

# Enjoying the Byway

# Boom or Bust Byway Bossier Parish

# Plain Dealing Kiosk

Byway travelers tend to be wanderers, easily enticed into side trips. Mileage end to end of the Boom or Bust Byway is about 130 miles. A purposeful trip, with stops at the byway's kiosks in (Vivian, Plain Dealing, Sarepta, and Homer) might take six hours. If you decide to fully enjoy the byway, plan at least a full day.

This GPS-driven tour can be downloaded onto the user's smartphone by searching for the free "N LA Byways" app in the iTunes Store or Google Play for Android. Travelers without a smartphone can check out a handheld device called a GPS Ranger® to experience the video tour. Both the free app and the GPS Ranger® show travelers their position on a map, while revealing the history and culture of communities along the Boom or Bust Byway. GPS Ranger® devices can be checked out from and returned to the following locations:

- **Louisiana Welcome Center at Greenwood**  
– 9945 I-20 W., Greenwood
- **Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau**  
– 629 Spring Street, Shreveport
- **Lake Claiborne State Park**  
– 225 State Park Road, Homer
- **Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
– 601 Constitution Drive, West Monroe
- **Louisiana Welcome Center at Mound**  
– 836 I-20 W., Tallulah

For more information about the area and byways please visit these sites: [www.shreveport-bossier.org](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org)  
[www.shreveportbossierfunguide.com](http://www.shreveportbossierfunguide.com)  
[www.boomorbustbyway.com](http://www.boomorbustbyway.com)

Get a sneak peak of the Boom or Bust Byway. A video tour of the Boom or Bust Byway is an excellent way to make the most of your visit. These videos are divided into segments so you can see as many or as few as you wish.

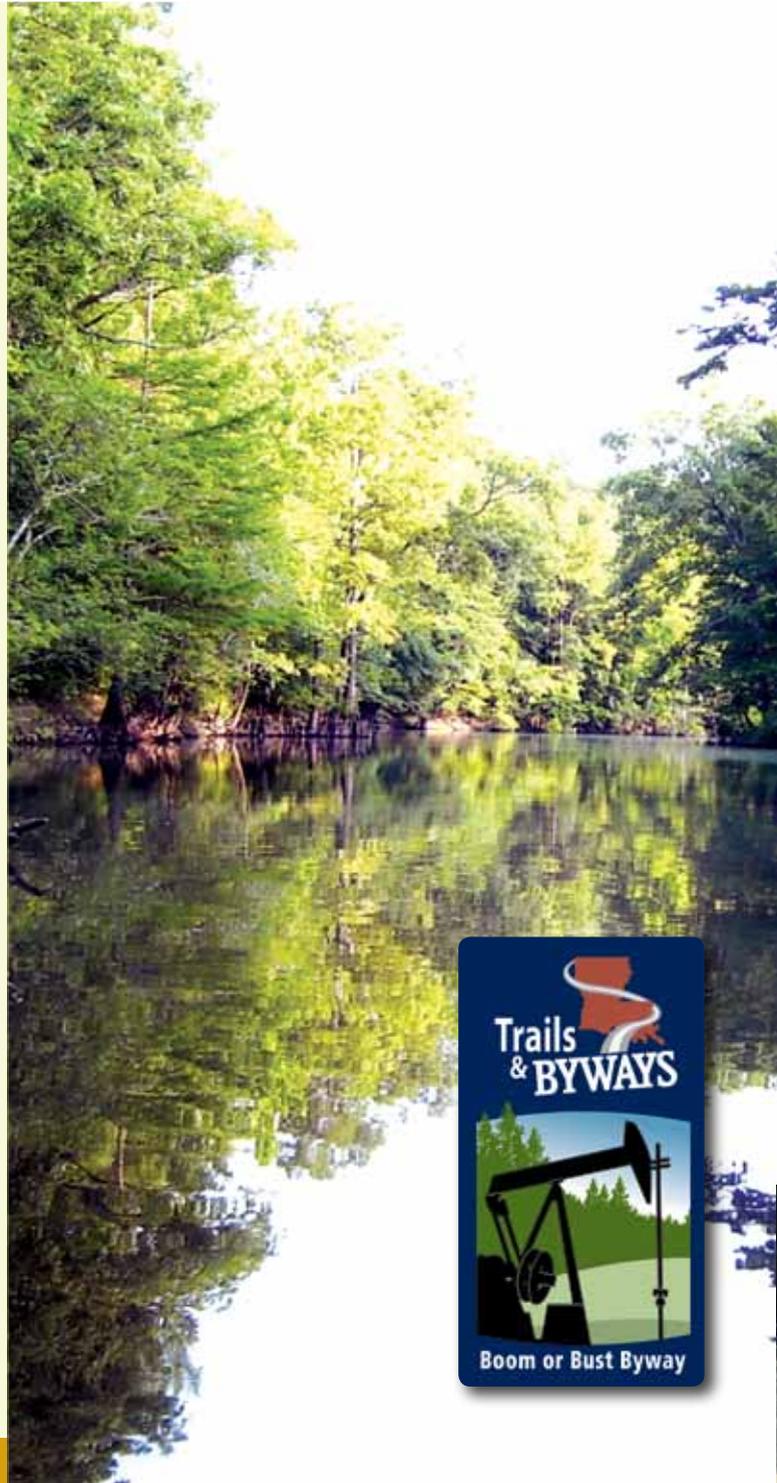


iPhone NLA Byways

Scan this QR code to download a free App.



