio continues to wait for ODOT's final proposal for a **SELECTIVE VEGETATIVE REMOVAL POLICY** to remove trees in the public right of way in front of billboards. Since Ohio ranks near the top of the list in its number of billboards, Ohio stands to lose a lot of trees.

On September 22, 2005, Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta, announced forty-five new designations — All-American Roads (AAR) and National Scenic Byways (NSB) and Ohio's newest National Scenic Byway the **Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail**. From Paul Staley, who heads the byway program for Ohio, "It's fantastic-[It]closely follows Lake Erie from Ashtabula Co. to Lucas Co. It mainly focuses on natural and recreational areas. We have plenty of information about this byway [and others] on our web site:" www.ohiobyways.com

Useful Websites

www.scenicohio.org
www.scenic.org (Scenic America)
www.enhancements.org
www.planning.org (American Planning Assoc.)
www.nationaltrust.org
www.railtrails.org
www.conservationfund.org

SCENIC OHIO THANKS OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Akron Garden Club
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Allan
Alpha Garden Club
Mr. and Mrs. Rennick Andreoli
Ms. Janet M. Austin

Mr. Edward G. Bare
Mr. and Mrs. William R. Barney
Mr. David Beach
Ms. Marna L. Becker
Mr. Lee Behnke
Mr. William A. Behnke
Mrs. Frank Bell
Ms. Donna R. Bender
Mr. and Mrs. Irving G. Bieser, Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. Steven Bohl
Mrs. Thomas D. Bowen
Mr. and Mrs. David Brennan
Dr. and Mrs. William B. Brideweser
Ms. Beverly Brockett
Ms. Frances Buchholzer
Ms. Kate Buckley

Ms. Ava L. Cassirere
Ms. Edith Chase
Garden Club of Cincinnati
Cincinnati Town & Co.
Garden Club of Cleveland
Ms. Natalie Cook
Ms. JoAnne Cowan
Country Garden Club

Mr. and Mrs. John Dalton
Mr. Murry Davidson
Garden Club of Dayton
Mr. and Mrs. William Dehoff
Mr. Guy L. Denny
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Deveny III
Dr. and Mrs. Carl P. Dietrich
Mr. and Mrs. George A. Dietrich
Ms. Karen Doty
Mrs. Thomas E. Downs
Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Dressler

Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Estep
Mrs. Christine D. Freitag

Ms. Bridget J. Garvin
Mr. Bruce E. Goetzman
Ms. Michele A. Goff
Ms. Sandra E. Gonzalez
Ms. JoAnne Granzow
Garden Forum of Greater Akron
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Gretter

Ms. Edna L. Hansen
Mr. James Hashman
Ms. Ellen Hay
Dr. and Mrs. William Helmkamp
Ms. Suzanne D. Henninger
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Herberich
Ms. Diane Hert
Ms. Paula Hinkle
Ms. Mary Paolano Hoerner
Mrs. F. Herbert Hoffman
Mr. Dewey Hollister
Mr. Robert L. Hunker
Ms. Jane Hutchinson

The Inn at Brandywine Falls
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Jeffrey
Ms. Peggy Jones
Mr. Peter and Dr. Sophie Kamnitzer
Mr. James M. Kastelic
Dr. and Mrs. C. William Keck
Dr. Robert Kent
Mr. Malcolm J. King
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Kinnamon

Ms. Susan Klein
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kruder
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kudner
Leaf and Blossom Garden Club

Little GC of Columbus
Ms. Cherie Lucks

Mr. and Mrs. John Martin
Mrs. Graham Marx
Mr. and Mrs. James Mather
Elizabeth Ring Mather & William Guinn
Mather Fund
Ms. Georgeann McCall
Mr. and Mrs. William McGrath
Mr. and Mrs. David A. Meecker
Mr. Gary Meisner
Mrs. Ellen K. Mell
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Merryweather
Mr. and Mrs. H. Theodore Meyer
Mr. Richard J. Meyers
Ms. Geneveive Miller
Mr. David Minc
Mrs. Amy Mitch
Mr. and Mrs. J. Donald Moorhead
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mugridge
Mr. Stephen E. Myers
Northview Buckeye Garden Club
Mrs. R. Henry Norweb, Jr.
Garden Club of Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. Rory O'Neil

