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Iowa's Roller Coaster Roads

Text and Photography by Brian Abeling

In Allamakee County, this route is actually called Roller Coaster Road.

This past fall, while I was out exploring in northeast Iowa and rural Allamakee County, I ran across a gravel road called Roller Coaster Road. With a name like that, you have to stop. From the north end of the road looking south, there's a vantage point showing seven peaks. It makes you wonder why anyone even considers calling Iowa flat.

After visiting Roller Coaster Road in Allamakee County, I took to Google in search of any other roads with similar names, and it turns out there's also a Roller Coaster Road in Dubuque County. Since then, I've visited and photographed numerous locations with similar terrain across the state. Here are some of the views I captured.

A word of caution: I've heard from many first responders regarding these locations. They are some of Iowa's most beautiful and dangerous roadways — regardless of weather. In fact, there's an assumption that you'll be fine on these roads during good weather. The truth: You can't see what's coming over these hills and it's easy to lose control of your vehicle going over the peaks, so please be cautious!

In Dubuque County, Oakland Farms Road offers a view that most RAGBRAI cyclists would dread.

Dubuque County has its own official Roller Coaster Road.
The rolling hills are ideal for fall foliage-viewing drives.



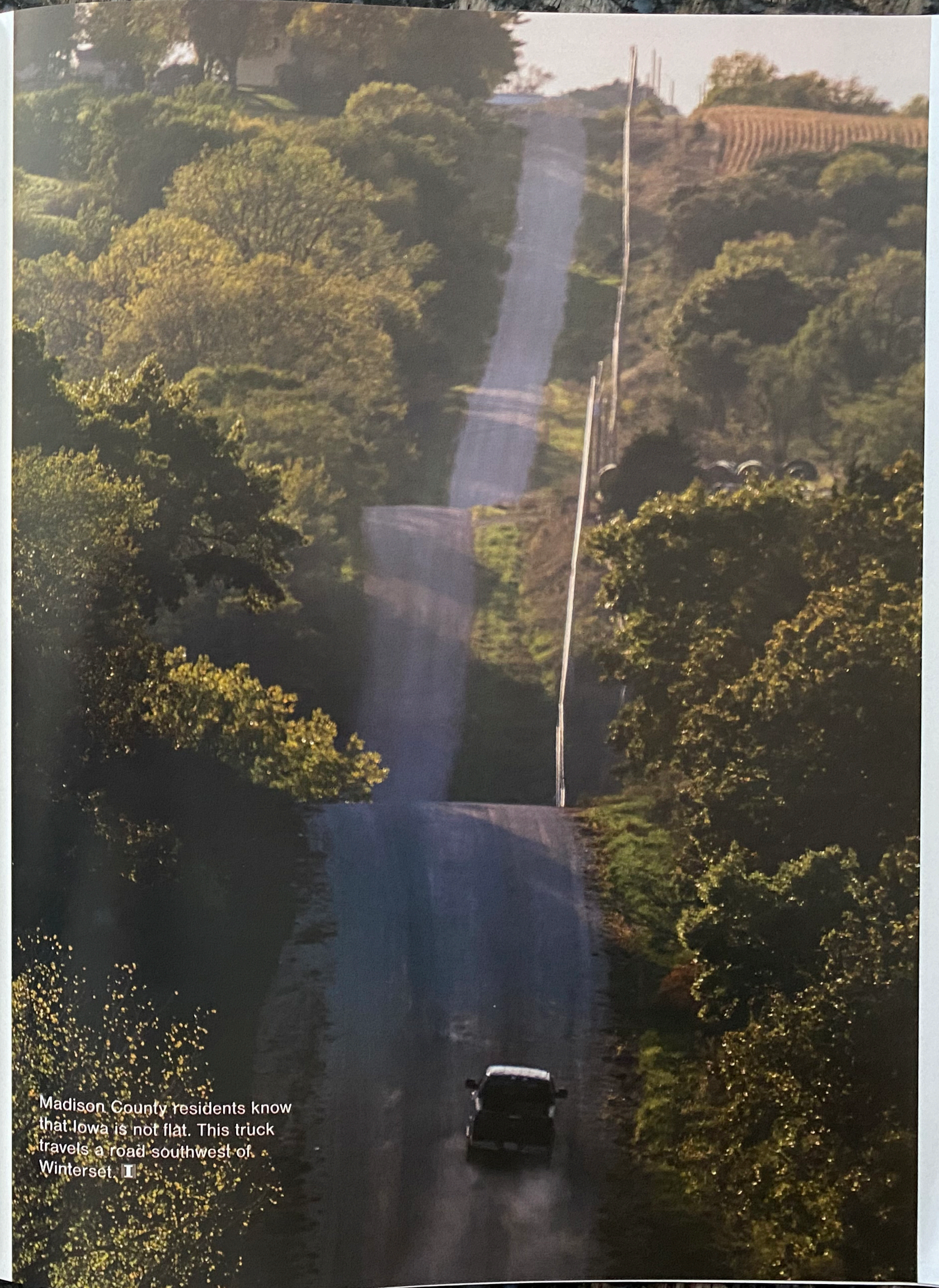


In Allamakee County, the street sign says it all.

Iowa Roller Coaster Road List

After I posted a photo of Allamakee County's Roller Coaster Road on Facebook, Iowans quickly responded with their favorite local equivalents. This isn't a comprehensive list. If you're aware of another great Iowa road that compares, email it to editor@iowan.com. — *Brian Abeling*

- Roller Coaster Road, north of Waterville, Allamakee County
- Roller Coaster Road, south of Epworth, Dubuque County
- Oakland Farms Road, southwest of Dubuque, Dubuque County
- 260th Street (also known as Rippey Dumps), southwest of Winterset, Madison County
- 7 Hills Road, west of Coggon, Linn County
- Page Avenue, Cornelia, Wright County
- Popcorn Road, southwest of Le Roy, Decatur County
- M Avenue, north of Denison, Crawford County



Madison County residents know that Iowa is not flat. This truck travels a road southwest of Winterset. **I**