Android NLA Byways

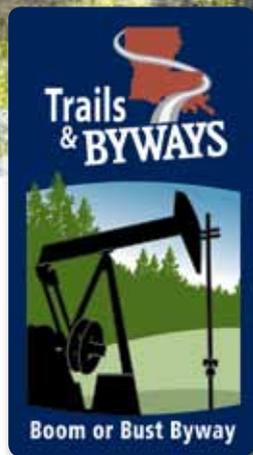


The Red River, local lakes, and bayous have been just as important to the well being of northwest Louisiana as underground pools of oil, piney forests, and iron tracks of railroads, and equally interconnected.

On its way to join the Mississippi River, the Red River drains nearly 170,000 acres of land. So, when downed trees and debris created a massive barrier that blocked the flow of all that water, the so-called Great Raft flooded hundreds of acres in northwest Louisiana forcing water into Caddo Lake, Bayou Bodcau, Lake Bistineau, Bayou Dorcheat, and connected bodies of water.

Caddo Indians prospered off the lake and surrounding uplands. European hunters and trappers lived off the birds and furbearing animals attracted to water. Outlaws hid in mossy lairs among the twists and turns of shady bayous. For decades, during the mid-19th century, steamboats and ferries shuttled passengers and cargo from landing to landing.

Then, in the 1870s, a Herculean, multi-year effort cut through the Great Raft and the Red River regained its powerful, down-stream flow. As lake and bayou water levels dropped inch by inch, the local age of shallow draft steamboats literally ran aground.



# BOSSIER PARISH BOSSIER PARISH BOSSIER PARISH

Welcome to the Boom or Bust Byway! Most people know about Louisiana's rich Cajun, Creole and French heritage and culture, but along the Boom or Bust Byway you will experience "Louisiana's Other Side."

As part of Louisiana's French legacy, counties are called "parishes" and the Napoleonic Code (rather than Common Law) holds sway in the state's courtrooms.

You'll drive along roads lined with colorful wildflowers, past bayous, plantations, forests, and rich productive farmland. You'll pass well-kept churches reflecting the Protestant faith of most 19th century settlers. Here in Shreveport-Bossier: Louisiana's Other Side you can feast on local favorites such as fried chicken, catfish, or chicken fried steak with green beans, okra, sweet potatoes, and cornbread.

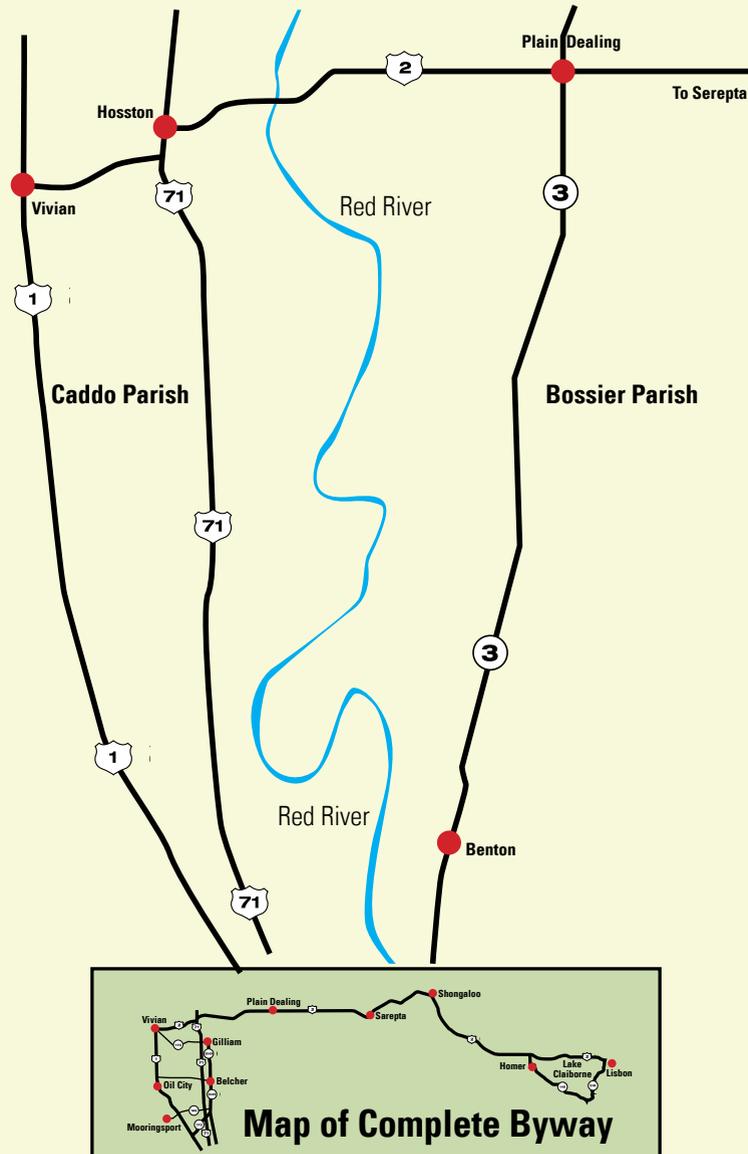
Why is it called the Boom or Bust Byway? As you drive along the byway you will see evidence of the economic booms and busts experienced by the resilient people of Northwest Louisiana. You'll see graveyards of old oil field equipment that died when the oil industry went bust.

