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Senate passes Route 66 historic trail bill

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On Friday, U.S. Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Mo., announced the Senate passed the Route 66 National Historic Trail Designation Act, which advocates say will help protect the historic highway.

The legislation designates Route 66, celebrating its centennial this year, as the newest of the country's National Historic Trails.

The measure still needs approval in the House of Representatives.

"Route 66 is part of America's story, and Missouri is at the heart of that story," Schmitt said in a statement. "It was right here in Springfield that the name 'Route 66' was first sent by telegram 100 years ago. I'm proud to have helped lead this bipartisan effort alongside Senator (Ted) Cruz to preserve the Mother Road and recognize the communities, small businesses, and history that make it an American icon. I look forward to getting this across the finish line for Route 66's 100th anniversary."

Lawmakers in both parties have been working to advance the bill, versions of which have been around for nearly a decade. The legislation has been supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and several Route 66 organizations.

Rhys Martin, manager of the Preserve Route 66 Initiative at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, wrote last week in The Washington Post of the need to designate Route 66 as a National Historic Trail. According to Martin, "The designation would task the interior secretary with creating a corridor management plan, elevating the road to a new level of national awareness. ... An official designation would no doubt continue the route's momentum."

National Historic Trails are overseen by the National Park Service. If approved, the measure would allow the agency to award federal funds to help preserve, develop and promote Route 66, according to The Associated Press. The use of eminent domain would be prohibited.

Other national historic trails include the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails, the Trail of Tears and the route followed by Lewis and Clark.

Route 66 stretched approximately 2,400 miles from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California, through eight states, including Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma.

On Nov. 11, 1926, federal and state highway officials met in North Carolina to adopt a numbered highway system for the United States, including Route 66. The 100th anniversary

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Globe | John Hacker

Braxton Schwab, a freshman at Joplin High School, left, and Maggie Mercado, a teacher and one of the band directors at Joplin High School, prepare for their trip to New York City for the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade on Thursday.

Joplin-area musicians to march in Macy's parade

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On Thursday, two Joplin-area musicians will perform in the 100th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City.

Braxton Schwab, a freshman at Joplin High School, and Maggie Moncado, North Middle School band director, will take part in two collaborative bands within the parade.

Schwab will join approximately 150 other musicians, flag dancers and color guard members, representing high schools across the country as part of the Macy's Great American Marching Band.

As part of the parade's 100th anniversary, 250 marching band alumni will perform in the Great American Marching Band Alumni Band. Moncado, who also serves as an assistant band director at Joplin High School, performed in the parade, playing the tenor saxophone, during her junior year of high school.

Last year, while sharing about her experience — and plans to try out for the alumni band — Moncado saw Schwab's interest. She encouraged him to take a crack at the auditions.

Schwab, then an eighth grader, began the process in December 2026, spending two months working on the music and drills. He submitted a video audition in February and learned he was accepted in April.

The audition process included learning to perform a box drill — something new for the eighth grader without marching experience — and two études of different speeds. Schwab, who plays the clarinet, is one of 30 clarinetists to qualify for the experience.

For the last month Schwab practiced the two songs the high school band will play — "Welcome to the Black Parade" by My Chemical Romance, during the televised performance at Herald's Square, and "Joy To The World" while marching along the parade route.

Moncado said it's tough for an eighth grader to earn a spot in the band because they are competing against high schoolers with

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Mayor's tree lighting kicks off Christmas events in Joplin

FROM STAFF REPORTS
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The first of several Christmas events on the calendar for Joplin arrived Thursday night.

Light Up the Park and the Holiday Kickoff Party took place at Spiva Park and included the annual Mayor's Tree Lighting Ceremony.

"Every year we try to make Spiva Park look amazing," said Ivy Hagedorn, assistant director of the Downtown Joplin Alliance.

Volunteers help decorate the park and put up the Christmas tree and the lights earlier that day.

"Really, we just want to see everybody coming downtown," Hagedorn said.

Other holiday events include:

• An unveiling of Joplin City Hall's annual winter holiday windows is planned for 5:30 p.m. Monday at City Hall, 602 S. Main St.

Regional artist Sandra Dawn created a two-panel piece representing this year's theme, "Wrapped in Unity."

The new feature has the appearance of stained glass and celebrates the story of the Joplin community. Dawn, a large-scale mural artist from Newton County, has created each of the displays for the City Hall windows since 2021. The new display will be located in one of the window sections on the Sixth Street side of the building, according to information provided by City Hall.

The City Hall holiday display has become a tradition that draws people downtown and creates a backdrop for events including the Joplin Christmas Parade. The building's large exterior windows once allowed shoppers to peek inside the popular Newman's Department Store.

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