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Final Case Study for the National Scenic Byways Study

Scenic Highways and Byways Programs
Outside the United States

Scenic **BYWAYS**



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Final Case Study
for the
National Scenic Byways Study

**SCENIC HIGHWAY and BYWAYS
PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

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Prepared for
The Federal Highway Administration

Submitted by
The Academy for State and Local Government

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scenic Highway and Byway Programs Outside the U.S.

Our survey of selected tourism-oriented, developed countries reveals a wide variety of regulations for the designation, signage and promotion of scenic highways and byways with most of the action occurring at the local and regional level. Uniform practices do not exist. The International Road Federation states that because of the highly decentralized process of scenic road designations, the types of names given these roads are extremely varied and that "it would be very difficult to put them in fixed categories."

We have found, however, that design and placement decisions for scenic signs, once they are made at the local or regional level, always require the approval or concurrence of national highway administrations when signs are to be placed on national roads. The placement and maintenance of the signs themselves is generally the responsibility of the subnational groups responsible for the initiative.

The names given scenic roads tend to relate to the character of the landscapes crossed by them and to the cultural and artistic features of the surrounding countryside. The historical associations of the towns they connect, and the archaeological or architectural heritage of the region they traverse also provide a rationale for their designation.

More than seventy thematic highway designations exist in West Germany alone. They are marked throughout their length, one of them traversing the entire country from the Alps to the Baltic, and they are marketed aggressively by the national tourist association. In tourist-oriented Switzerland, there are no procedures for 'official' scenic or historical designation, but some roads, nevertheless, have an informal historical, geographic or culinary name that appears on maps sold to the public.

Signage

While no standardized procedures have been identified for the selection or designation of scenic and historical roads, there are precise national rules almost everywhere for signposting of tourist attractions, whether cultural, historic or gustatory. England appears to lead the way in the precision of its national signing standards, though their application in a consistent fashion to identified 'leisure drives' and heritage roads is still in its infancy.

The white on brown lettering for tourist signs which originates in Europe, appears to have universal appeal when jurisdictions opt to regulate the process. It was spotted even in South Australia, a state with a population of only 1.4 million, which has in place a highly articulated signage

approval, implementation and funding procedure.

Environmental Issues

The English Tourist Board last December proposed new "Qualifying Criteria for White on Brown signs in England". These are meant to deal with the problems of excess created by the indiscriminate application of the system throughout the country which has resulted in visual clutter. In the Netherlands, the influential Royal Dutch Touring Club (ANWB), which counts half the country's households among its members, states there are no plans for the further expansion of scenic routes because of environmental considerations.

Economic Impacts

Anecdotal information on the economic impacts of scenic road designations from a variety of sources, in the absence of firm statistical data, is universally positive. The economic spin-off of Canada's distinctively marked "Yellowhead" national highway, which is marketed as a scenic tourist route by the regions, communities and four national parks through which it passes, is believed to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

In West Germany, each "tourist road" is operated as a working group of economic interests, such as chambers of commerce, tourist promotion boards, hotel and restaurant associations, bus and shipping lines. The perceived economic benefits motivate member groups to pay for, install and maintain the signage, contribute funding to operate an office, publish information brochures, issue an annual festival/events calendar involving destinations along the route, and work out package tours with travel operators.

An Australian response notes that scenic routes, designated and promoted by sub-state regional groups of local government and tourist associations are recognized as an effective marketing tool. A recent article by the Western Australian Department of Main Roads states that for many years the Department has argued that improved tourism potential, which cannot easily be quantified, needs to be taken into consideration in "contingent valuation" when it comes to assessing road benefits.

Halfway around the world, in Japan, existing scenic drives are being upgraded. A spectacular example is the projected planting of a route which leads from the Sea of Japan to the Inland Sea, with a hundred thousand cherry trees. The ten year project, intended to create the longest continuous cherry tree route in Japan, will get cooperation by student and volunteer groups in planting and caring for the trees.

July 1990

Scenic Highway and Byway Programs Outside the U.S.

Our survey of selected tourism-oriented, developed countries reveals a wide variety of regulations and procedures for the designation, signage and promotion of scenic highways and byways with most of the action occurring at the local and regional level. Uniform practices do not exist. Nor have we been able to identify a Europe-wide or multi-country study of practices in this area. Only scattered national brochures and publications are now available. These are generated principally for promotional purposes and are issued by local or regional authorities and the tourist boards that report to them.

We find that scenic road designations are generally not made at the national level, nor by governmental bodies or associations operating at the national level. The International Road Federation states that because of the highly decentralized and liberal process of scenic road designations, the types of names given these roads are extremely varied and that "it would be very difficult to put them in fixed categories. Some relate to the landscape crossed by motorways, others relate to the artistic features of the country and some relate to history, etc. The signalization adopted for these scenic roads is also extremely varied and has rarely been regulated whatsoever."

We have found, however, that design and placement decisions for scenic signs, once they are made at the local or regional level, always require the approval or concurrence of national highway administrations when signs are to be placed on major (national) roads. The placement and maintenance of the signs themselves is usually the responsibility of the subnational and public private groups responsible for the initiative.

The Designation Process

While national governmental bodies generally do not get involved in the designation of scenic highways, scenic or touristic titles are sometimes attached to the official

alphanumeric designations without a formal or legal process. Highway administrations or toll road concessionaires may use the informal scenic name on maps and tourist brochures as a complement to the established numerical listing. In the case of major multi-lane highways, experience shows that these can indicate a destination or region without implying touristic merit. The purpose is to identify the route by an easily recognizable designation that will make it recognizable and attractive to tourists and vacationers. Unlike 'leisure drives', they intentionally avoid scenic features and population centers for the sake of long distance speed and convenience.

Examples abound, such as the "Autoroute du Soleil" (Autoroute of the Sun) for the A 6 motorway in France leading South and the corresponding "Autostrada del Sole" in Italy. They are generally not particularly scenic for most of their length. When it comes to the truly scenic or otherwise interesting highways and sections of highways, the informal names they receive are usually picked on the initiative of a regional tourist board or by voluntary associations, such as chambers of commerce, who expect favorable economic impacts. They tend to relate to the character of the landscapes crossed by the highways and to the cultural and artistic features of the surrounding countryside. The historical associations of the towns they connect, and the archaeological or architectural heritage of the region they traverse also provide a rationale for their designation.

