



**What We Collectively Accomplished
in 2015**



FY2015 Snapshot of Looking for Lincoln Communities*

There are currently twenty-three Looking for Lincoln communities in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage area. Looking for Lincoln communities include:

- Alton
- Atlanta
- Beardstown
- Champaign County
- Coles County
- Decatur
- DeWitt County
- Galesburg
- Hancock County
- Jacksonville
- Lincoln
- McLean County
- Metamora
- Mt. Pulaski
- Petersburg
- Pleasant Plains
- Pike County
- Quincy
- Shelby County
- Springfield
- Taylorville
- Vandalia
- Vermillion County



Of the twenty-three Looking for Lincoln (LFL) communities, seventeen of the communities have active LFL working groups. During FY2015 the ALNHA Steering Council approved the community of Atlanta as a LFL Community and the LFL staff continued working with the emerging LFL community of Edgar County. Looking for Lincoln staff continues working to re-engage existing LFL communities and establish LFL working groups.

*Community denotes an individual community or a county that works collectively.



FY2015 Snapshot of In-kind Match

Looking for Lincoln Heritage Area wide In-kind Match: \$150,775.55

(The above in-kind match was collected from ALNHA Steering Council Meetings, ad hoc committee meetings, grants, workshops, and other heritage area wide projects.)

In-kind Match from Looking for Lincoln Communities: \$249,980.97

(LFL working group meetings, volunteer time and donated goods & materials for projects and programs that fit within the goals of the ALNHA)

Total FY2015 In-kind Match: \$400,756.52

FY2015 Projects that Benefitted the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area as a Whole

- **Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Interpretive Plan.** The purpose of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area interpretive plan is to assist and guide Looking for Lincoln Communities as they enhance and develop the stories of Lincoln's life and times. Part one of the interpretive plan outlines the framework for telling stories in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Part two serves as a step-by-step guide for communities to create effective interpretation of their national, cultural, and historical resources. Part three provides the basic steps for marketing the stories and experiences available in the communities. It is the communities' unique stories that drive heritage tourism, economic development, and foster a strong community identity.
- **Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Marketing.**
In 2015, Looking for Lincoln implemented a fully integrated strategic marketing program for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Through a combination of NPS funds, marketing grant funds from the State of Illinois – Office of Tourism, and a Google grant for SEM services, we were able to establish a consistent brand identity for marketing, and implement a multi-faceted program that included online, print, video and public relations programs to build awareness of the National Heritage Area and began establishing it as a viable travel destination for visitors – both domestic and international.

Efforts included print advertising, web site development, online digital prospecting and retargeting campaign, Facebook sweepstakes, visitor guide publication, production of a promotional video, development of an ALNHA Experience Travelogue through Brand USA and press outreach for a variety of events and programs throughout the Heritage Area.

Results generated strong website traffic, generated nearly 17,000 requests for information, nearly 4 million impressions and over 10,000 click thrus.

- **Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Signage.** Looking for Lincoln staff is working in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Transportation to have signage placed along major highways that make travelers aware of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.



- ***Bring a Lincoln to Your Community grant program.*** This program provided funds for nine Looking for Lincoln Communities to bring a Lincoln actor to their community to enhance existing or special community events or programs. Collectively Looking for Lincoln invested a total of \$5,348.43 and the communities leveraged \$81,451.11 reaching 13,317 visitors. The Lincoln actors were used for both formal and informal educational programs in the communities including: Civil War reenactments, reenactments of speeches, special programs, and informal conversations with visitors.
- ***L.E.A.D.: Lincoln's Path to Leadership.*** Looking for Lincoln in partnership with the Spirit of Lincoln Youth Initiative, the National Park Service – Lincolns Home, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Illinois College, and Union Pacific is developing a youth leadership program, L.E.A.D.: Lincoln's Path to Leadership. L.E.A.D. is a FREE, one week residential youth leadership program for emerging leaders who have completed 7th grade at the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

The purpose of the Looking for Lincoln Youth Leadership Conference is to provide an opportunity for youth to learn about the character qualities of a leader by examining Abraham Lincoln's life, his ideals, his character and his leadership capabilities through immersive experiences in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. The inaugural L.E.A.D. program will be held from Sunday, June 5 to Friday, June 10, 2016 at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois.

