

# Preservation efforts continue in McAlester

By **Adrian O'Hanlon III**  
CNHI Oklahoma

McALESTER — Local musician Lee McWaters plucked a bluesy rhythm on the guitar and sounded the harmonica before singing about the history of the Jefferson Highway.

The introduction set the tone Tuesday for a meeting of the Jefferson Highway Association at the Southeast Expo Center in McAlester before the association's president Glenn Smith and Roger Bell explained the vision of highlighting portions of the old highway — which portions of were renamed as U.S. Highway 69 and runs through McAlester.

"We believe it should

be saved; we believe it should be remembered for younger generations," Smith said.

The Jefferson Highway was established in 1915 and named to honor president Thomas Jefferson's "greatest real estate deal in history" for the Louisiana Purchase. The 2,300-mile highway stretches from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, to New Orleans, Louisiana.

Smith and Bell said during the meeting that the highway was constructed by citizens of each town — in addition to some prison labor — in which it was being built and funded in part by donations. Smith talked about the adventures road travelers had on the highway throughout the years. The Jefferson Highway Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to preserve bridges, tourist camp sites, rest stops and other historic markers.

*Adrian O'Hanlon III is the news editor for the McAlester News-Capital.*

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## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Phoenix tries to promptly correct errors. To report an error, please call 684-2900.

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A story on 1A Sunday should have said Runt's Bar-B-Que was to furnish barbecue at the Juneteenth celebration and not Mahylon's.