In the United Kingdom, the determination of a scenic route, known locally as a 'leisure drive', is very often made by a mix of local government, voluntary bodies, tourist boards and private interests. The Elgar Route in Worcestershire, for example, was put in place by the trustees of composer Sir Edward Elgar's birthplace, working with local authorities and the Heart of England Regional Tourist Board. In the County of Kent, on the other hand, it was the local authority that put together three circular leisure drives - East Kent, the Heart of Kent and the High Weald - in a national signposting demonstration. The country tours average 60 miles in length and take in attractive villages, historic houses and varied countryside. The initiative is still in its early stages. About a dozen continuously signposted thematic drives featuring consistent interpretive plaques and markers have been identified in the U.K.

The story is different on the continent proper. More than

seventy thematic highway designations exist in West Germany alone. They are marked throughout their length, one of them traversing the entire country from the Alps to the Baltic, and they are marketed aggressively by the national tourist association. German and foreign language brochures extolling their attractions are made available to travel agencies and full page ads placed in publications that target the foreign tourist market. The range and variety of their appeal to a sense of history and nostalgia, and the more physical of sight, taste and smell, is indicated by some of the names selected: Romantic Route, German Wine Route, Castle Route, German Alpine Route, German Fair-trade Route, Green Coastal Route, Rheingold Route, etc.

The latest wrinkle (1990) is the transnational Route of Emperors and Kings, devised by a coalition of 13 regional and municipal tourist boards in Austria and West Germany plus a Danube passenger line. The royal and imperial route runs from Frankfurt to Vienna, a length of 756 km, connecting the coronation city (Frankfurt), legislature (Regensburg) and official residence (Vienna) of the Holy Roman Emperors of the German Nation. It is being test marketed this year to German speaking target groups, English language promotions will follow in the early 1990s.

In tourist-oriented Switzerland, there there are no procedures for 'official' scenic or historical designation, some national roads, nevertheless, 'traditionally' have an attached historical, geographic or culinary nickname that appears on maps sold to the public. Some examples are the Gotthard and Three Passes road, and the vineyard roads above the Lakes of Geneva and Neuchatel.

To the extent official procedures regulate the adoption process, Europe's scenic highways are generally decided on by local and regional bodies, with the need for concurrence by national highway administrations only to the extent they involve national highways and standardized signage.

Signage

While no nationwide standards or procedures have been identified for the selection or designation of scenic and historical roads, there are precise national rules almost everywhere for signposting of tourist attractions, whether cultural, historic or gustatory. England appears to lead the way in the extent and precision of its national signing standards, even though their application in a consistent fashion to formally identified leisure drives and heritage roads is still in its infancy.

The British regulations (Annex 1), published by the Department of Transport as a Roads Circular in April 1986, following the Kent and Nottinghamshire demonstrations in 1985, call for the use of white lettering on brown background to point out tourist attractions. The British draw on and credit the French who are said to be the first to use the white on brown color combination. A total of 20 standard designs and several dozen standardized legends, which are to be provided at the expense of the applicants, are prescribed by the regulations. The highway authority responsible for the road along which the signs are to be placed, is in charge of approving and placing them.

The white on brown lettering for tourist signs appears to have universal appeal when jurisdictions opt to regulate the process. It was spotted even in South Australia, a state with a population of only 1.4 million, which has in place a highly articulated signage approval, implementation and funding procedure. These are discussed on page * and are appended to this Report (Annex *).

Environmental Issues

The English Tourist Board last December proposed new "Qualifying Criteria for White on Brown signs in England" (Annex 2). These are meant to deal with the problems of success created by the wide and somewhat indiscriminate application of the system throughout the country which has resulted in visual clutter. The more restrictive criteria, currently the subject of a national consultation and review process, are expected to be made a part of amended traffic sign regulations next year.

There is some apprehension that in a compact country like England, a profusion of scenic roads, and signs pointing out tourist attractions may help generate more motorists than the infrastructure can safely accommodate. For example, the regional tourist board responsible for the East England county of Norfolk reports that its tourist attractions have resulted in the installation of more than a thousand signs since the new regulations came into force in 1986. Environment-sensitive organizations like the National Trust and English Heritage have expressed concern that the growing visual clutter can despoil the very countryside tourists are being encouraged to see.

In the Netherlands, the influential Royal Dutch Touring Club (ANWB), which counts half the country's households among its members, states there no plans for the further expansion of scenic routes. The ANWB is in charge of signposting throughout the country. It says that while the '48 existing scenic roads will be maintained, "the debate in our country about reduction of car traffic on environmental grounds," has led to consensus that no new roads will be added.

Economic Impacts

Anecdotal information on the economic impacts of scenic road designations from a variety of sources, in the absence of firm statistical data, is universally positive.

The economic spin-off of Canada's distinctively marked "Yellowhead" national highway, which is marketed as a scenic tourist route by the regions, communities and four national parks through which it passes, is believed to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The Highway is promoted by an association that includes well over a hundred local government and tourist industry members among the communities through which it passes on its nearly two thousand miles, though it is not possible to quantify precise impacts.

We have the most information on the West German experience, which appears typical. Each tourist "road" is operated as a working group of economic interests, such as chambers of commerce, tourist promotion boards, hotel and restaurant associations, bus and shipping lines. The perceived economic benefits motivate member groups to pay for, install and

maintain the signage, contribute funding to operate an office, publish information brochures, issue an annual festival/events calendar involving destinations along the route, and work out package tour deals with travel operators. There is even a "Promotional Coalition of German Vacation Routes" (Foerderkreis Deutscher Ferienstrassen) which serves as an experience exchange mechanism at the national level.

The economic desirability of being part of a vacation route is indicated by the alacrity with which public and private bodies in more than a thousand West German jurisdictions have associated themselves with scenic road groupings. Many are traversed by and belong to more than one of these tourist routes. Several, like Lindau in the extreme South of the country, belong to as many as three routes as well as their supporting route associations. In the cited instance, this includes the Swabian Baroque Route, the German Alpine Route, and the Black Forest - Lake Constance Green Route.

A major reason economic impact data, specifically associated with the routes, are hard to come by is that the figures of local and regional tourist bodies on overnight stays refer to local destinations or regions, not to the roads themselves. As noted, a region may also be traversed by more than one tourist route. What is certain is the steady increase of overnight stays or visits to locations along the routes by both foreign and domestic tourists, some of which is believed to be directly attributable to the marketing of the "route" as an integral tourist experience. The range, variety and proliferation of the routes which include such inventive combinations as the "Fairytale Route" referring to the tales of the Grimm Brothers, the "Nibelungen-Siegfried Route" which has some far-fetched links with Germanic hero fables, and the "Idyllic Route", named mainly for the gentle character of the Swabian countryside, attest to the marketing appeal of the concept.