- ***Looking for Lincoln in Illinois Book Series.*** The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area in collaboration with Southern Illinois University Press is publishing a book series entitled *Looking for Lincoln in Illinois*. The first two books in the series, *Lincoln's Springfield* and *Lincoln and Mormon Country*, were published this year. The purpose of the *Looking for Lincoln in Illinois* Book Series is to tell the story of the distinctive role the region known as the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area played in shaping the man who became the 16th President of the United States.

The stories in the first two books are drawn from more than two hundred illustrated wayside exhibits across fifty-two communities in Illinois. *Lincoln's Springfield* contains fifty stories about Abraham Lincoln and his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. *Lincoln and Mormon Country* tells more than thirty fascinating and surprising stories that show how the lives of Lincoln and the Mormons intersected. The third book in the series, *Lincoln and the Eighth Judicial Circuit*, is scheduled to be published in 2017.

- ***Looking for Lincoln Community Designation Program.*** In FY2015 Looking for Lincoln implemented the Looking for Lincoln community designation program developed last year. The first community to undergo the designation process was Atlanta, Illinois. The community was accepted as a Looking for Lincoln Community at the April 17, 2015 Steering Council Meeting. In addition, Looking for Lincoln staff worked with the community of Paris, Illinois moving them forward in the community designation process. Staff also provided several communities within the ALNHA information about the community designation program.



- **Looking for Lincoln Community Self-Assessments.** This past year all Looking for Lincoln Communities were asked to undergo a Looking for Lincoln Community Self-Assessment. The self-assessment was developed last year as part of the community designation program by an adhoc committee of the ALNHA Steering Council. The LFL Community Self-Assessment provides the LFL working group with a starting point for developing and/or reexamining goals for their community. The self-assessment illustrates the community's strengths and challenges and gives them a foundation for building and expanding the community's unique Lincoln story(s) and promoting economic development through heritage tourism.
- **Looking for Lincoln Signature Events.** Looking for Lincoln staff worked with an adhoc committee of the ALNHA Steering Council to develop a process and criteria for designating Looking for Lincoln Signature Events. The purpose of the LFL Signature Event program is to promote heritage tourism within the ALNHA by recognizing outstanding events that are representative of the Looking for Lincoln brand. The primary focus of these events is to promote the education and interpretation of the life & times of Abraham Lincoln while providing a high level of visitor services.

Four events were designated LFL Signature Events during the pilot year of the program: Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington, History Comes Alive-Springfield, Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment-Pike County, and Lincoln's Trial & Tribulations- Coles County. Collectively, LFL invested \$15,012, the communities leveraged \$139,783.84 in cash and in-kind goods and services, and a total of 108,010 visitors were reached.

Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington was held on July 17-19, 2015 in Bloomington, Illinois. The Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington is an annual event that celebrates Abraham Lincoln's connection to Bloomington Normal and its surrounding communities. Through Civil War reenactments, tours of historic sites, lectures, and theatrical, cultural, and musical presentations, the Festival's mission is to entertain and engage audiences as well as to promote historic downtown Bloomington as a destination. This event is a collaborative effort between various local entities to tell the local Lincoln story. The event received \$2,750 in funding from Looking for Lincoln and matched this with \$53, 923.56 in donated materials and volunteer time reaching 5,300 visitors.

History Comes Alive was held from June 9-August 8, 2015 in Springfield, Illinois. History Comes Alive is a daily living history program offered free-of-charge to visitors at the key Lincoln sites in Springfield and throughout the downtown area. In addition to driving visitors to the various Lincoln sites, the program was also designed to bring the HCA program into the downtown shops and restaurants as a business-driver within the historic downtown area. The event received \$4,762 in funding from Looking for Lincoln and matched this with \$61,231.50 in donated materials and volunteer time reaching 100,000 visitors.

Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment was held on June 6-7, 2015 at Lake Pittsfield in Pike County. This living history event promotes the life and times of Abraham Lincoln through a Civil



War encampment and battle, demonstrations, period music, and interpretive programming. The event received \$2,750 in funding from Looking for Lincoln and matched this with \$13,916.36 in donated materials and volunteer time reaching 1,600 visitors.

