

ROUTE 66 MUSEUM

Clinton, OK

Scope: Addition/Renovation to Existing
Building 10,800 SF

This small museum in Clinton, in the heart of Oklahoma's wheat belt, celebrates the 2400-mile ribbon of Americana known as Route 66.

Long and linear like the road itself, with green and black vinyl siding, glass block in the lobby and a red neon arrow over the front door, the museum tells the story of America's most famous highway through photographs, artifacts, movies and music.

The Route 66 Museum replaced a dull and redundant western history museum that concentrated on fossils and old farm machinery. Elliott added 5,000 square feet to the original building, including a "Wow Room" focused on a 1966 Corvette convertible. The museum's flat billboard facade and bright neon banding give it appropriate roadside panache, while its low befinned roof resembles the rear end of a 1959 Cadillac Coupe de Ville.

The exhibits are arranged chronologically from the 1920s, when the highway began, to the 1970s, when it finally succumbed to the interstates and lost its designation as a U.S. Highway. Included are a flat bed truck like the one the Joad family drove to California, and a 1950s diner with chrome stools, red vinyl booths and James Dean posters on the walls. The journey ends at a drive-in showing episodes from "I Love Lucy" along with touching home movies that capture the tastes and innocent longings of Middle America before freeways.

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