

Heart of Hidden Valleys ~ Driving Tour

We begin our adventure through the "Heart of Hidden Valleys" in Richland County's largest community and county seat, **RICHLAND CENTER**. Richland Center was settled on both sides of the Pine River by trappers canoeing up the Wisconsin River. By 1880 it was a thriving community of 1,227. World renowned architect, **Frank Lloyd Wright** was born here in 1867. He returned in 1915 to build the unique **A.D. German Warehouse** located on Church St. The beautifully restored, 1909 railroad depot now houses **Richland Center's Visitor Center** (800) 422-1318, on the corner of Hwy. 14 and Seminary St. One block north of the Visitor Center is Court Street, Richland Center's downtown main street. Shopping, restaurants, art galleries and many other unique shops are readily available in the downtown area. On the outer areas of Richland Center, **apple orchards** cover the hillsides with spring blossoms and fall fruit. Take advantage of more shopping, a place to spend the night, and a fast burger, all of which can be found before leaving town, as we head east on Hwy. 14.

You can hop on your bicycle and take a lazy ride on the **Pine River Recreation Trail**. It meanders through bluff scenery, broad valleys and crosses a number of bridges from Richland Center to Lone Rock. The river backwaters are havens for great blue herons, egrets, turtles and other wildlife. We will take Hwy. 60 west out of **GOTHAM**. This winding road that follows the Wisconsin River never fails to be a travelers' delight. For the absolute greatest view of the river, rent a canoe for an adventure you are not likely to forget.

All this activity is sure to work up an appetite. At the junction of Hwy. 60/80, stop in at **Honkers**; or cross the bridge over the Wisconsin River to **Amo's Bar and Grill** for a delicious meal.

Just past the bridge is **Riverside Park**, a scenic little park with a playground, shelters and a camping area that overlooks the river. Many a beautiful sunset is caught looking over the bridge and down the river. Wisconsin Ave. is Muscoda's downtown. At the end of Wisconsin Avenue follow Hwy. 80 to the left, about a half a block, to see the outdoor sculptures of **Ellis Nelson**. Stop and look around – he has a very creative yard full. Backtrack and go straight through the intersection staying on Catherine St. **The Victorian Rose B&B**, a beautifully restored mansion, is open year 'round.

Follow Catherine St. out of town. It becomes County G. A few miles out, take County Q up the hill, which then winds through a beautiful valley on a very narrow road. A few miles and start watching for the sign for **Spurgeon's Vineyards**. Down Pine Rd., off the beaten path, about 2 miles is the winery. They are open year round, 10-5, tours April through October. The bald eagles come into the valley around October and stay until March, so keep an eye open to the sky.



Back up on County Q there's a race horse ranch and a bison farm before you enter the back side of **HIGHLAND**. You will go to the stop sign and head down the steep hill, back on Hwy. 80, which is Highland's downtown, where you can get something good to eat at any of a number of small restaurants. At the bottom of the hill, Hwy. 80 makes a sharp turn to the left to head out of town.

As soon as you reach the outskirts of Highland keep your eyes to your right. Twenty wind turbines, spanning approximately five miles of farmland, fill the horizon. These are the largest wind turbines manufactured in the U.S., each nearly as tall as a 33-story building.

They can supply enough energy to power 10,500 average Wisconsin homes. They don't look that big from here.

Three miles up the road, **Palan's Outpost** sits at the entrance to **Blackhawk Lake Recreation Area**. You can purchase munchies and all the tackle you will need for a great day of fishing at Blackhawk Lake, which is about three miles down County BH. Blackhawk Lake consists of a 220 acre lake with a 300' sand beach, shower house, playground, picnic shelters, canoe, boat, kayak, paddle boat, and pontoon rentals, 135 campsites, cabins, and a boat launch – something for the whole family.

Back to Hwy. 80 south and you will come into **COBB** which hosts the annual **Cobb Corn Roast** each August. All the sweet corn you could possibly eat, with a carnival and parade. Continuing on Hwy 80/18, follow the windmills about six miles, you will come across a very unique depot and bowling alley, **Tower Junction**. Take the kids in for a game of bowling. They have bumper rails for the youngsters. And they have some of the best food in the area, from burgers to great pizza, steaks and seafood. The walls are covered with pictures of old railroad cars and they also have information on the **Montfort Wind Farm**.