Mr. Hugh D. Pallister, Jr.
Mrs. George T. Parry
Mr. Bruce Petrie
PYSHT Fund
Ms. Lynn R. Quintrell

Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Rappaport
Ms. Nancy Ray
Mr. and Mrs. Roger T. Read
Ms. Frances S. Repperger
Mr. Dick Rinaldi
Mr. and Mrs. John Rion
Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. Justin Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Rymer

Salsbury-Schweyer Co. Inc.
Ms. Ruth Sawyer
Ms. Barbara Schenck
Ms. Mary Sanford Schirmer
Ms. Jeanne Schmitt
Mr. and Mrs. John Seiberling
Mr. Jack Shaner
Mr. and Mrs. F. Eugene Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Richey Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. Sonneck
Ms. Joan P. Stadler
Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Staiger
Mrs. Nancy C. Stevenson
Mr. Bert Szabo

Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Teater
Mr. and Mrs. Martin R. Timko
Ms. Dorothy Jane Todd

Dr. and Mrs. Chris Van Devere
Mr. and Mrs. John Vittum

Dr. and Mrs. Lewis H. Walker
Ms. Elena Weldon
Ms. M. Conrad White
Mr. Robert Williams
Mr. Ken Wobbecke
Mrs. Virginia Wojno-Forney

Profile of Connie White— Scenic Ohio board member

All who know Connie White acknowledge her love and devotion to conservation and preservation. A member of the Garden Writers Association of America where she has served as national and regional director, she has shared her love and knowledge of gardening for the past 30 years through a bi-weekly column in the Chagrin Valley Times.



She became an active member of the Garden Club of Cleveland in 1958 and has served on many committees both on the zone level and national level of The Garden Club of America where she was also a director and a member of the executive committee. At their annual meeting in 2004 the GCA awarded Connie the Amy Angell Collier Montague Medal “for outstanding civic achievement”.

Her civic activities include the renovation and beautification of Cleveland’s Public Square for the bicentennial of the United States. She has served as president of the Gates Mills Community Club, as founder/president and trustee of the Gates Mills Land Conservancy, as a board member of the Cleveland Botanical Garden, the Horticulture and Library Committee of the Holden Arboretum, the board of Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens and currently as the Mayor of Gates Mills.

Since becoming mayor, Connie is overseeing the building of the first “green” library in Ohio and is creating an historic district to preserve her village’s unique character. Most important for Scenic Ohio, throughout all these many activities she has found the time to help us transcend from the Ohio Roadside Council to Scenic Ohio and its affiliation with Scenic America. Her acceptance speech for the GCA award reflects the essence of this accomplished woman. “My vision for my community and our northeast Ohio area is for a greener, cleaner community that will invite recognition of the business world for the opportunities here: good living facilities for families, outstanding cultural institutions, good housing stock, parks and the water that is already coveted by many.”



SCENIC OHIO
Associate of Scenic America

Scenic Ohio
P.O. Box 5835
Akron, Ohio 44372

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Akron, OH

Scenic Ohio

*...our mission is to
preserve and enhance
the scenic character of
Ohio's communities and countryside.*

- Promote Scenic Byways
 - Protect open space
 - Support highway beautification
 - Encourage billboard control
- Join us and help us protect your scenery*

- _____ \$20 Senior /Student
- _____ \$30 Individual
- _____ \$50 Family/Organization
- _____ \$100 Sponsor
- _____ \$500 Patron
- _____ \$1000 Advocate

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Scenic Ohio
P.O. Box 5835
Akron, Ohio 44372
330-865-9715
www.scenicohio.org

Scenic Ohio is a not for profit 501 C(3)