Lincoln's Trial & Tribulations with supplementary county-wide programming was held on August 29, September 19 and October 3, 2015 in Coles County. Lincoln's Trial & Tribulations is a dinner theater presentation held in Oakland about the 1847 Matson Slave Trial, the only trial in which Lincoln represented a slave owner. Additional programming took place in several other communities in Coles county including: Lerna, Charleston, and Mattoon. The event received \$2,000 in funding from Looking for Lincoln and matched this with \$10,712.42 in volunteer time reaching 1,110 visitors.

- **Looking for Lincoln at the 2015 IL State Fair.** Looking for Lincoln brought history to life at the Illinois State Fair from Friday, August 14th to Sunday, August 23rd, 2015 in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Arts Council, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, reenacting groups, Looking for Lincoln Communities and countless volunteers. Over 400 volunteers participated with thirteen different Looking for Lincoln communities represented from throughout the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area during the ten day event.

Visitors to the area had an opportunity to interact with Abraham Lincoln, participate in period games, visit with Civil War and living history re-enactors, build with Lincoln Logs, watch period demonstrations, hear period music, drill with USCT Civil War reenactors and learn about all the sites and activities in the National Heritage Area to visit. Together, we created awareness of the National Heritage Area at the Illinois State Fair.

- **Looking for Lincoln Wayside Program.** An adhoc committee of the Looking for Lincoln Steering Council was formed to address the impending warranty expiration on the majority of Looking for Lincoln waysides in 2018 and 2019. The adhoc committee developed a handout with information relating to care and maintenance, warranty information, and action steps for Looking for Lincoln working groups. A plan is in development to determine the condition of signage and begin replacement of damaged or faded signs prior to the warranty expiration.
- **Tweeting Lincoln's Last Days.** Looking for Lincoln created a Twitter reenactment to chronicle the last days of Abraham Lincoln's life, his assassination, and funeral. This captivating story was told through the eyes of Eliza Stavely, a fictional journalist in Washington, D. C. The idea behind the project was to capture how a 19th century woman might have used the power of 21st Century social media to tell the world what was happening around her. Eliza's "live" feeds were based on actual events taken from first-hand accounts, newspapers, letters, biographies, and scholarly books.

By using Twitter to tell this important story, Looking for Lincoln engaged new audiences in the discussions surrounding Lincoln's life, death, and his legacy to the nation and encourage them to visit and experience the rich Lincoln history throughout the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area in Illinois. The project culminated with nearly 1,000 followers on the Twitter account.



