

# Press Release - Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation

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**Information is also posted on** <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us>  
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## **Oklahoma's newest Byway is ready to be explored**

Winding roads through the hillsides. Breathtaking views of lakes and rivers. A new discovery around every corner. It's all part of our state's newest Scenic Byway.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, in partnership with the University of Oklahoma and the Cherokee Nation, is proud to announce the selection of the Cherokee Hills Scenic Byway in northeastern Oklahoma as our state's eighth byway. This 88-mile route takes travelers into the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Adair, Cherokee, Delaware and Sequoyah counties, and captures the natural beauty and the rich Native American culture of the region.

"Travelers will be amazed by the scenic locales and exhilarating recreational areas along the Cherokee Hills Scenic Byway," Richard Andrews, Oklahoma Byways Program Coordinator and ODOT Project Management Division Assistant Manager, said. "We look forward to working with the communities along the Byway and the Cherokee Nation to develop and promote this byway locally, regionally and nationally."

This new byway passes through stops on U.S. Highways 59 and 412A, and State Highways 10, 51, 62, 82 and 100, including the towns of Gore, Cookson, Keys, Tahlequah and West Siloam Springs. Some of the highlights include Lake Tenkiller, Natural Falls State Park, the Cherokee Heritage Center, the Talbot Library and Museum and the Tsa La Gi Ancient Village.

"Our structures are the oldest West of the Mississippi; our government predates the state of Oklahoma. Our history is expansive," Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith said. "As visitors travel along this scenic byway I am sure the scenery will make them pause and reflect at the beauty and history of Cherokee Nation and our people. We are happy to sponsor the Cherokee Hills Scenic Byway, and I encourage visitors to stop along the way to visit our communities and our historic sites."

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The Oklahoma Byways Program is a cooperative effort between ODOT and the University of Oklahoma Outreach. The state Secretary of Transportation approves all state byway designations. Once approved as a state byway, communities collaborate with the Oklahoma Byways Program to bring their goals to fruition in an effort to enhance economic development and community sustainability throughout the state. Byway project proposals are submitted to the Federal Highway Administration where grants are considered and approved.

“The Cherokee Hills Scenic Byway will not only showcase eastern Oklahoma’s outstanding landscape and geographical features, it will also highlight the significant cultural aspects of the region,” University of Oklahoma Outreach Coordinator Pamela Hockett-Lewis said. “Most importantly the Oklahoma Byways Program is community driven, community led. This will be an opportunity for communities on this route to highlight their successes.”

Other designated Oklahoma Scenic Byways include the Osage Nation Heritage Trail along US-60, the Wichita Mountain Byway along SH-115 and SH-49, the Cimarron Heritage Trail along US-64 and SH-325, the Mountain Pass Scenic Byway on US-59/270, the Mountain Gateway Scenic Byway on US-259, Route 66, and the Talimena Scenic Drive, which is also a National Scenic Byway.

For more information on how your community can apply for an Oklahoma Scenic Byways designation, contact Pamela Hockett-Lewis with the University of Oklahoma Outreach Program at 405-325-2848, or Richard Andrews, Oklahoma Byways Program Coordinator, 405-521-2454. Route and program information is available at [www.okscenicbyways.org](http://www.okscenicbyways.org).

**(Editors and News Directors: For inquiries about this Byway call Kenna Mitchell with the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 918-838-9933, LeeAnn Dreadfulwater with the Cherokee Nation at 918-453-5378 or Pamela Hockett-Lewis with the University of Oklahoma Outreach at 405-325-2848.)**



Cherokee Hills Scenic Byway photos and directions.pdf

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