In the neighboring Netherlands, the ANWB avers that "in our view these routes are economically significant." While no statistics are available, the ANWB estimates that the Dutch scenic routes, some of which run for short distances into Belgium and Germany, are used by 300,000 cars with an average of three passengers each year. More than half of these visitors, the national tourist club believes, are likely to stop at a cafe or restaurant en route.

In a similar vein, the Automobile Association of Great Britain says the scenic road signs "appear to have been welcomed by the general public" even though no precise details on benefits to the local economy are available. The Association of District Councils (ADC) adds that with very few exceptions, district councils now positively encourage tourism and the new leisure roads with their standardized signs that promote tourism. The ADC is on record in stating that "district councils "welcome the income and jobs brought to their local communities." Back in 1980, a survey by British regional tourist board (Annex 3) found significant economic benefits to service establishments along a leisure route that was intensively promoted to holiday makers.

On the other side of the world and still on the topic of economic development impacts, an Australian response notes that scenic routes, designated and promoted by sub-state regional groups of local government and tourist associations are recognized as an effective marketing tool. Again, sound statistical data are simply not available. Nevertheless, the Australian Local Government Association, commenting on development impacts, points out that "the linking of road signage local maps with tourist promotion is recognized as a highly successful strategy in some the well-known regions, such as the Hunter Valley wine growing area."

Promotion

The publication of illustrated books, specially marked road maps showing scenic highways and byways, newspaper and magazine ads targeting foreign tourists, package tour promotions in cooperation with tour operators, travel agencies, bus and river cruise lines, are among the marketing techniques used by the scenic road coalitions. Thousands of colorful, illustrated brochures extolling the special character of individual routes are distributed nationally and internationally.

Entire books published by national coalitions and tourist boards are devoted to the subject. Some of these, from Japan and West Germany, accompany this Report in a collection of country-specific files, prefaced by the pertinent country extracts. The country-specific promotional materials, along with scenic road and leisure drive maps from Australia, Austria, Canada, the Federal Republic, the Netherlands,

Italy, Japan, Switzerland and the U.K., are provided in separate file folders for inclusion in a scenic highways and byways library. The separate country files also include the original correspondence engaged in to elicit the facts and figures cited in this report.

Ingenious initiatives to upgrade existing scenic routes and to add incentives order to attract more visitors are also reported from various countries.

The regional castle route of Lower Austria, for example, publishes a "Castle Passport", directed at tourists from German-speaking countries as a part of the brochure. It urges tourists to have their visits to the castles certified by a stamp in the passport, available at all the sites free of charge. Entries mailed to the regional tourist office validated with stamped logos collected at least three of the region's castles participate in an annual prize drawing.

Halfway around the world, in Japan, the existing 170 kilometer scenic drive which leads from the Sea of Japan to the Inland Sea, is now being planted with a hundred thousand cherry trees, in a 600 million Yen project (\$ 4 million) undertaken by the Hyogo Prefectural (state) government. The ten year project, intended to create the longest continuous cherry tree route in Japan, will get cooperation by student and volunteer groups in planting and caring for the trees.

Methodology

To give a fair sampling of international practice in the designation, signage and operation of scenic highways and byways, we have obtained information from nine developed countries of which seven are located in western and central Europe. All of the respondent countries have highly developed, service-oriented economies and per capita GNPs in a range comparable to the U.S. The European countries included in our survey comprise Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, West Germany and the United Kingdom. We tried for a response from Sweden, as representative of Scandinavia, but were told by the Automobile Association in a phone conversation that no tourist roads or designated scenic drives existed in that country, after several letters and faxes failed to elicit a written response. However, after we gave up on Sweden, we obtained an unsolicited, but most interesting response from Denmark through the good offices of Kevin Heanue of FHWA.

Outside Europe, we have obtained responses from Australia, Canada and Japan. Our sources of information include national automobile associations and touring clubs, transportation ministries, national tourist boards and scenic road coalitions. In addition to national bodies, we have also incorporated some data received from international associations such as the International Road Federation and the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile. Only one national association (France) in our representative selection of 11 countries failed to respond to repeated inquiries. Several weeks after our self-imposed deadline had passed, we finally received a reply from the French Ministry of Public Works (Ministere de l'Equipement, Directeur des Routes) through the French Embassy's Transportation Counselor in Washington. The gist of this information is incorporated into the final report and the text of the reply can found in the country documentation.

In view of time pressure, we used telefax correspondence almost exclusively, buttressed by some international phone calls and the airmail shipment of documentation, photos and brochures not suitable for fax transmission.

The wide variation in the quality and comprehensiveness of responses, the wide range of national experience they reflect, and the near complete absence of dependable data in such areas as economic impacts argue against aggregating the replies under subject headings. Instead, we are reporting on a country by country basis, abstracting in each case the replies under our five thematic subjects where sufficient data have been furnished to warrant separate headings. The five rubrics include the designation process, signage, environment issues, economic impacts, and promotion initiatives. In our report, we proceed from the most comprehensive reply (United Kingdom) to the most sketchy (Japan).

United Kingdom

Two interconnected elements - national regulations on tourist signs, and the designation of scenic drives by local authorities - characterize the evolving picture in the U.K. Carrying out the recommendations of the 1986 Report of Lord Young of Graffham, Minister Without Portfolio, titled: "Pleasure, Leisure and Jobs, The Business of Tourism", (Annex 4), the Secretary of State for Transport authorized the nationwide adoption of signs tested in a pilot project by two British counties using standard white on brown

lettering and symbols to direct motorists to tourist attractions. (The experiments in the counties of Kent and Nottinghamshire were welcomed by the media and the public, with tourist attractions reporting a substantial rise in the number of visitors following the introduction of the signs.)

Among Lord Young's 18 recommendations were a major review of all directional signs and the adoption of new criteria for the signposting of major tourist attractions from motorways and trunk roads.

An April 1986 Road Circular by the U.K. Department of Transport authorized the new white on brown traffic signs throughout the country to show the way to tourist attractions. The Circular depicted the new standard designs and promulgated criteria for their use.