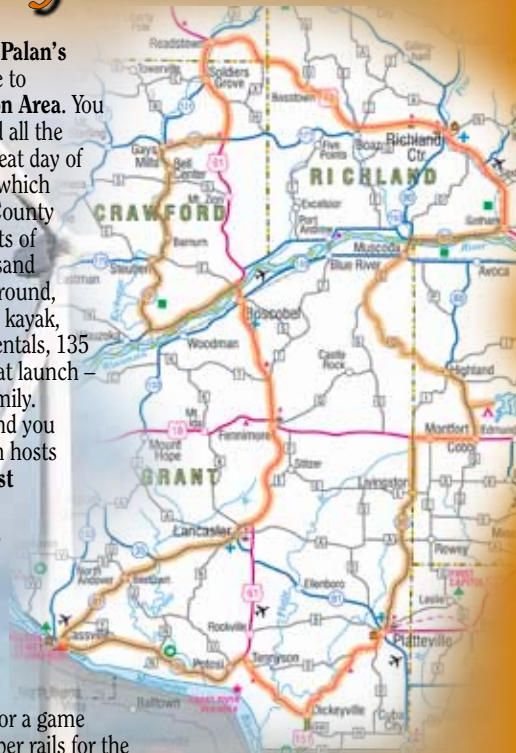
MONTFORT is less than one mile down the road. It is home to **Rural Route 1 Popcorn and Gift Shoppe**, where you can sample many of their scrumptious popcorn flavors. Take Hwy 80 back the direction you just came from and turn south to Livingston.

LIVINGSTON is a small town established in 1880 from mining and agriculture. Take one of the streets to your right to Center St. which is Livingston's downtown

area. They have a few small businesses and several serve food.

Heading out of town on Hwy. 80 keep your eyes to the right. There aren't many lighthouses in this area, but this residential house will sure fool you! Coming down off the ridge, you come into the little town of **ARTHUR**. It may be small but it hosts a very big class act at the **Arthur House Restaurant and Comedy Club**. They have comedy shows on many of the weekends. You can have dinner with your show or just come in for the show and some laughs. Reservations are recommended. We are staying on Hwy. 80 and heading toward Platteville, the biggest town on our tour.

Into **PLATTEVILLE**, you will hit a 4-way stop which is the beginning of Platteville's downtown main street. Take a stroll in this Historic shopping district and enjoy a very diverse selection of shops. There are restaurants, a photography shop, a bridal shop, crafts, tattoos, wines, a coffee shop and even a bicycle shop. Continue down Hwy. 80 until you get to the stoplights. Take a right on Hwy. 151. You will find an abundance of places to eat, sleep and play. (Left will take you to **Walmart** and **K-Mart**.) From the historical, and artistic side of Platteville to its great outdoors, you can find it all right here in Platteville. Platteville's **Tourist and Area Information** which is on the left of Hwy. 151 heading south, open 9-5 M-F, is your first stop. From there, you can start exploring. See the 1845 Bevans



Lead Mine at the **Mining Museum** or the thousands of farm and home exhibits at the **Rollo Jamison Museum**. Visit the **Stone Cottage** built in 1835 by one of the founders of Platteville, or bike the **Rountree Branch Trail**. **University of Wisconsin-Platteville** is a liberal arts college with the **Wisconsin Room** on campus which is open to the public. The **Nohr Gallery** features art exhibits & collections. **Rountree Hall** is the site of the first School of Mining to be built in the U.S. in 1866. **UW-Platteville Center for the Arts** features international music and theatre performances throughout the year. **Katie's Garden** arboretum offers a peaceful setting along the Rountree Branch stream. Climb the **World's Largest "M"**, enjoy the **Family Aquatic Center** with its 150 ft. water slide or stroll through any one of Platteville's 14 city parks. All of this and much more can be found right here in this one area. Take your time and enjoy the sights.

Once you are ready we will head out of town staying south on Hwy. 151 to **DICKEYVILLE**. Go north on Hwy. 35/61 to Dickeyville's **Grotto**, built around 1925. It is an amazing religious and patriotic wonder made of stone, mortar and millions of pieces of colored glass, gems, petrified wood, stalactites, seashells, fossils and all kinds of rock collected from all over the world. The shrines and gardens are open to the public year round, with a gift shop in the back.

On to **POTOSI/TENNYSON**, two communities connected. Through Tennyson, take a left on north Hwy. 133 down the hill. We come to Potosi, having the longest main street in the world without an intersection. **St. John's Mine**, a short distance down Hwy. 133 gives guided tours through one of the oldest lead mines in the state. Across from the mine is the **Badger Hut Trail** where you can view the Badger Huts which were dug by the lead miners in the 1830s. Potosi hosts its annual **Catfish Festival** each year, the second weekend in August. **Potosi Brewery** - now reopened. Stop at the Potosi Brewery Co. Enjoy a tour of the museum and stay for lunch or even sample a brew, including root beer. Info can be obtained at www.potosibrewery.com. Just out of town on your left is the road to the **Grant River Recreation Area** along the Mississippi River. It is open April-October, with campsites, boat dock, fishing, and picnic areas.

