

# Historic trail proposed

## Lafayette's route close to Rt. 143

By JOAN LIVINGSTON  
Staff Writer

CHESTERFIELD — A Stage Road resident says the historic tour through the Hilltowns by a heralded Revolutionary War hero might be one way to promote that area's resources to visitors.

Charles A. Bisbee Jr., a Chesterfield resident, said he would like to see the five towns located along Route 143 adopt it as the Lafayette Trail.

Bisbee said after the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette traveled along a route close to the one that follows Route 143. In fact, during that trip, Lafayette stayed overnight at a Worthington inn.

Route 143, a state-numbered route, runs through Williamsburg, Chesterfield, Worthington, Peru and Hinsdale.

Bisbee said distinguishing Route 143 as the Lafayette Trail would be one way to attract tourists to the Hilltowns' scenic spots and businesses. In addition, said Bisbee, who is president of the Chesterfield Historical Society, new historical museums are being opened in his town and in Worthington.

A former state representative and senator, Bisbee noted that several other routes already have distinctive names for sections that run through western Massachusetts. Part of Route 9, for instance, is called the Berkshire Trail, and part of Route 2 is known as the Mohawk Trail.

Nandor Sala, coordinator of the Hilltown Hospitality Council, said getting Route 143 designated as the Lafayette Trail will likely be one of projects the council, which is made up largely of Hilltown business owners, will undertake. He said the group will have to research the process needed to get that accomplished.

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Sala said giving a route a name helps establish an identity when it comes to marketing an area to tourists. "Anytime you have a name for a road instead of a number, it helps," he said.

During the early 1950s, Bisbee said, a group proposed renaming Route 143 the Lafayette Trail as a way to get the road reconstructed. Though the proposal wasn't carried out, he said, some of the towns may have already endorsed the new name.