Tourist signs were allowed on motorways and trunk roads only within 20 miles of attractions with more than 150,000 visitors a year. In Scotland and Wales, motorway signs were allowed to attractions where visitors number at least 75,000 annually. On secondary roads, the visitor threshold ratio is lower. Another requirement is that the facility must be open for at least 50 days a year and that adequate parking facilities for cars and tourist buses are available.

Designation Process

Requests for tourist attraction signs may be initiated by operators of the attraction, local or regional tourist boards in close consultation with the appropriate local and highway authorities. Consultation with neighboring highway authorities is also mandated in the case of attractions signed across jurisdictional boundaries. Site plans are required for signs proposed to be located on motorways and trunk roads. When these criteria are met the Department of Transport issues the required authorization.

Financial Arrangements

Under the regulations, the full cost of the signing operation should be recovered from the operators of the tourist attractions. Recovered costs are expected to include the costs of associated constructions such as service areas and information boards, as well as an allowance for future routine maintenance and replacement of signs if necessary. Local authorities and tourist boards may contribute to the costs of the signing operation if they consider it to be of

benefit to the tourist trade in the area as a whole. Local authority contributions have to be met within existing resource constraints.

Once installed, the signs become the property of the highway authority and the operator of the tourist attraction must agree to the condition that they will be removed if the attraction fails to meet the criteria, or if the signs are considered by the highway authority to constitute a road safety hazard.

Leisure Drives

Using the promotional impact of the new signs a number of British counties have developed "leisure drives", "country", or "scenic tours". These titles are used interchangeably, sometimes in connection with a geographical name, such as "East Kent Country Tour."

Criteria for these leisure drives are also contained in the DTp circular, and a number of these have been designated since the advent of the white on brown signs. The common sense guidelines contained in the circular include provisions that leisure drives should use attractive secondary roads and avoid congested areas as well as major tourist attractions which are already traffic magnets. They should also pass service facilities such as picnic and parking areas, toilets, scenic outlooks, restaurants, etc. Their suggested length is in the range of 40 to 60 miles, with a loop or circular configuration and a counter clockwise direction to avoid right hand turns (driving in Britain is on the left side of the road). Prior to their designation, local authorities are urged to consult regional tourist boards and take into consideration significant objections from residents along the route who would rather not have their tranquility spoiled by tourist traffic.

Leaflets which illustrate the route should be available, generally without charge, at Tourist Information Centers and route illustrations should be included on Tourist Information Boards in service and parking areas.

More than a dozen "leisure drives" have been laid out, signed and promoted in tourist brochures since the nationwide liberalization of tourist sign regulations. Some of these also include scenic rural road circuits laid out specifically for cyclists. However, the profusion of the new white on brown signs pointing to tourist attractions near

the main roads around the country has caused the authorities to take a new look. (Representative leisure drive brochures are included in the U.K. documentation file accompanying this report.)

Environmental Concerns

Over the past two years the English Tourist Board has come to the view that the 1986 tourist sign liberalization has become a victim of its own success. The promise of economic benefits - though these have not been quantified in a dependable fashion - has led to visual clutter that is beginning to despoil the countryside. One example reported by the ETB is the eastern English county of Norfolk where more than a thousand of the white on brown signs have already been erected and more are on the way. Local residents have begun to object at the visual pollution, motorists report being confused, and national heritage organizations have expressed concern at the incipient despoilation brought about by the very signs intended to help tourists savor the tranquil sights of the countryside.

Efforts at damage control are currently underway. Adrian Clark, ETB Controller told us: "We have learned that the 'opening up' of signing three years ago, may have gone too far, leading to a proliferation of signs and the first signs of the start of the ruination of the countryside. We are now working on ways of tightening up the regulations to ensure that attractions have a written declaration of eligibility for signing and that the number of signs is kept to a sensible minimum compatible with ease of travel to the destination."

The ETB has proposed adding "qualifying criteria" to the 1986 Department of Transport Circular which authorized the new signs (Annex 1). Published in December 1989, these criteria (Annex 2), are now being circulated among interested organizations, including local highway authorities, regional tourist boards and operators of tourist attractions. The ETB expects acceptance of the proposed criteria the Department of Transport and their promulgation in 1991.

Criteria Highlights

The qualifying criteria, intended to deal with the problems that have arisen through the enthusiastic response to the

tourist sign provisions, provide tightened definitions and guidance to those seeking and approving tourism sign posts. The nine page document defines general and specific benchmarks for various types of roads and qualifying attractions. It makes authorization for the placement of signs contingent on "the safe and efficient guidance of traffic rather than promotion" and declares that it is "the sole responsibility of the highway authority to decide the number and location of signs." Regional Tourist Boards will have to certify to highway authorities in writing that the attraction is eligible for the tourist signs.

Environmental and traffic safety considerations may preclude tourist signing even if the attraction is otherwise eligible. The draft criteria specify that: "Although an attraction or facility may be declared eligible by the regional board for tourism signposting, other criteria may preclude it from being signposted; stricter criteria may well be in force locally in environmentally-sensitive areas, certain urban areas, or where there is a profusion of tourist attractions, or for traffic management reasons." The stricter guidelines are intended to respond to the new concerns by allowing the denial of otherwise eligible signposts out of environmental and traffic safety considerations.

Economic Impacts

The Heart of England Tourist Board, a regional body, promoted a specific leisure drive through the Cotswolds in 1980 to the West Country to escape "motorway monotony". The idea was to determine the extent to which prospective vacationers would respond to a scenic route suggestion and the economic impact on tourist attractions and service establishments along the way. The sample of 2,000 people queried comprised those who lived in a contiguous area and had requested a regional tourist guide the year before. A follow-up questionnaire determined that 41% of the respondents took the leisure route recommended by the Board en route to their vacation and that 82% of those who took the route stopped along the way. The Board concluded that "there will be significant economic benefits to enterprises along the (leisure) routes from holidaymakers using them", and that on balance "the potential economic benefits should be sufficient to justify further promotions of this kind." The study titled "Tourism Scenic Throughroute Experiment" is appended to this report as Annex 5.

France

Long before scenic road designations became popular to attract tourists, laws were passed to attribute official names to two highways associated with glorious and turbulent events in the nation's history. La Voie Sacree (The Sacred Highway) was the name assigned to the supply route to the World War One battlefield of Verdun where more than half a million lives were lost in 1916, La Voie de la Liberte (Liberty Highway) is the official designation given the stretch from Avranches to Metz to recall the advance of the American forces that liberated France in World War Two.

