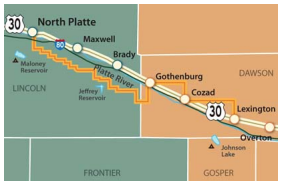

Most Lincoln Highway enthusiasts know about the Gothenburg Stair Step.

However many local residents may not realize that a series of 90-degree turns, from Gothenburg to North Platte, are part of an original 3,400-mile highway from New York City to San Francisco, CA, established in 1913.

This summer, history buffs and others are celebrating the 100th birthday of the Lincoln Highway, a roadway created to expand American tourism and economic growth.

Celebration in Kearney

The celebration will climax in Kearney, the middle of the transcontinental highway named after President Abraham Lincoln, on June 30 and July 31 (see schedule on pg. A3).

Motorists traveling the roadway from the east and west will meet in the city for a host of celebratory activities.

Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce director Anne Anderson, who is also treasurer of the Lincoln Highway Scenic Historic Byway, said local residents should also know that Highway 30 is the original Lincoln Highway except for a few meanderings along the route like the stair steps.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITY

Drivers of historic and modern cars will re-trace original Lincoln Highway routes and pass through Gothenburg on Saturday, June 29, between 5-7 p.m.

The public is invited to view the vehicles from a city park on the southwest corner of Lake Avenue and Highway 30.

Motorists will travel Highway 30 and also Highway 47 from the Gothenburg Stair Step south of town.

They will overnight in Lexington on their way to the centennial celebration in Kearney on June 30 and July 1.

LINCOLN HIGHWAY HISTORY

The idea of the Lincoln Highway came from the fertile mind of Carl Fisher, the man also responsible for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Miami Beach.

With help from fellow industrialists Frank Seiberling and Henry Joy, an improved, hard-surfaced road was envisioned that would stretch almost 3,400 miles from coast to coast, New York to San Francisco, over the shortest practical route.

The Lincoln Highway Association was created in 1913 to promote the road using private and corporate donations. The idea was embraced by an enthusiastic public and many other named roads across the country followed.

Americans' enthusiasm for good roads led to the involvement of the federal government in building roads and the creation of numbered U.S. routes in the 1920s.

The Federal Highway Administration and the Interstate Highway System are the culmination of these efforts.

Source: www.lincolnhighway assoc.org

LINCOLN HIGHWAY CELEBRATION

DOWNTOWN KEARNEY

Sunday, June 30

■ 8 a.m.-1 p.m.—Parade/Show & Shine Check-in parking lot at 620 E. Highway 30

■ Noon-5 p.m.—Main Street Comes to Life from the 1910s to the 1950s with historical characters, food courts, vendors, music, car show, movies, historic tours

■ 12:30 p.m.—Official Lincoln Highway Centennial: East Meets West Tours (25th St. & Central Ave.)

■ 1 p.m.—Grand Parade down Central Ave.

■ 2 p.m.—Kearney Area Community Band Concert

■ 7 p.m.—Sons and Brothers Band with Mike Adams at Merryman Performing Arts Center

GREAT PLATTE RIVER ROAD ARCHWAY,

Monday, July 1

■ 9 a.m.-5 p.m.—Education Tent (Burma Shave jingles, Woody Guthrie/Will Rogers presentations, era music, hula hoop and paper hat classes, food & book vendors, auto camp & store, Model T rides

■ Noon—1733 Barbershop Chorus

■ 12:45 p.m.—Parade of Packards

■ 1 p.m.—Official Lincoln Highway Centennial Program

■ 7-10 p.m.—Lincoln Highway Gala with The Bobby Lane Orchestra, dinner and wine from Mac's Creek Vineyard in Lexington, $30 per person. Tickets can be bought at the local Chamber office