



Historical Society of Vandalia-Butler

336 East Alkaline Springs Road, P.O. Box 243

Vandalia, OH 45377

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Thank you for attending this historic event.

For information about the Ohio National Road Association, including our upcoming interpretive sign unveilings, please visit our website at www.ohionationalroad.org or contact Melanie Runkel (937) 521-2129.

Become a member and *Join the Journey!*



*Unveiling of the Ohio National Road
Crossroads of America Interpretive Sign*



St. John's Lutheran Church
122 West National Road
Vandalia, Ohio 45377

Friday, July 29, 2011 at 10:00 am



A Brief History of Vandalia, Ohio

In **1811**, construction began at Cumberland, Maryland on the first ten-mile section of the historic National Road, the nation's first federally-funded interstate highway.

In 1838, Vandalia was nothing more than the crossing point of two dirt trails later known as the intersection of National Road (U.S. 40) and Dixie Highway (U.S. 25). Benjamin Wilhelm, a settler from Pennsylvania, was the first to settle in Vandalia when he built a home and a small general store, which served as a stop for travelers as they journeyed westward. This east-west trail began to attract more travelers and entrepreneurs and soon a small settlement began to take shape. The town was incorporated in 1848 as the Village of Vandalia, with Benjamin Wilhelm serving as its first mayor.

In **1911**, a road funded by the Dixie Highway Association had significant impact upon Vandalia. Construction began on a lake-to-the-gulf highway from Detroit to Cincinnati and points further south. The most advantageous route for this highway brought it along the Vandalia north-south dirt trail that had since become known as Troy Pike. This new highway intersected the National Road crowning Vandalia as the "*Crossroads of America*."

By 1959, Vandalia was outgrowing its "village" status, and its citizens voted for a council-manager form of government, effectively making the village into a municipal corporation. On January 1, 1960 Vandalia became a State of Ohio Charter City. By 1960, Vandalia's old "crossroads" was complemented by a new "crossroads" with the construction of Interstates 70 and 75. This interchange was Federally dedicated October 25, 2004 as "Freedom Veteran's Crossroads" with a seven-year, state-of-the-art modernization of the "Crossroads of America" completed November 23, 2009.

In **2011**, the Historical Society of Vandalia-Butler is proud to unveil this Ohio National Road Crossroads of America Interpretive sign on the property of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Unveiling of the Ohio National Road Crossroads of America Interpretive Sign

Friday, July 29, 2011—10:00 am

Speakers:

- **Bill Loy**
City of Vandalia Mayor
- **Joe Dranschak**
Historical Society of Vandalia-Butler President
- **Dean Ringle**
Ohio National Road Association President



A special thanks to the following:

Ohio National Road Association Board, Members, & Staff

City of Vandalia Staff

Tim Garwood and Robert Walker of the

Historical Society of Vandalia-Butler

Phil & June Frantz and Pastor Gil Santiago of

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Mrs. Thelma Karns for the Carl Calvin Karns Memorial Bench

Made by the R. J. Thomas Manufacturing Company