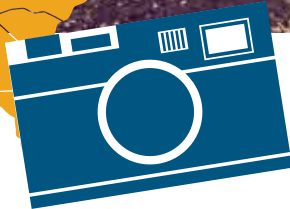


ROAD TRIP

VISITING INDEPENDENTS ON ROUTE 66



**INDEPENDENT
WE STAND**
Powered by **STIHL** and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles **Jeep**


NRHA
North American Retail
Hardware Association



>>>A Local Favorite

While in Oklahoma City, we were told to check out POPS 66, a local soda shop that opened on Route 66. We stopped by one of the two locations to enjoy a nice, cool soda pop. At the location we visited, there is a selection of more than 700 flavors of soda to choose from. We all enjoyed a nice cold drink before heading to our last two stops of the day at Central Power Equipment and Spectrum Paint.

>>>Reflections From Renee

The Great American Route 66 Road Trip officially kicked off on Monday, March 14, but our team, made up of Independent We Stand's co-founder Bill Brunelle, community manager Tara Mazarella, videographer Scott Sonneberg and I, all arrived the day before. In some areas, Oklahoma City felt like going back to the old western days. We met plenty of great small business owners who were excited to show us their communities and what they offered.



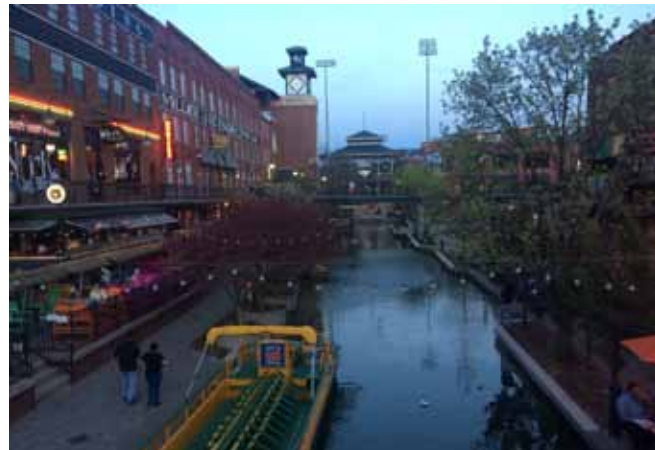
BEST MEAL

We couldn't visit Stockyards City without enjoying a meal at the historic Cattlemen's Steakhouse. It's been open since 1910, serving cowboys, ranchers, cattle haulers and tourists alike. For lunch, I had a delicious filet wrapped in bacon and a potato.



DON'T MISS THIS

When you're in Oklahoma City, you have to visit an area known as Bricktown. Our group ate dinner outside and watched the Bricktown Water Taxi pass by while we enjoyed the spring weather.



DAY ONE

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Amarillo, Texas

Miles traveled: 260

Hotel:

- Colcord Hotel

Independent Stores Visited:

- Richards Car Care Tire Pros
- Bob Moore Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram
- Stockyards City Main Street
- Central Power Equipment
- Spectrum Paint

Food & Entertainment:

- Stockyards Sarsaparilla
- Cattlemen's Steakhouse





>>>The Ultimate Tour

On our second day of the road trip, we met many different business owners and leaders from the Amarillo community. At our first location, Judy Stark, executive vice president of the Panhandle Producers & Royalty Owners Association and a longtime Amarillo resident, welcomed us to town and took us on a proper tour of the city. One of the coolest places we saw was the 6th Street Historic District, which is an area with lots of little boutiques, local antique shops and cool restaurants.

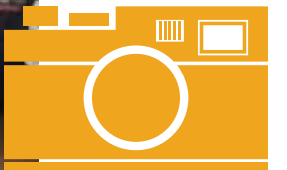
>>>Reflections From Renee

While in Amarillo, Texas, our group got a great taste for the tight-knit community. We met several small business owners who have loyal, longstanding customers and a welcoming attitude. Everywhere we went, we experienced true southern hospitality. For many of the independents we spoke with, their love for their communities was rooted in the fact that they were big cities with a small-town feel.