Other routes are popularly known by a name that perpetuates historical associations, such as the Route Napoleon in the Alps used by the Emperor on his return from exile.

Of more recent origin are the fanciful names given to portions of the autoroute or major toll road network by the Transport Ministry in the mid-1970s after a nationwide naming contest. According to the Ministry letter, the idea behind 'baptizing' certain autoroutes was to popularize their image and promote their use by the travelling public rather than to draw attention to the scenic character of the regions traversed by them. The Autoroute du Soleil and seven others, such as *la Provencale*, *l'Aquitaine*, and *l'Oceane*, fall into this category, as is the case with the Italian autostrade described below.

As an afterthought, and initially to keep drivers alert and attentive for traffic safety reasons, the Ministry pioneered the "white on brown" information signs along the autoroutes, drawing highway users attention to the scenic, historic or cultural monuments and the distinctive character of the surrounding countryside. The symbols, shapes and colors of the signs were selected with a view to distinguishing them clearly from both traffic information and advertising panels. An autoroute user survey conducted soon after the introduction of the white on brown signing system affirmed that they achieved their purpose and were highly appreciated by motorists.

In tandem with these official and semi-official measures, private initiatives, such as the Michelin maps and guides, draw the attention of motorists to scenic highways, picturesque local roads of special interest and gastronomic highlights of the region. A recently published guide catalogues those restaurants worth a visit that are located

within an easy drive of autoroute exits.

Representative listings of autoroutes, illustrations of the white on brown signs, tourist facility symbols and services, as well as the commercially available maps with scenic drive notations, can be found in the country documentation.

Italy

There are no official scenic highway or byway designations in Italy, however attractive-sounding names are often attached to national highways as a public relations gambit. These popular names, used in conjunction with the numbered motorway (autostrada) system, date back to the early years of the system and were originally assigned by the motorway toll concessionaires and popularized by the media. Among these named and numbered motorway stretches are the Autostrada del Sole (Highway of the Sun), the Autostrada dei Fiori (Highway of the Flowers) and the Serenissima (Most Serene), which was the official name of the Venetian Republic. Respectively, these routes run North/South, in the West and the northeast part of the country. Dr. Roberto Melis of the Touring Club Italiano makes the astute observation that "by their own nature these motorways are by no means scenic." They are high capacity, multi-lane trunk lines, often choked with traffic that avoid scenic features and population centers where possible for the sake of long distance speed and convenience.

However, the Touring Club and the Automobile Association also issue and sell maps to the public that indicate scenic stretches of main and secondary roads. The scenic roads are marked with a green line that runs along the road trace. The scenic markings have no official status, they are based on suggestions from members and staff, but are checked out by the Club before being indicated on maps handed out or sold to the public.

Denmark

The Danish National Tourist Board has recently gotten behind the idea of identifying and signposting a single tourist route that will pass the country's 300 most significant cultural and scenic locations. It will be the first and only such route in the country. According to Ole Djurhuus, who represents the Road Directorate of Denmark's Ministry of Transport, the new route has the working title of "Daisy

Road", deriving its name in part from Queen Margrete ("daisy" in Danish), in part from the related fact that the daisy has recently been declared the national flower of Denmark. An appropriate signposting symbol, once again white on brown, depicting a 16-petal daisy has been designed, and the proposal is now making its way through the various consulting and approval echelons. Hearings are being held on the project and its specific road alignments in the counties and municipalities through which the route will pass.

Discussions between the Tourist Trade Board and the Roads Directorate resulted in agreement on the following route criteria:

- o suitably frequent cultural, historic and scenic spots clearly indicated along the route;
- o a natural and 'unambiguous' road alignment;
- o the bypassing of dense urban areas;
- o continuous signposting;
- o avoidance of main highways.

Signposts will be paid for by the local road authorities and are estimated to cost the equivalent of \$ 170 per sign with a projected maintenance cost of 10% per year. The daisy signs will be placed at intervals "corresponding to about 20 minutes travel. When the sign is used as a warning before a change of direction, it will be placed 100 meters ahead of the directional change." The sign will be about a foot square (30 x 30 centimeters).

The Road Directorate believes that the hearings phase will be completed in the fall, that signing will commence early next year and that the route will be officially opened on April 16, 1991, the Queen's 51st birthday. As soon as the route is opened, promotional maps and brochures will be become available in several major languages, including at the outset, English and German. The original text of the Road Directorate letter, together with the projected trace of the route and a photocopy of the daisy design, is included in the country documentation.

Australia

The Australian Local Government Association reports that

there are no federal government programs that designate or identify scenic highways. However, a move is currently afoot to propose special funding for roads promoted as "economic development roads". Funding for road construction and maintenance has been a source of intergovernmental contention in Australia for many years. Local authorities have been demanding higher subsidies in this area from their respective states, the states in turn contend that the federal funding level is grossly inadequate.

While there are no officially designated scenic highways, some of the Australian states, local governments and regional tourist associations have identified intra-state scenic byways and vacation drives using secondary and rural roads. ALGA states that local and regional maps and road signs are used to guide motorists through historic and scenic areas. Firm evidence of economic impacts is not available, but ALGA states that "the linking of road signage and local maps with tourist promotion is recognized as a highly successful strategy in some of the well known regions, such as the Hunter Valley wine growing area of New South Wales."

National Arterial Roads

The Australian federal government provides special purpose grants to state governments for expenditure on certain designated roads. One such category is that of "national arterial roads," which are defined to comprise roads of "national economic significance and which enhance the domestic and export competitiveness of Australian industry."

Roads which "facilitate, to a significant extent, travel for tourist purposes", may be declared a National Arterial Road for the purposes of receiving federal funding, but to date no specific tourist road has been included in this category.

The Australian Automobile Association points out that a key criterion for the inclusion of road projects in the national arterial category is their positive cost benefits ratio. The pertinent clause in the federal government's definition (Annex 5) poses the requirement that the Federal Minister for Transport and Communications, responsible for making the designation, be satisfied that: "the benefits likely to flow from the construction of the road or the proposed road justify the incurring of the costs of construction."

State Roads

There is no uniform policy among the seven Australian state as concerns scenic highways and byways. The most populous of these states, New South Wales (NSW), which has a population of 5.5 million or about a third of the nation's total of 17 million, says "as far as the state of New South Wales is concerned, the designation of 'scenic highway' does not exist (Annex 6). An official state map only shows four designations: national routes, state routes, sealed roads and unsealed roads.