And, if you pass through Shreveport-Bossier you'll see the new booming industry – gaming! Six casinos can be found along the banks of the Red River. Maybe it is fitting that gaming is now the latest booming industry in Northwest Louisiana, because folks here have been gambling for years...gambling on the steady supply and demand for oil and gas,...gambling that once a forest is cut, it will grow back again,...and gambling that Louisiana soil will bring forth an abundant crop in spite of droughts and floods.



## ATTRACTIONS in Benton, LA

The 1845 Hughes Home, 1884 Heath Log Cabin and 1900s one room school, which was relocated from Rocky Mount, LA are a must see.



## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

### *Benton on the Square Heritage Village*

414 Sibley St., Benton, LA. Group tours welcome by appointment. 318-965-0798.

### *Flea Market*

First Saturday in May at Community Center, Plain Dealing, LA.

### *Old Fashioned Trapshoot*

Fourth Saturday in August. One mile out of Plain Dealing, LA on Hwy. 157.

### *Christmas in Plain Dealing Festival*

First Saturday after Thanksgiving, Plain Dealing, LA.

### *Benton Christmas on the Square Festival & Parade*

Second Saturday in December, Benton, LA. 10 am - 5 pm.

## Plain Dealing and Points Along the Byway



### Points of Interest:

- Bossier Parish Branch Library with historic section
- Ornate churches
- Several early 1900s old homes
- Mural on side of building next to drugstore

Between Plain Dealing and Serepta travel through rolling hills, pastures, horse farms and visit Bayou Bodcau (Wildlife Management Area) scenic body of water with boat launch.

The community of Plain Dealing, for a short time, was known as Guernshein. The name was soon changed to Plain Dealing by the Gilmer family who located to the area from Virginia where they had a plantation named Plain Dealing Plantation.

Late 1870s, Mr. S.J. Ziegler, a business man, proposed a railroad line of St. Louis Southwestern railway from Lewisville, Arkansas to Shreveport, Louisiana. A town was needed, Plain Dealing, to serve the north Bossier area along the Cotton Belt railroad. It was instrumental for mail delivery and exporting and importing goods from North Bossier to other markets.



Most original stores on main street (Palmetto Street) are occupied by businesses today. Churches of almost every denomination sprang up and are located in the downtown and outlying area. The Plain Dealing Cemetery, located approximately 1 mile north on LA Hwy. 157, was established by the Gilmer Family.

On February 6, 1933, Charlie Frazier's notorious gang robbed the Plain Dealing First State Bank. The complete gang was captured, with Frazier being the last after swimming across the Red River into Caddo Parish.

The upper West Fork Bayou watershed created three lakes approximately a half mile north of Plain Dealing. One is Lake Dogwood, used for flood control, fish and wildlife. Another is Lake Plain Dealing, which is used for potential municipal and industrial use, picnicking, boating, swimming, water skiing and fishing. The third lake, Cypress Bayou Number Three is used for flood control only.

Numerous sawmills were in the surrounding area of Plain Dealing. Bolinger Timber Company owned and operated a large sawmill in Bolinger, three miles north of Plain Dealing. The Johnsons operated another mill at Antrim, approximately two miles south of Plain Dealing.

Cotton was the primary crop in earlier days; corn and soybeans the leading crops today. An area on the LA Hwy. 537 loop was known as Wardview, which had a cotton gin as well as three stores that supplied groceries and hardware to the farmers and workers.



Traveling east on LA Hwy. 537, Ridge Road, is well known for its abundance of Dogwood blossoms in April.

Approximately seven miles south from Plain Dealing on LA Hwy. 3, is the Rocky Mount area, known for housing the Confederate headquarters during the Civil War. The headquarters were later known as the Hughes Home, which has been moved to Benton, LA.

Hunting and fishing the woodlands and waterways are the major pastimes along this stretch of byway.

All along the byway red crimson clover is abundant, with several species of wild flowers and flowering trees, such as Dogwood and Crape myrtles.