



## ACT LOCALLY, THINK...CREATIVELY!

A conversation we had at the Ogden Nature Center Earth Day Festival in April got us ruminating about Legacy Parkway, and how it came to be billboard-free.

Some creative thinking is the short answer!

Construction on the 11.5-mile road started in 2001, then was halted by a lawsuit brought by the Sierra Club (leading out on behalf of numerous other groups). In 2005, opponents and the Utah Department of Transportation reached a compromise. Construction resumed in 2006 and finished in 2008.

The compromise brought a number of benefits: A design reduction from six to four lanes, no semi-truck traffic until the agreement sunsetted in 2020, and a bike and walking path for much of Legacy's length, among others.

A billboard ban also was part of the compromise, but that too would have sunsetted in 2020 if not for some prescient moves by local communities, who petitioned to have Legacy Parkway designated as a Scenic Byway. That was in 2002, six years before Legacy was completed! Without the Scenic Byway designation, the route today would look more like I-15, lined on both sides with signs and billboards.

We reached out to Scenic Utah volunteer Gary Uresk, who spent 28 years as Woods Cross City Manager (1993 to 2021), for his recollections.

"Neka Roundy, in the Davis County Planning Department [who later served as Kaysville Mayor, 2006-2010], and I spearheaded the effort to get Legacy designated as a Scenic Byway, which would prohibit billboards." Ultimately, he recalls, Davis County, Woods Cross, West Bountiful,

Centerville, North Salt Lake, and Farmington got together and submitted an application to the State Scenic Byway Committee.

“That application was pretty thorough, with sections on the historical, cultural, and archeological aspects of the Parkway,” Gary says. “We took a lot of heat for submitting it. People were saying, ‘Hey, this isn’t Mirror Lake Highway or Highway 12 near Bryce. It goes by a landfill!’ But we saw the long-term benefit.”

As part of the process, Gary and the Byway proponents put out notices and held public meetings. “We specifically invited the billboard companies to those meetings, and they were the only ones to argue against the designation. Public support went a long way with the Scenic Byway committee.”

Gary’s advice for Scenic Utah supporters? “Anticipating things and taking action pays dividends. Our group of local governments was lucky enough to realize the threat of billboards was coming. We took action well beforehand and forestalled the whole thing.”



**GARY URESK**

There’s no doubt that 20+ years later, the efforts of Gary, Neka, and all the others who fought to keep billboards off Legacy Parkway are still enjoying broad public support and appreciation!

More from the archives: <https://www.deseret.com/2002/6/13/19660596/no-billboards-on-legacy>

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