On the other hand, the state of Victoria (population 4.2 million) does have a category of state roads called "tourist road" funded by a mixed bag of predominantly state resources with minor federal subsidies. The Victorian Roads Corporation notes that "currently Victoria is going through a major re-classification of its road network, so no accurate maps are available to outline this 'tourist road' network in Victoria."

South Australia and Western Australia which have populations of 1.4 million each, have gone the furthest in establishing and carrying out policies pertaining to tourist drives and tourist signposting. In a remarkably clear three page guideline and six page policy statement (*), the state defines tourist drives, establishes approval procedures, signposting responsibilities and funding commitments. According to the definition, tourist drives, "represent the best and most interesting route for visitors through an area or town by linking together legitimate tourist highlights and attractions." It states that tourist drives "may only be developed when the route is of acknowledged scenic interest. They are not to be developed essentially to attract traffic to a particular town."

The guideline establishes a mechanism involving the state tourist agency, local authorities responsible for the route and the state's Department of Road Transport for the approval process. After the required approvals are obtained, the state tourist agency will meet fabrication costs and local authorities erection and maintenance costs for the statewide standard white on brown directional signs.

The South Australian policy makes a distinction between the white on brown tourist signs and white on blue service signs used to advise motorists of the existence of tourist-

oriented services and activities, such as picnic areas, trailer parks, information and refreshment stands which serve tourists while not being tourist attractions in their own right.

More than two dozen tourist drives have been identified, marked and published to date by Tourism South Australia (TSA), the state tourist agency, which maintains 35 intrastate tourist information centers. TSA is also represented in three of the other Australian states and maintains five overseas offices.

Western Australia, which contains much of the nation's toughest desert and outback terrain, has recently established a committee to plan and supervise the establishment of tourist drives. Representatives of the state's Department of Main Roads, the Automobile Club and the Tourism Commission serve on the committee which has established three "state tourist drives" to date and intends to name another six by the end of this year.

A representative collection of 24 tourist drive maps and brochures published by Australian states accompanies this Report.

Austria

The initiative to designate scenic roads in Austria comes generally from tourist promotion boards which are public interest associations under the control of their respective municipal or state governments. The nine Austrian states and most municipalities each have their own tourist boards and some of these have been especially active in initiating and winning support for specific scenic, romantic or historical routes as a tourist promotion venture. National government agencies are neither involved in the planning nor the approval process. Wolfgang J. Kraus, acting director of the Vienna tourist board, advises that scenic roads are primarily considered a promotional tool for the marketing of respective localities and regions.

A special Austrian category is comprised of mountain or alpine roads that carry a "panoramic" designation. There are 32 of these, some them alpine pass and toll roads that are only open part of the year. Users paying the toll generally receive a decal and or a descriptive booklet. While most the panoramic roads have been around since before World War Two,

the historic and cultural theme roads described below are of more recent origin.

In the case of the Austrian Romantic Road, the idea originated with the Tourist Office of the State of Lower Austria. The localities along the route, represented by their respective tourist offices, pay a pro-rated share of the costs for marketing and signing of the road. The working group constituted to plan and market the route coordinates the design and placement of the scenic road signs, when these are employed, with the Transport Ministry. The signs are funded by the working group and placed by the highway crews of the respective states. Wolfgang Kraus points out that not all tourist routes described in brochures and shown on maps made available by tourist offices or the automobile association, are marked by special road signs. In some cases, signs are placed only several years after the route has been in existence.

The 'Route of Emperors and Kings', staked out only last year by a coalition of tourist offices in Austria and Germany, has a newly-designed logo but as yet no identifying markers. However it is already being marketed actively to travel operators by means of a 28 page, profusely illustrated German language brochure and a just issued (March 1990) eight page English language version which is included in the accompanying resource materials.

Road Signs

Tourist destinations in Austria, including scenic road signs, where applicable, are currently marked in white lettering on a brown background. While uniform signing regulations valid for the whole country, now stipulate white on brown, signs conforming to the former traffic code (white lettering on a green background) continue to persist in Austria. They are gradually being replaced. For historic locations and sites under monument protection, the concurrence of state preservation officers and local planning agencies responsible for the cityscape is required for the design, size and placement of the markers. Black and white photo copies illustrating two recently-installed tourist destination signs along major highways are also included in the resource file.

Economic and Environmental Impacts

Neither the tourist boards nor the Austrian automobile club are aware of any environmental impacts or controversy generated by the roads or the signs that mark them. Before and after studies on economic impacts of the scenic roads, likewise, do not exist, but state and national tourist boards keep an exact tally of hotels, beds and overnight stays in tourist locations.

Switzerland

While Switzerland has no officially designated scenic roads, Philippe Martin, director of the Swiss Touring Club notes that special "nicknames" are attached to some main roads by popular tradition. Some of these names are historical, other geographic, still others have a scenic or tourists connotation. Examples in the first category include the Axenstrasse between the cantons of Schwyz and Uri, in the second the Gotthard and the Three Mountain Pass Road, in the third are several 'vineyard' roads in different regions of the country. The latter wend their way along hillsides above the lakes of Geneva and Neuchatel and are signed in French. Only the vineyard roads are said to be signposted with signage costs met by viniculture interests.

Map publishers in Switzerland and neighboring France (Guide Michelin) generally use the popular, though unofficial, road name along with its alphanumeric designation. Besides marking main roads with their traditional popular name, map publishers indicate their own selections of scenic stretches of secondary roads on some road maps by green lines that follow the trace of the road along its most scenic segments. The practice is identical to that used by the Italian Touring Club maps referred to above.

On a more official plane, in addition to these practices, Switzerland has adopted a standardized national signing system for tourist attractions, comparable to that employed in France and the U.K. It is now in use 'almost throughout the country', in the words of the Touring Club spokesman. The tourist signs and pictograms are white on brown and use 44 symbols for attractions, sports, service and transportation facilities (Annex 7).

Since the Swiss cantons (counties) are the final arbiters of road sign enforcement, the system features some local

variations and in practice cannot be described as homogeneous.

The Netherlands

Scenic roads have existed in the Netherlands since the 1960s. They were selected and marked by the influential Royal Dutch Tourist Association (ANWB) which has a significant grass roots constituency. (The association was founded in 1883, originally as a cycling club and has a membership of about three million, representing one out of every two Dutch households.)

