

Ten Years of Investment in The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area

In May 2008, the United States Congress officially designated 42 counties in Illinois as the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (ALNHA). Based on the premise that few individuals have so profoundly influenced American history as Abraham Lincoln – and that preserving and sharing this nationally significant story is important to not only the people that live in the region, but also the millions of people from around the world who continue to be inspired by the story of Lincoln’s rise from humble beginnings to the presidency of the United States – the National Heritage Area designation made sense.

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition (LFL), established in 1998, was named as the coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area and in that role would continue its efforts to preserve and enhance the Lincoln legacy by working to capture the true essence of Lincoln’s life and times during his 30 years in central Illinois.

During those 30 years, Lincoln raised his family, developed his interest in the law and politics, and prepared to become the leader of our country during one of its most trying periods. In the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, the Lincoln legacy comes to life through its communities, historic attractions, sites and exhibits, and special events. Looking for Lincoln and its many partners work diligently to create experiences and opportunities for residents and visitors alike to discover the culture and history of the region. It’s with great pride and excitement that we present this snapshot of our first 10 years – and a glimpse into the bright future of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.

Daniel Noll
Chair of the Board of Directors

Sarah Watson
Executive Director

Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition



In Partnership With



Looking Back . . . The First 10 Years

- Enhancement and promotion of a tourism destination that now supports an annual economic impact of nearly \$259 million, over 3,200 jobs, and nearly \$26 million in annual tax revenue.
- Establishment of the ALNHA Steering Council, including community partners from throughout the region, to guide programs for the future development and sustainability of the National Heritage Area as a viable tourism destination.
- Implementation of an annual LEAD: Youth Leadership Academy, in partnership with Illinois College, to empower young people to reach their potential as future leaders using Lincoln's leadership qualities as guiding principles.
- Publication of a series of Looking for Lincoln books, in partnership with Southern Illinois University Press, to examine Lincoln's rise to greatness from his central Illinois roots and encourage travelers to explore the Lincoln story.
- Establishment of the Looking for Lincoln Signature Event designation to identify special events that best capture the stories of Lincoln's life and times by bringing history to life in unique and exciting ways.
- Participation in the National Park Service: *Passport to Your National Parks* program at sites and attractions throughout the ALNHA.
- Completion of a long-term management plan that addresses future plans for heritage tourism development and marketing, education, preservation and conservation, and community planning and enhancement.



A Look Ahead . . . The Next 10 and Beyond

- Preserving the natural landscapes of the ALNHA.
- Maintaining and further expanding the Looking for Lincoln story trail exhibits.
- Developing new travel itineraries throughout the ALNHA.
- Welcoming additional official LFL communities.
- Implementing group tour itineraries and step on guide services within the ALNHA.
- Developing individual touring programs within the LFL Gateway Communities.
- Sharing the Lincoln story on established natural trails within the National Heritage Area.
- Establishing an annual Looking for Lincoln – ALNHA Bike Ride.



For more information, visit our web site at www.lookingforlincoln.com.