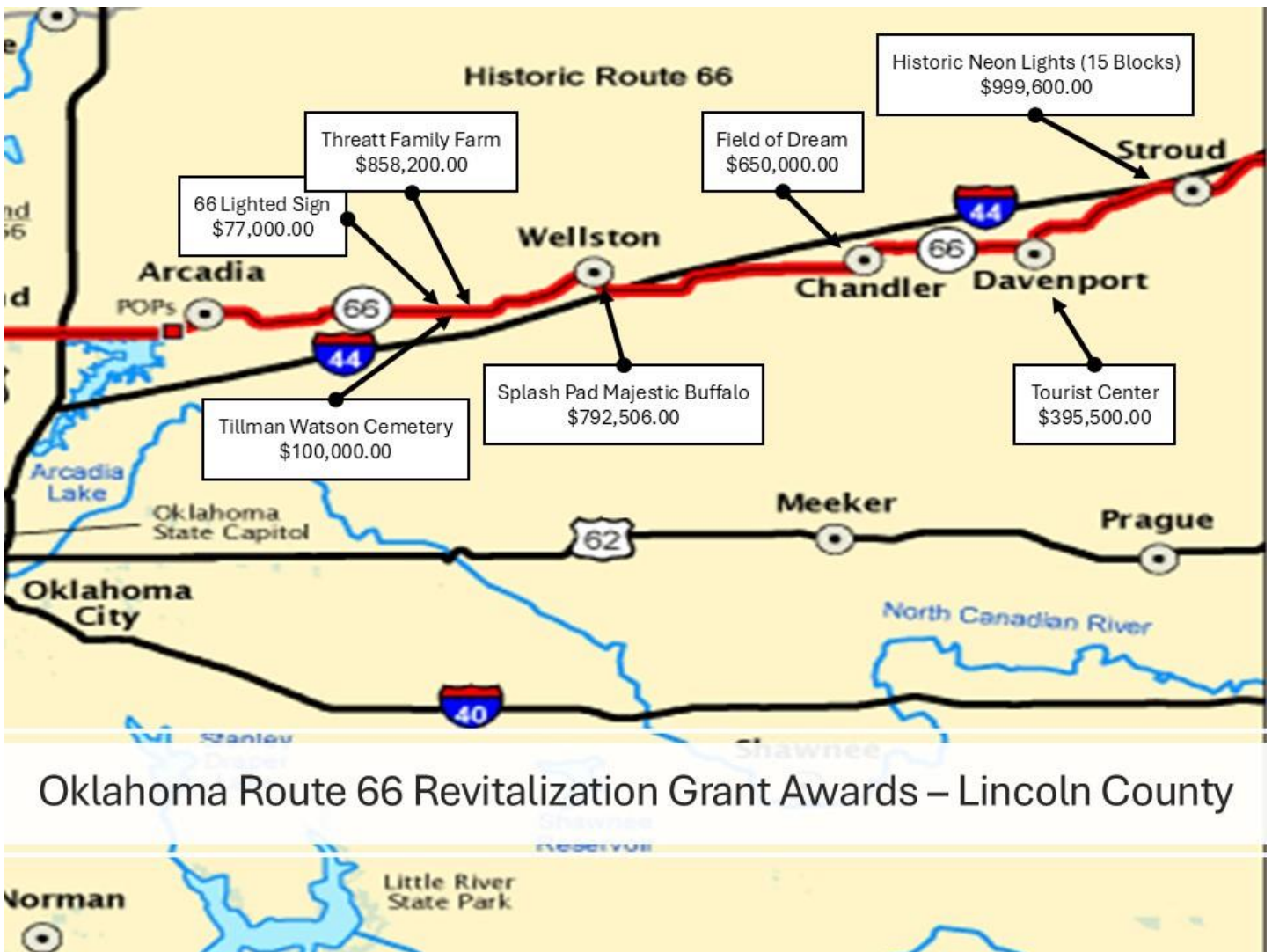


Oklahoma Route 66 Grants Awarded to Lincoln County

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LINCOLN COUNTY—On Thursday, August 15, the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission held its third quarter meeting at the JM Davis Arms & Historical Museum in Claremore, Oklahoma, to review and select the Round 2 Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization Grant recipients. The commissioners received over 83 grant applications totaling more than \$59,800,00.00, a significant increase from Round 1, completed on April 11, 2024. Out of the 83 grant applications, 49 received enough initial scores to pass through for consideration by the commissioners. After a lengthy discussion, the commissioners granted 13 applicants a total of \$6,612,00.36.

