

Fulton Joins Ronald Reagan Trail

The City of Fulton has officially been added to The Ronald Reagan Trail. In 2005, local historian Nancy Kolk began researching Reagan family history and its connection to Fulton. From the research gathered, Heather Bennett (Tourism Director) put together a tri-fold brochure titled, "Fulton's Ronald Reagan Connection." The brochure was very popular for visitors coming to Fulton and visiting the windmill. After several years of promoting Ronald Reagan's connection to Fulton, the Ronald Reagan Trail board agreed Fulton's connection to Reagan was historically significant.

Fulton's connection to the United States President runs deep. The Reagan family plot is located in the former Fulton Catholic cemetery. The President's parents were both born and married in Fulton at the church rectory of Immaculate Conception. In addition, the President's great grandmother and paternal grandparents are all buried in the Reagan Family plot.

The Ronald Reagan Trail was officially designated by the Illinois General Assembly on May 21, 1999. The Ronald Reagan Trail consists of the following Illinois communities: Tampico (birth place), Dixon (boyhood home), Ohio, Princeton, Henry, Chillicothe, Peoria Heights, Washington, Galesburg, Monmouth and Fulton. Each community pays an annual fee of \$0.10/per person based on the community's population. Fulton's commitment will be \$388. As part of the trail, Fulton will be added to all promotions including brochures and a website, <http://www.ronaldreagantrail.net/>. The Ronald Reagan Trail Board meets monthly in Princeton, Illinois. A representative from each community is a member of the board. Fulton resident, Bill Blecha, has agreed to represent Fulton at the monthly board meetings.

The Fulton Chamber of Commerce will also be commemorating Ronald Reagan's connection to Fulton with an Illinois State Historical Marker to be erected in 2011 at the Reagan Family Plot. The marker dedication will coincide with the Ronald Reagan Centennial Celebration planned in 2011 for the State of Illinois. Fulton resident and historian, Nancy Kolk, sits on the Centennial Celebration Planning Committee which meets monthly in Dixon, Illinois. The Fulton Historical Society also has a Ronald Reagan History Room inside the Fulton (Martin House) Museum. For more information on Ronald Reagan's Ancestral connection to Fulton, please visit <http://www.cityoffulton.us/>.