Continue on Hwy. 133 to **CASSVILLE**. This small community sits on the banks of the Mississippi River. It is home to **Nelson Dewey State Park**, the **Roe Nature Preserve**, and the **Stonefield Historic Site** featuring: the **Governor Nelson Dewey home site**, the **State Agricultural Museum**, a **1900 farmstead**, and a **1900 village**. You can also take **Charlie D**, Cassville's car ferry - the fun way across the Mississippi. When you are done discovering all that Cassville has to offer, take Hwy. 81 north to the very small town of **BEETOWN**. **Schurman's Wisconsin Cheese Company** is just to the right on County U. They have fresh curds, M-F.

Continuing on Hwy 81 east will take you into **LANCASTER** "City of the Dome" right up to the square where you will find the **Grant County Courthouse**. The courthouse's octagon copper and glass dome sparkles over downtown Lancaster. Self guided tour information is available.

The turn of the century architecture is prominent in the shops that surround the square and traffic goes only one way.

Cunningham Museum is just off the square along with the grave of Wisconsin's first governor-Nelson Dewey. The **Grant County Fairgrounds** are in Lancaster, where stock cars race around the tracks every weekend during the summer.

Continue on Hwy. 61 to **FENNIMORE** and **Carr Valley Cheese** where "Igor" still welcomes all who comes into town. They have a great selection of cheeses. In downtown Fennimore, the **Fennimore Doll and Toy Museum** has a great collection of dolls, puppets, tractors, circus clowns and more. A few blocks

further up Lincoln Avenue is **Fennimore Railroad Museum**, which resembles a 1900 depot with a replica water tower. It features train memorabilia from Fennimore's past and the kids will love the miniature train ride. It is open Memorial Day to Labor Day and also serves as one of Fennimore's tourist centers. Before you leave town, stop for a bite to eat at one of the many eating establishments.

If a motel is in your sites, **The River Inn**, just ahead on Hwy. 61 as you enter **BOSCOBEL**, has an indoor pool which always entertains the youngsters. But we are going to veer off to your right, on Wisconsin Ave. **Kronsage Park** sits on your immediate right. It hosts one of the largest **Civil War Reenactments** in the Midwest, the first weekend in August. Boscobel's main street offers a number of restaurants to grab a delicious lunch and **Central House/Boscobel Hotel** has a wonderful old-time bar and a newly opened gift shop. At the other end of main street a little further is the **Railroad Depot**, a restored depot that also serves as a museum. Follow

Wisconsin Ave. to the stop sign and take a left on Prairie St. to Hwy. 61. Go north and cross the bridge, taking Hwy. 60 west to the left, which follows the Wisconsin River until you reach Hwy. 131 north.

Hwy. 131 is a very curvy road, so take your time and enjoy the scenery through the woods. Keep your eyes open for the sign "**Husher Park Wayside**" as you ascend the hill, it comes up pretty suddenly. It's well worth stopping for the view. There are two lookout stands that allow you a 360° view of the Crawford County countryside. It is absolutely astounding! From the wayside you will come down into the small community of **STEUBEN**. Stay on Hwy. 131 north.

The river you see that snakes to and from the road is the **Kickapoo River**. It is one of the crookedest rivers in the world, as you can very well see on this stretch of Hwy. 131. Coming into **GAYS MILLS**, at the stop sign, a left will take you into downtown Gays Mills, but we are going to take a right up the very steep hill. One-half mile up and you can pull over into the historical marker and wayside. There is an amazing view of Gays Mills worth stopping for. And then the apple orchards begin. All have something to offer - bakeries, gift shops, Amish goods, and a whole lot of apples. The orchards are beautiful in the spring, and the apples are delicious in the fall. No matter what time of year you travel this section of road, it is quite a site for all.

At the stop sign at Hwy. 61/171 head north 5 miles to Soldiers Grove, America's first solar village. A short drive farther, continue to Readstown, where you can rent canoes, kayaks, get a fishing license and supplies, and enjoy a day on the river. Hungry? Stop at Kickapoo Corners Family Restaurant for friendly service and a wide variety of food choices. Don't know what you're looking for! Stop at Crazy Frank's - "selling stuff for peanuts". To complete our circle tour, take Hwy 14 back to Richland Center, via Boaz, where Boaz Fun Days is celebrated every July at the Community Park.

As you once again enter **RICHLAND CENTER**, you cross over the small bridge. Look to your right to see the **Richland Center Footbridge**. It was built in 1912, enabling west side residents to walk across the river to attend functions on the east side. It has been rebuilt and is maintained well and lighted at nighttime. To your left is **Krouskop Park** where **Star Spangled Celebration** is held the last full weekend each June. If you love country music, you won't want to miss this three-day event with many top Nashville entertainers. Continue on Hwy. 14 to your right to the stop lights and you are once again at Richland Center's Visitor Center. Stay and take full advantage of all that Richland Center has to offer - there is something for everyone.

