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**J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway**  
c/o Cathie Parrott  
P.O. Box 1084  
Penney Farms, FL 32709

*Your membership dues are tax deductible.*



The J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway includes three miles of S.R. 16 through the Town of Penney Farms and a loop along local streets of the town, which allow visitors to see landmarks related to the town's two distinctive, historically significant communities - the Penney Retirement Community and New Hope. As you arrive from the east on S.R. 16, a roadside sign marks the beginning of the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway, which is bordered by a thick oak and magnolia tree canopy. Some of these trees date back to the 1920's.

The Town of Penney Farms was incorporated in 1927. The name recalls the vision of James Cash Penney, the nationally recognized retailer and founder of J.C. Penney department stores, to attract farmers to the area and develop a retirement home for church workers in memory of his parents.

Although inhospitable soil conditions and the Depression hastened the demise of J.C. Penney's agricultural effort, the retirement dream lives on, known today as the Penney Retirement Community.

The New Hope community traces its history back to the post Civil War period, which was a time of significant population migration from Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas. These settlers came with a simple dream of a better life. Some African-American families in the area trace their roots to what was known as Long Branch City, before the Town of Penney Farms was incorporated. Some of their descendants still live

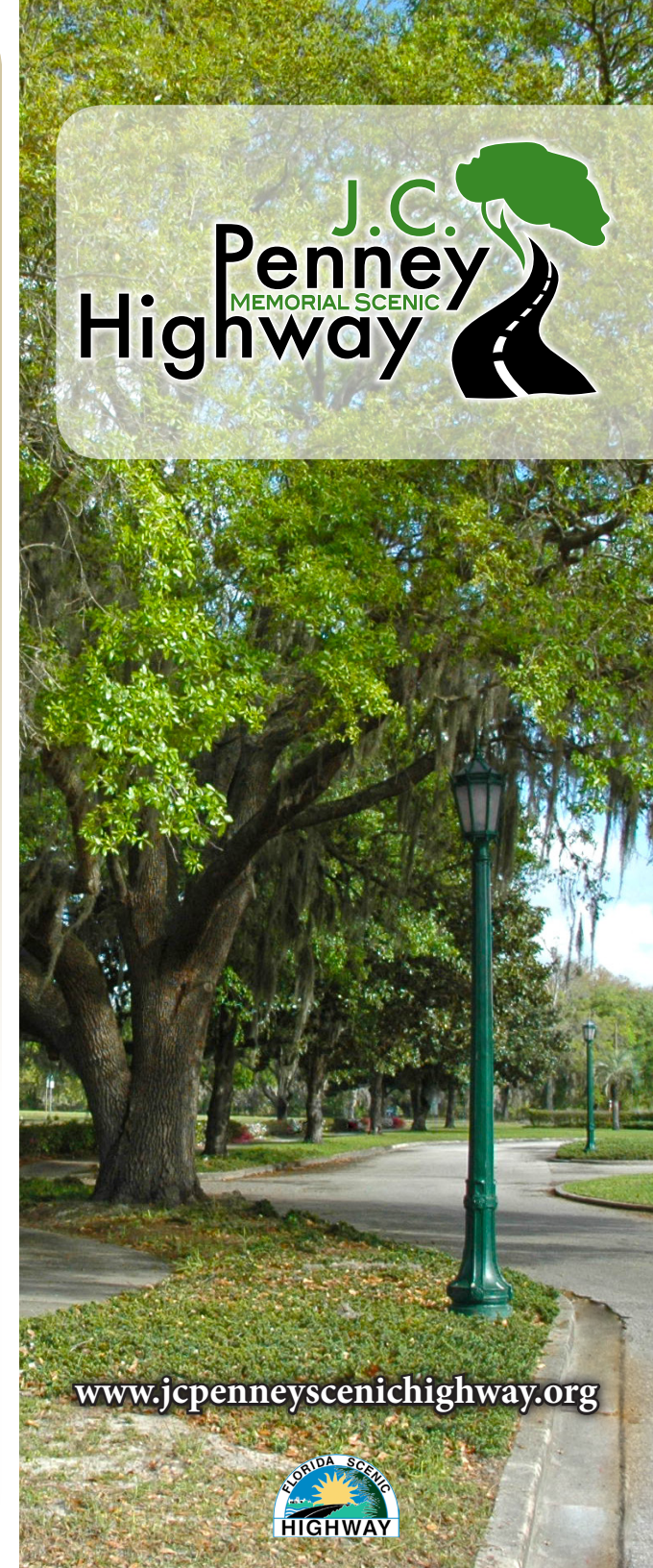
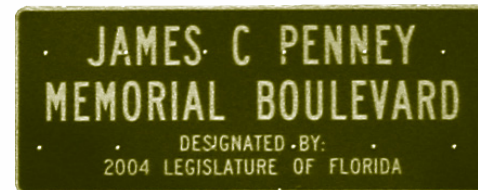
worship in the area of town appropriately named "New Hope," because it was said that the community and church "gave the residents a new hope for the future."