BEHIND THE SCENES

While in Amarillo, word spread of our Great American Route 66 Road Trip. Bill Brunelle (left) was interviewed by two different local news channels that were excited to spread the word about Independent We Stand and shop-local causes.



CADILLAC RANCH

Everyone told us to visit Cadillac Ranch, a tourist spot off of Route 66. We took a detour to visit the graveyard of classic cars, and I got a photo (below). Truth be told, it was a little underwhelming. But, it made for a cool picture!



DAY TWO

Amarillo, Texas to Albuquerque, New Mexico

Miles traveled: 286 (546 total)

Hotel:

- Amarillo Inn and Suites

Independent Stores Visited:

- Lang Tire & Auto
- Panhandle Producers & Royalty Owners Association
- Proffitt's Lawn and Leisure
- Texas Dodge Dealership

Food & Entertainment:

- La Fiesta
- 6th Street Historic District





>>>Retailers in New Mexico

Before getting to Albuquerque, we made our first stop in Las Vegas, New Mexico, to visit BTU Do it Center. We met Wayne and Shelly Sonchar (previous page), owners of the business since the 1980s. Their business is very involved in the community and utilizes Independent We Stand. Once we arrived in Albuquerque, we visited Raks Building Supply, where we met Kenneth Trujillo at one of his five locations. The business employs 150 people and hosts events to support local charities.



>>>Unique Shops Add Charm

In Albuquerque, we met Carolyn Chavez of the Nob Hill Main Street organization. Nob Hill is a unique neighborhood community within Albuquerque that features many local businesses, like restaurants, hotels, breweries, boutiques and more. One shop we visited in Nob Hill was Izzy Martin Menswear, where we met owner Rufus Cohen and got to check out the store.



>>>Reflections From Renee

By the third day of our road trip, the four of us were starting to feel the effects of hours of driving and interviewing independents. Yet Albuquerque was a very cool area, where shopping local seems to be preferred among consumers. Just looking up and down the Nob Hill area, we saw a majority of spots that were locally owned and operated. The business owners we interacted with were all excited to meet us and share their stories.

>>>Where to Stay

While in Albuquerque, we stayed at the Hiway House Motel, which has been in operation under the same name along Route 66 since it opened its doors in 1958. The motel had a true old-time feel, and the neon sign beckons visitors to stay. When we arrived, they gave each of us a real key to use (rather than a plastic swipe card). After unloading our luggage, the group gathered to grab dinner. We ate at Bistronomy B2B, a local brewery and restaurant that featured burgers, vegetarian fare and tasty pickles.

WHAT A VIEW:

On our way to Albuquerque, we pulled over to check out breathtaking views of the approaching mountains.



DAY THREE

Albuquerque, New Mexico to Flagstaff, Arizona

Miles traveled: 325 (871 total)

Hotel:

- Hiway House Motel

Independent Stores Visited:

- BTU Do it Center
- Izzy Martin Menswear
- Raks Building Supply
- Melloy Dodge
- Alberto's Tire Pros

Food & Entertainment:

- O'Neil's Pub
- Bistronomy B2B



CELEBRATING ST. PADDY'S DAY

We were in Albuquerque the day before St. Patrick's Day, so we had to get our fix of Irish fare. I enjoyed a tasty corned beef sandwich (right) at O'Neil's Pub during lunch.





A SLICE OF PIE

For lunch on Thursday, we wanted to grab a quick bite, and Fratelli Pizza in downtown Flagstaff was the perfect spot. I enjoyed an amazing slice of pesto pizza and a healthy salad.



LOCAL PRIDE

HomCo Lumber & Hardware in Flagstaff was a great example of a business with plenty of community pride. The store even has a mural of the city painted above the entrance.