FY2015 Looking for Lincoln Community Accomplishments

- Alton planned a Lincoln Funeral Commemoration Event - October 15 (Alton)
- Alton hosted five Living History Tours along our trail for motor coaches. (Alton)
- Atlanta became a Looking for Lincoln Community (Atlanta)
- Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington was designated as a LFL Signature Event by Looking for Lincoln. (The 2015 event included Civil War Days, Bloomington Library programs, Encounters with Lincoln's Bloomington, McLean County Museum of History programs, and programs at Franklin Park and the Ames Library lawn.) (McLean County)
- Barn Quilt Heritage Trail (McLean County)
- Lincoln Funeral Train at Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum, Charleston (Coles County)
- Lincoln's Trial & Tribulations was designated a LFL Signature Event with county-wide supplemental programming. (Coles County)
- Replacement of wayside exhibits (Decatur)
- Updated brochure with map of Decatur Looking for Lincoln waysides and distributed to hotels and attractions. (Decatur)
- Lecture and Book Signing featuring Michael Burlingame, Robert Shaw and John Warner IV held on March 2, 2015. (DeWitt County)
- "Remembering Lincoln" play held on April 17 & 18, 2015 - A play written by Helen Stites to commemorate the death of President Lincoln. (DeWitt County)
- 3rd Annual Thanksgiving Dinner featuring Randall Duncan portraying President Abraham Lincoln to be held on Thursday, November 12, 2015 (DeWitt County)
- Hosted Lincoln in Hancock County for two programs. A program in April 2015 celebrating the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War at the Kibbe Museum in Carthage and a program with Lincoln in Nauvoo during the Nauvoo Pageant. (Hancock County)
- Replaced two deteriorated wayside exhibits in Jacksonville (Jacksonville)
- LFL Working Group began meeting regularly (Jacksonville)
- Lincoln Heritage Museum hosted an event celebrating Logan County's heritage with living history and rare exhibits to raise funds for the Mt. Pulaski and Postville Courthouses. (Lincoln)
- The Lincoln Heritage Museum hosted an event, A National Mourns, April 15, 1865 by the Logan County Genealogical & Historical Society on Sunday, April 12, 2015. (Lincoln)
- The 2015 Lincoln Colloquium was held at the Lincoln Heritage Museum in Lincoln, Illinois on October 2&3. The theme of the colloquium was "The Better Angels of Our Nature: the Influential Legacy & Character of Abraham Lincoln." (Lincoln)
- The Abraham Lincoln National Rail-Splitter Festival was held in Lincoln at the Logan County Fairground on September 18-20, 2015. (Lincoln)
- Increased community activities involving the Mount Pulaski Courthouse (Mount Pulaski)
- Raised over \$15,000 to help support the Mount Pulaski Courthouse (Mount Pulaski)
- Became engaged with two other tourism organizations (Mount Pulaski)
- Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment (Pike County)
- Instituted Education program for children for Public, Private schools as well as day care centers. (Pleasant Plains)



- Began rebuilding the "Whig" building for an education center and construction of the "Clayville School" which existed at Clayville in the early 1800s. Logs from the historic Jesse Gumm cabin. The logs were found at the site in 2009. (Pleasant Plains)
- Relocation of The History Museum from the Parsonage to the Old Public Library on the Square with additional Lincoln life & times exhibits, including a permanent Mormon Historic Sites Foundation exhibit about the 1838-39 LDS refuge experience. (Quincy)
- "Quincy Mourns Lincoln: Now He Belongs to the Ages" - commemoration of 150th anniversary of Lincoln's death with announcement by historic bell rung in 1865, public "viewing" of representation of Lincoln/life mask in replica of Lincoln coffin, honorary period cortege, and program about how Quincy responded to the news. (Quincy)
- Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War nationwide traveling exhibition, presentation by Lincoln scholar Frank J. Williams, and subsequent panel discussion about Lincoln's Constitutional Legacy featuring local college/university faculty. (Quincy)
- Replacement of three wayside exhibit panels. (Shelby County)
- Minipark renovation installation of Lincoln's court cases exhibit (Shelby County)
- City renovation of sidewalks and installation of the Traveling the Circuit exhibit (Shelby County)
- Participation in Vermilion County Museum's 50th anniversary celebration, spotlighting the Lincoln and Fithian connection. (Vermilion County)
- Pioneer Cemetery Maintenance (Vermilion County)
- Local area Lincoln Birthday card contest (Vermilion County)

FY2015 Looking for Lincoln Community Challenges

The greatest challenges identified by Looking for Lincoln Communities in FY2015 were:

- Changes to leadership and working group composition
- Focusing the working group for greatest impact in the community
- Recruiting new volunteers, members and board members in order to expand the number of organizations participating in our working group and enhance the group's chances for success.
- Developing an operational structure for the LFL Working Group
- Lack of funding/Fundraising
- Collaborating with community members and other stakeholders on programming and promotion.
- Lack of time to devote to Looking for Lincoln
- The most significant challenge our group has faced this year has been the State of Illinois taking a step back from their commitment to preserve the history and heritage of not only our historic site, but of the whole state of Illinois
- Volunteer tracking
- Establishing communities as tourism sites



Training Opportunities Requested by Looking for Lincoln Communities

- Interpretive Training/Techniques (tours, storytelling, living history, activities for children)
- A "mapping" session for working group members and a wider community representation to help visualize and develop a common strategy to accomplish the objectives in our action plan.
- Intro workshop about volunteering as a LFL Working Group member
- Leadership training for LFL Working Groups
- Visitor Preparedness/Guest Services
- Fundraising, Institutional, and Membership development for community working groups