Proceeding west, the golf course and homes with gardens of the Penney Retirement Community section of the town come into view. As you turn onto Poling Boulevard you enter the area designated as a State of Florida Historic District. Of note here are the retirement community's entrance, the beautifully landscaped median, and homes with French Norman style architecture. Further south stands the Gothic-style Penney Memorial Church. Inside the church the beautiful stained glass windows and organ catch the eye. Also inside is the plaque that marks the 1926 dedication of the Memorial Home Community in memory of J.C. Penney's parents.

Outside the church, headed west on Caroline Boulevard, are more retirement community homes and buildings in French Norman style architecture. One block off the Scenic Highway route, on Lewis Avenue, is the 1927 post office.

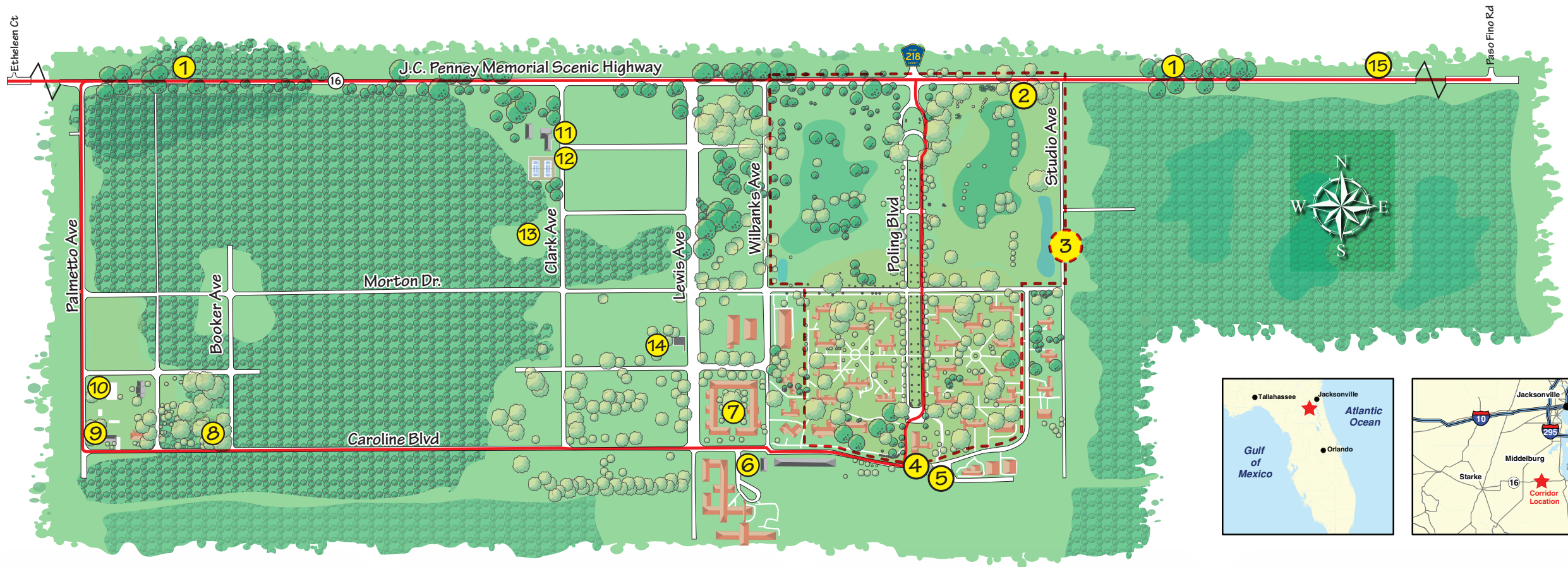
Further west on Caroline Boulevard, lies undeveloped forested land before arriving in the New Hope section of the Town of Penney Farms. The original tenant farmer cottage is on the corner of Caroline Boulevard and Booker Avenue. Turning onto Palmetto Avenue, fields of palmetto plants flank the west side of the roadway, and the New Hope Baptist Church and Penney Farms Recreation Park are on the east, enveloped by oak trees with Spanish moss.