After selecting and laying out the routes, and before placing the route signs, the ANWB obtains the concurrence of local and regional authorities (municipalities and provinces) as well as the road maintenance authorities. ANWB public affairs manager G.R.de Regt says "in principle permission is asked for each sign post." The design of the scenic signposts has been developed by the association, which has also assumed the inspection and maintenance responsibility for the signposting system. Regular inspection drives are carried out by the ANWB to ensure that tourists are able to cover the entire circuit without having to consult a map.

The scenic routes or leisure drives vary in length between about a hundred and 120 km, and are laid out in a roughly circular fashion bringing drivers back to their point of departure. Over the years, 48 of these routes have been designated. They are marked by hexagonal signs carrying the name of the route and by a directional arrow. A average of number of 140 signs are placed along each of the leisure drive circuits, or about a little more than one per kilometer. All routes start in the Netherlands, of course, but a few of them place a part of their loop into neighboring West Germany and Belgium with the permission of the contiguous countries' regional highway authorities.

Selection Criteria

The ANWB notes that the selection of a scenic route depends on the presence of attractive natural surroundings, a pleasing scenery, such as well tended farms and flowering fields along side the route. The proximity of structures of cultural or historical interest, old towns and villages is also taken into consideration. As a matter of principle, national highways are never made part of a scenic route.

Rural roads used predominantly by farmers, and roads that are better suited for bicycles than cars are not selected either. In choosing routes that pass through, or in close proximity to towns and villages, the ANWB, says it has always sought to keep the disruption for the people living in the neighborhood "to a strict minimum".

Economic Impacts

While not providing statistics, the Dutch association affirms its view that the scenic routes are economically significant. "There are quite a few examples of scenic routes," says de Regt, "which mean a lot to a number of establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, cultural and historical institutions." He adds that while the ANWB has no statistics available at its disposal, nor can precise figures be found elsewhere, "it is estimated that the scenic routes are used by 300,000 cars annually, with an average of three passengers each. Approximately 53% of these people are likely to visit a cafe or restaurant" (Annex 8).

Environmental Concerns

The growing environmental consciousness of the Dutch population has led to a decision not to increase the existing network of scenic drives. This attitude has been conditioned by the national debate on the reduction of motorized traffic because of environmental concerns. Traffic noise and pollution rank high among public irritations.

However the ANWB has gone on record in stating that existing scenic routes should be maintained. They are said to play an important role in the recreational activities of the elderly and the handicapped, besides offering family-oriented leisure activities to the general public. The argument is also made that the scenic routes make it possible to channel tourist traffic into less developed regions and unto suitable underused roads.

West Germany

A highly-articulated system of working groups, planning meetings and promotional initiatives characterizes the operation of the country's scenic road network. The working groups (Arbeitsgemeinschaften, abbreviated ArGe) that manage most of the 26 major and 47 secondary tourists roads are comprised of jurisdictions along the respective roads,

regional tourist boards and, in some cases, associate members from among the local hotel and restaurant industry. The working groups have their own bylaws and dues structure, based on community size and tourists importance, they elect a director and an executive committee that meets as required between the annual meeting of the full membership.

As an illustrative example the Romantic Road ArGe, headquartered in the medieval town of Dinkelsbuehl, has 25 members and an annual budget in the range of \$ 120,000 met by membership dues (70%) and contributions by regional tourist boards (30%). Its director, who serves without compensation and is elected for a term of five years, is currently the manager of the Dinkelsbuehl tourist office.

Like its peers, the Romantic Road ArGe helps plan and coordinate the events that will attract tourists to member communities along its 217 mile length, it publishes events calendars and promotional brochures, designs and places ads, participates in tourist industry fairs and workshops. The working group also negotiates package prices with wholesale travel operators for single and group tours in the localities and region traversed by the road. (Currently these range from the equivalent of \$ 123 pp/do for an economy two day package to \$ 1,900 pp/do for a luxury seven days all suites package including a hot air balloon ride.) A documentation folder, representative of a year's activities, which also includes the 1990 English language version of the Romantic Road brochure, and the package offers described above, is appended as Annex 9. The folder holds the ArGe's bylaws, budget and contributions structure.

Similarly, the 370 mile Fairytale Road represents a marketing ploy that zeroes in on historic towns figuring in the widely read Grimm Brothers fairy tales, such as Hameln, where the Pied Piper reputedly took his revenge. It bisects much of West Germany, from Bremen in the north, to Frankfurt in the center of the country. Along the way it links the home of the Grimm Brothers in Marburg and their monument in Hanau. The Fairy Tale Road, an initiative of the Kassel Tourist Office, has about 80 institutional members and an annual publicity budget in the range of \$ 120,000. Signs marking the road have a standard logo. As is generally the case with Germany's scenic roads, these signs are bought from a central supplier and installed on their own by member jurisdictions.

On the national level, the government-funded German Central

Tourist Agency (Deutsche Zentrale fuer Tourismus), which oversees the official West German tourist office network abroad, places ads and publishes brochures promoting the nation's scenic road. Full page ads, for example, appear in the English language biweekly "German Tribune" published in Hamburg, which has an international circulation. Recent tear sheets are enclosed in the country documentation together with a subsidized book-length publication for the domestic market, with the German title of Deutsche Ferienstrassen (German Vacation Roads).

The newest of the ArGe working groups is promoting a binational concept that delves deep into European history. The Route of Emperors and Kings is run by a public private coalition of 18 regional and municipal tourist boards and a Danube passenger line. The 470 mile road which traces its origins back to Charlemagne, connects the coronation city (Frankfurt), the legislative capital (Regensburg) and the official residence (Vienna) of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

A jointly funded German-language brochure has been printed and distributed, promotional efforts are underway with tour operators, a logo has been selected and signs to mark the route are under preparation. The Road of Emperors and Kings is currently marketed to German-speaking target groups, promotions to the English-speaking tourist market have just started (March 1990). An extension to Budapest is under consideration.

Canada

In Canada all highways are primarily the funding and maintenance responsibility of provincial governments, except in national parks, military reserves and other federally owned lands. However, the federal government designates Trans Canada Routes which are part of the national Highway System, and portions of these, such as the "Icefield Parkway" (Highway 93), which pass through Banff and Jasper National Parks, have their own "scenic" name because of the topography of the area which has traditionally been a tourist attraction.

