



A National Scenic Byway

January 2024

Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Newsletter

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BARBERVILLE YARD ART IS A LANDMARK ALONG THE BYWAY

By Georgia Turner, West Volusia Tourism

"What IS this place?" visitors often ask when they drive just west of the intersection of State Road 40 and US Highway 17, along the Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway.



Welcome to Barberville Yard Art Emporium, a true "Old Florida" roadside landmark for more than 30 years, located in between Daytona Beach and the Ocala National Forest. If you don't

stop the first time you pass the 20-foot giraffe, the chubby Big Boy or a mini Statue of Liberty, chances are you will on another trip. The owners estimate there are between 700,000 and 800,000 pieces of one-of-a-kind pieces of ornamental art found inside and outside at the three-acre attraction.

You'll find everything from recycled cast aluminum statuary to metal mailboxes to rustic teakwood furniture to local honey. There are



hundreds of Talavera Mexican pottery pieces in various shapes and sizes, as well a video in one area that tells of how Haitian artisans turn reclaimed oil drums into the colorful wall hangings and trinkets that adorn the Emporium. Plan to stay at least an hour or more to explore the vast number of displays. Open 9 am to 6 pm every day. For more information, call 386-749-3562 or visit www.barbervilleroadside.com

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN.....Jim Thorsen

Wow, 2024 has arrived!! Our Byway will be on its 16th year. We hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and a very Happy New Year! This past year we had numerous accomplishments and I will list a few:

- Our grant from West Volusia Tourism and Advertising thority was significant in producing new brochures and updated website.
- United Southern Bank’s donation provided promotional products for our Byway with Florida Black Bear hats, shirts and tote bags. These items are very popular at the festivals that we participated in.
- Our kiosk program is an important educational and environmental tool. Currently, we have fifteen in place and all of them have been replaced with new prints.
- From the festivals, we’ve been able to connect with many people who visit our display. There is always a “bear story”!
- Community involvement is a key to accomplishments. We are involved with Lake



County on new trail projects, the Central Fire Tower restoration with the Ocala National Forest and re-opening of the Fort Gates Ferry on the St. Johns River. So, it's been a great year and we plan to continue our mission to provide education to the traveler along the Byway and build a volunteer base. For a New Year resolution, please consider joining our membership and becoming a volunteer to aid in our projects. A trivia fact, The Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway travels through the oldest National Forest east of the Mississippi River. Proclaimed by Teddy Roosevelt in November 1908!!

Jim Thorsen, Chair thor1505@aol.com



Do you know the byway? Be the first to answer our byway question and win a Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Tote Bag.

The Cross Florida Barge Canal was begun in the early 30s. It was viewed by many as a disastrous idea from an environmental standpoint.

What US. President is credited with stopping construction and ending the plan? Email your answer to

tomrose43@gmail.com

Congratulations to Doneda Cole, winner of the last contest. Doneda knew that the Juniper Millhouse was used to generate electricity for the CCC Camp.

Website & Facebook: Learn more about the byway at our website <https://floridablackbearsenicbyway.org/> and Facebook page <https://floridablackbearsenicbyway.org/facebook>

Next Meeting: January 16th
(Tuesday) 2PM at the Pioneer
Settlement in Barberville. FL

Visitors are welcome. Attending a
board meeting is a great way to
learn more about the byway. Please
let us know if you plan to attend.
tomrose43@gmail.com

Our Mission: *To enhance,
encourage and promote the
preservation and protection of the
outstanding natural, ecological,
cultural and historical resources
of the Florida Black Bear Scenic
Byway for its residents,
inhabitants, visitors and future
generations.*



*The Byway Board July 2023 Pioneer Settlement
Barberville, FL*

Officers: Jim Thorsen, Chairman - Kristee Booth, Vice Chair - Cathy Connally,
Treasurer - Nikki Thorsen, Secretary

Editor: Tom Rose **Contact:** tomrose43@gmail.com. Your letters, comments,
suggestions and submissions are welcome.