Returning to the S.R. 16 portion of the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway and heading back east through the oak and magnolia canopy, stop to see the many resources along Clark Avenue. These include the statue of J.C. Penney, the town hall Historical Society exhibit of photos and artifacts of the era of J.C. Penney, and the Martina C. Kohler Park.



[www.jcpenneyscenichighway.org](http://www.jcpenneyscenichighway.org)





and

**1. Oak and Magnolia Tree Canopy** – Located along S.R. 16, many of the trees in the tunnel-like green canopy were planted by Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Penney in the early days of Penney Farms.

**2. Town of Penney Farms 1927 Historic Marker** – This marker identifies Penney Farms as a Florida State Landmark.

**3. Memorial Home Community Historic District (National Register, 1999)** - In 1926, J.C. Penney built the Memorial Home Community to honor his parents. This facility was originally dedicated to providing a residence for retired ministers, missionaries, and YMCA workers with few financial resources. In 1971 the Memorial Home Community became self-sustaining and was renamed the Penney Retirement Community.

**4. Penney Memorial Church** - The Penney Memorial

Church was dedicated in 1926, and is today recognized as a building of significance within the designated Historic District. It was an initial gift from J.C. Penney and has been a focal point and central gathering place. The church has an extensive set of beautiful stained glass windows. A plaque inside the church marks the dedication of the Memorial Home Community in memory of Penney’s parents. On the east side of the sanctuary in the church lecture room, there are many pictures of Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Penney, his parents and Reverend Dr. Daniel A. Poling, and Mrs. J.C. Penney. Open daily from 8am to 5pm.

**5. Penney Retirement Community Archives**

**6. Railroad Exhibit** - Open Wednesday from 2pm until 4pm and Saturday mornings.

**7. French Norman style architecture** – J.C. Penney and his wife had traveled to France, and admired the architecture so much that they based

the design of the Penney Memorial Church and the original cottages on the French Norman style.

**8. Tenant Farmer Cottage** – This former dwelling in the New Hope area has been identified as a tenant farmer cottage. Efforts are underway to build a replica of this home along the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway loop.

**9. Penney Farms Recreation Park** - Adjacent to the New Hope Baptist Church, this park includes a playground for children to enjoy and is a good spot for a picnic.

**10. New Hope Missionary Baptist Church** – Originally established in 1920, the New Hope Baptist Church is the central gathering place of the New Hope community. Three white crosses are located on the church grounds, symbolizing the three crosses found at Calvary.

**11. J.C. Penney Statue** – A bronze likeness honors the town’s founder in front of Town Hall.

**12. Historic Society Exhibit** – Currently located within Town Hall, the exhibit includes photos and artifacts from the time of J.C. Penney’s establishment of the town. Open Monday through Friday, 9am until 2pm.

**13. Martina C. Kohler Park** - This passive park has trails, a footbridge and benches. It also has a band shell and a restroom facility. The adjacent municipal tennis courts may be used by visitors.

**14. U.S. Post Office** - Originally built in 1927, the Post Office continues to operate, and is located just one block from Caroline Boulevard.

**15. James C. Penney Memorial Boulevard Sign** – This sign denotes the designation of S.R. 16 within the Penney Farms Town limits in 2004 by the legislature of Florida.