

Bion Harmon Piepmeier

April 15, 1885 - December 15, 1974



B.H. Piepmeier was born on April 15 near Appleton City, St. Clair County, Missouri. Little information is available about his early life, but it is known that he graduated from the University of Missouri in 1908 with a civil engineering degree.

He worked for the Illinois State Highway Department from 1908 to 1922, holding a variety of engineering positions

As Maintenance Engineer for the Illinois State Highway Department in 1915 he published Bulletin No. 11, Surface Oiling of Earth Roads, and in 1921, as Engineer of Construction, he published Bulletin No. 16, Manual on Road Construction for Resident Engineers and Inspectors. These documents can be accessed in the Illinois References.

While serving as Maintenance Engineer for Illinois, Piepmeier was the supervisor of Frank T. Sheets, who later became Chief State Highway Engineer for Illinois.

On June 1, 1922, Piepmeier was hired as Chief Engineer of the Missouri Highway Commission, replacing Missouri's first State Highway Engineer, Alexander W. Graham, who had served Missouri from March, 2017, until June 1922.

On April 30, 1926, Piepmeier met with Cyrus Avery of Oklahoma and Oklahoma's Chief Highway Engineer, John M. Page, in Springfield, Missouri, to resolve the issue of assigning a number to the highway from Chicago to Los Angeles. Both Piepmeier and Avery had campaigned to give it the number U.S. 60, to which the state of Kentucky was opposed.

John Page noticed that the number 66 had not been assigned to any route and, when informed of this, Piepmeier and Avery sent a telegram to BPR Chief MacDonald stating that they preferred the number 66 for the route. Kentucky agreed to this designation and the route was subsequently numbered U.S. 66, making Springfield, Missouri, the official birthplace of Route 66.