DAY FOUR

Flagstaff, Arizona to Santa Monica, California

Miles traveled: 480 (1,351 total)

Hotel:

- Southwest Inn at Sedona

Independent Stores Visited:

- HomCo Lumber & Hardware
- AZ Power and Lawn
- Sedona Main Street Organization
- Sedona Paint Center

Food & Entertainment:

- Fratelli Pizza
- Rock & Oak Creek Canyon

>>>HomCo Stands Out

We had quite a drive to get to our first stop at HomCo Lumber & Hardware in Flagstaff, Arizona. Upon our arrival, Christina Russo, marketing coordinator for the business, greeted us and introduced us to Shawn Whitehead, the store manager, and Todd Callan, chief operating officer. We did a quick tour of the business, which was impressive in size. Their merchandising was extremely creative, with a chandelier made out of plungers and a bold display for their YETI products.

>>>Spectacular Views

In both Flagstaff and Sedona, the views kept catching my eye. Coming from of the Midwest, I don't see much more than flat land, so Arizona was a beautiful change of scenery. While we drove from Flagstaff to Sedona, all four of us had our windows rolled down, while we snapped pictures of the breathtaking mountain views. We stopped a few times for photos, and unsurprisingly, we weren't the only ones to have this idea.



>>> Reflections From Renee

On day four, our road trip crew began to dread hopping back into the van. Our stretches of driving were getting longer, but our views kept getting better. Both stops in Arizona reminded me a lot of my experiences in Colorado. While the mountains may be part of the reason, the people were all very laid back and locally proud, which made visiting even more fun. The majority of people we met were community-minded and creative individuals.

>>>Where to Stay

After visiting businesses in Flagstaff, Arizona, we spent the second half of our day in Sedona, Arizona, which is nestled in the middle of the Arizona desert. Our drive through the mountains was stunning. We ended our day at the Southwest Inn at Sedona, which is located beneath Thunder Mountain, Chimney Rock and Coffee Pot Rock. The rooms featured plush towels, comfortable robes, a fireplace and of course, great views.





THAT'S A WRAP

When we got to the Santa Monica Pier, it was so exciting to stand by the Route 66 sign and celebrate our nearly 1,500-mile-long trip. We visited five states in five days, with the mission of celebrating local businesses!



DAY
FIVE

Santa Monica, California

Miles traveled: 1,351

Hotel:

- Bayside Hotel

Independent Stores Visited:

- Route 66 Tire Pros
- Anawalt Lumber
- P.O. Bahn & Sons

Food & Entertainment:

- Islands Fine Burgers & Drinks
- Santa Monica Pier



>>>The Last Leg of the Trip

While we only had three businesses on the agenda, the eight-hour drive ahead of us from Sedona to Santa Monica meant we had to be on the road by 4 a.m. Once we got to California, we drove through a lot of barren stretches of land, but when we arrived to the valley, the scenery became lush and palm trees welcomed us to the beach community and tourist town.

>>> Reflections From Renee

This was my second road trip with Independent We Stand, and I must say, the businesses and people I met along the way reminded me that independent businesses certainly endure. Whether I was speaking with hardware or home improvement store owners or business owners from other industries, I met people with pride in their communities who understand the impact their stores make on their towns.

>>>Where to Stay

For our last night, we stayed at the Bayside Hotel. We did a final video on the Santa Monica Pier to end our filming. Then, the four of us road trippers enjoyed a drink while watching the sun set over the ocean. We then ended our night at a local Mexican restaurant, laughing and reminiscing about the trip.



A STRONG STORE

Anawalt Lumber was the final home improvement store we visited. It was very special to see this business, which survived the Great Depression and has remained in the Anawalt family for 93 years. Owner David Anawalt gave us a tour of the store. It began in a lima bean field and is a prime location today.



CALIFORNIA FUN

While in L.A. and Santa Monica, I enjoyed seeing the lush palm trees and the beautiful beach. Our group was happy to end our trip in this laid-back community.