The city of Chandler was awarded \$650,000.00 in the Round 1 competition to build McClanahan Park, also called the “Field of Dream.” It is described as a must-see tourist destination showcasing the artwork of Chandler resident Jerry McClanahan, renowned EZ66 Guidebook author. During the commissioner’s meeting last week, Lincoln County was again well-represented with creative ideas from Stroud, Wellston, Chandler, and Davenport for the commissioners to envision.

Stroud Historic Route 66 Business Neon Light Project is a unique opportunity for the state of Oklahoma to demonstrate the pride of a small rural town in Lincoln County with a neon light experience for everyone who travels Route 66. There are 49 businesses that have signed up to participate in the project creating a 15-block (5,500 feet) experience down Stroud’s Main Street (OK Route 66). The neon signs will illuminate at dusk and turn off at 1:00 am, giving travelers a neon light experience that allows them to walk, drive, or cruise down main street. When the Stroud committee first met, several ideas were discussed. However, after interviewing previous Route 66 travelers from other states and reviewing Facebook posts, one common theme emerged, “travelers down Route 66 expect neon.” It is part of the tradition, and it is part of the desired experience. Stroud has two of the most iconic Route 66 neon signs in the state of Oklahoma, the Skyliner Motel and the Rock Café. The city of Stroud was awarded \$ 999,600.00.

Wellston has officially been identified as the midway point of the Oklahoma Route 66. The town of Wellston wants to give travelers from Oklahoma, across the nation, and local residents an opportunity to stop at the midway point and enjoy a family activity. The Wellston Route 66 Splash Pad and majestic buffalo statue were awarded \$792,506.00 with an in-kind donation of \$200,000.00, making the total project \$992,506.00 and will become a central gathering spot for the community, visitors, and tourists, providing visitors with the history of the Town of Wellston and the original Route 66, now Route 66B, through a StoryBook Walk® and Trading Post.

The town of Davenport was awarded \$395,500.00 to renovate the historic gas station and create a visitor center. This \$3,000,000.00 opportunity is significant because each town and city in Lincoln County has been awarded one of the Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization Grants from Wellston, Chandler, Davenport, and Stroud, giving the county a new opportunity for economic development.

In the 2022 Legislative Session, Chairman Kevin Wallace (District #32 - Lincoln) and Senator Roger Thompson (District #8 - Okmulgee) co-authored House Bill #4457, which established the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission to revitalize the route in preparation for its centennial in 2026 and provided the funding. The fiscal impact of this measure is from the addition of the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission Revolving Fund, which receives up to six million six hundred thousand dollars (\$6,600,000.00) per year through the life of the Commission. Senator Grant Green’s district, which extends to eastern Oklahoma County, has also realized Route 66 Commission funding. Luther Oklahoma has been awarded three of the Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization grants – the Luther on 66 Lighted Sign Project was awarded \$77,000.00 to boost tourism and instill community pride by evoking nostalgia through a wayfinding landmark on land that was part of the original Route 66 at the iconic pecan orchard; the Threatt Family Farm Development Project was awarded \$858,200.00 to provide education and economic development opportunities while sharing the U.S. Route 66 story of perseverance, community, and living on the Mother Road; and the Church of the Living God Tillman Watson Cemetery was awarded \$100,000.00 to address the historic preservation for a total of \$1,035,200.00 for Eastern Oklahoma County.

The two original authors representing rural districts with rural values knew reinvesting into Oklahoma Route 66 would financially and economically impact smaller rural communities and the entire Oklahoma Tourism and Travel industry. All of the cities and towns receiving grant awards are scheduled to have their projects completed in time for the upcoming centennial in 2026.

Make sure to get the official Travel OK Route 66 Passport so that as you and your family travel down Route 66, you can stop in at all of the destinations and get your Passport stamped.