The Yellowhead

A good case study of a national scenic highway is provided by the Yellowhead Highway, officially known as National Highway 16, which spans over half of continental Canada for a total of 1,979 miles. It was officially named the "Yellowhead Highway" in 1970 and designated in 1986 as an integral part of Canada's National Highway System. The Yellowhead is marketed as a tourist attraction, it passes through some of the country's most scenic areas, is known officially as "Western Canada's Scenic Route", and is promoted by an interprovincial association with representation from the four western provinces and practically all incorporated municipalities in its catchment area.

The Yellowhead Highway Association, formed in 1947, now comprises 122 governmental and over 300 corporate and commercial members. It currently operates an annual budget of C\$ 350,000. The organization was created to lobby the federal government to develop the Yellowhead Highway as a major component of Canada's National Highway System. (The Yellowhead Pass which gave its name to the highway in turn was called after Tete Jaune an early 19th century Iroquois guide and trapper active in the area who was known for his light hair.) The Highway provides access to ocean ports in British Columbia from the rest of Canada. It is signed throughout its length with the distinctive "Yellowhead" logo in addition to its # 16 numerical designation (Appendix 10).

Use of the Yellowhead has increased substantially along most of its stretches over the 1979 to 1987 period, with a peak of more than 11,000 a day reached on one of its stretches during a particularly busy holiday season. Association General Manager Jack Smith says: "Clearly all those tirelessly optimistic years of lobbying by an alliance of four western provinces, calling themselves the Yellowhead Highway Association, has paid off. What is even more certain is that as improvements and upgrading continue, in conjunction with promotion of this incredibly scenic route, the Yellowhead will be the highway of choice for ever greater number of travelers."

Described as Canada's Road to Resources, the scenic highway's economic spin-offs for the regions, communities and four national parks through which it passes is believed to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, though it is

not possible to quantify precise impacts.

Provincial Roads

The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) notes that some provincial governments have taken the initiative to designate certain roads as scenic to attract tourists. For example, the Ontarian government has the "Thousand Islands Parkway" along the St. Lawrence River near Kingston, and the Nova Scotia government is operating the "Cabot Trail" around Cape Breton Island.

The Tourist Route Signing Policy which forms part of the Provincial Ministry of Transport (MTO) regulations in Ontario, stipulates that applications for the designation of a proposed tourist route within the province are to be reviewed by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation prior to formal submission to the Ministry of Transportation. The application for the route, including its proposed name, are processed through the MTO Tourism Signing Committee and the Highway Signing Committee for formal approval or disapproval by the Executive Director of the Ministry's Highway Operations and Maintenance Division. Following approval, the MTO installs approved signs, normally at 30 km intervals on own post or on same post below the provincial route marker shield.

The CAA provides maps to its members which show in bold black dots those sections of road which in the view of the CAA are particularly scenic. These include, but are not limited to the officially approved and designed tourist routes. Representative CAA maps accompany this report.

Japan

Considerable interest in scenic roads is reported from Japan where main roads are generally congested and the rate of motorization is now higher than one vehicle per every two inhabitants. While English language materials are not available, our scanning of the Japanese literature in the field has identified two Ministry of Construction publications on the subject.

The first of these, published in 1988, described "100 Selected Roads of Japan" covering all 47 prefectures. The selections were made by the "Ministry of Construction Road Day Organizing Committee", based on nominations received

from prefectures and municipalities. The purpose of the exercise was to promote public interest in scenic and historic roads, environmental awareness and "the spirit of road maintenance." Nomination criteria for 50 roads in 1986 included historical and local interest connotations, in 1987 another 50 roads were selected for "scenic beauty" and "harmony with nature."

Selections were announced to celebrate the national "Road Day" and were followed by the Ministry's publication of an illustrated volume promoting and detailing each of the selected prefectural and local roads. Prefectures and local signs or markers are placed alongside these roads at the discretion of the respective jurisdictions. At this point there is no national standard, except for the directional signage along national highways.

The publication of the Hundred Selected Roads volume was followed by a "Manual for Scenic Road Planning and Maintenance", also published by the Ministry in October 1988. The profusely illustrated 482 page publication addresses itself to prefectures, traffic planners and highway authorities. It provides suggestions and examples of good practice from around Japan and overseas and makes the point that scenic roads should be laid out and built to maximize the motorists' comfort and enjoyment of the surroundings. Planting along the embankments and median strips according to the varied climate of the prefectures are suggested - from coniferous trees in Hokkaido at the extreme north of the archipelago to palm trees in Miyazaki at the southern tip of Japan.

Along the seashore, specially-treated, non-corroding guard chains, connecting concrete bollards and cement blocks are suggested. Traffic authorities are urged to avail themselves of the cooperation of local volunteer groups to keep scenic roads clean and litter free. Both the Hundred Selected Roads volume manual and the Manual for Scenic Road Planning and Maintenance, are included in the country documentation folder.

We were able to obtain representative illustrations of six prefectural tourist routes from Tochigi Prefecture on the central island of Honshu, about three hours drive from Tokyo. In translation, the route designations include Volcano Route, Maple Leaf Route, Lake Chuzenji Sky Route, the Nasu Sanroku, Kirifuri Kogen and Nasu Kashi routes, which carry well-known scenic place names. All of these are

toll roads, as is generally the case with scenic routes in Japan. We are told by our Japanese correspondent that "each local government is free to give its own favorite name to scenic roads that will serve as tourist attractions and contribute to the image of the region." These roads are promoted on tourist maps and brochures that also show pictures of sightseeing attractions accessed by the route. However, they are not specially indicated on general maps placed on sale by public bodies such as the Japan Highways Public Corporation which is in charge of the major national highways and toll roads.

One of the most prominent new scenic road projects undertaken by a prefecture this year is the planting of the existing 170 kilometer road which leads from the Sea of Japan to the Inland Sea, with a hundred thousand cherry trees. According to press reports, the 600 million Yen (\$ 4 million) ten year project is being undertaken by the Hyogo prefectural government. It is intended to create the longest continuous cherry tree route in Japan and will get the cooperation of student groups and local voluntary associations in planting and caring for the trees. The project will take advantage of national subsidies available to prefectures for river improvement projects and for park construction by local governments.

There are also moves afoot to replicate the European tourist promotion experience through the organization of regional tourism bodies. A Kyushu International Tourism Council recently held its organizing meeting that brought together more than 70 representatives of tourism sections of prefectural governments. (Kyushu is Japan's southernmost island.) One of the priorities of the newly formed Council is the improvement of routes to scenic and historic spots.

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