State Route 77
Tucson to Oracle Junction to Globe Highway and Show Low to Holbrook Highway

Location: Globe, Holbrook, Tucson District; Navajo, Pima, Pinal County
Length: 148 miles
Begins: Oracle Junction (MP 68.1)
Ends: Holbrook (MP 388.67)

Contemporary State Route 77 (SR 77) is a north-south route in east-central Arizona. The southern segment runs between Oracle Junction and US 70, east of Globe and passes through one of Arizona’s most important mining districts. The northern segment connects the White Mountain town of Show Low to the railroad town of Holbrook along modern Interstate 40 and then north to the boundary of the Navajo Indian Reservation. In between these two segments, SR 77 follows the same path of US 60 between Globe and Show Low. The oldest highway segments were Territorial-period roads between Show Low and Globe and Oracle Junction and Globe.

SR 77 from Holbrook to Show Low became part of the Arizona State Highway System in 1930, but its forerunner was a territorial-period wagon road used by Mormon pioneers as they moved into the sparsely settled Silver Creek drainage. One important farming community bisected by Route 77’s forerunner came into being after Mormon colonist William Flake purchased the existing Stinson Ranch along Silver Creek in 1878. Later that year, Mormon Apostle Erastus Snow and his fellow colonists joined him when floods repeatedly destroyed their irrigation system along the Little Colorado River. Apostle Snow laid out the town site of this new community of Snowflake on an idealized Mormon plan: large square blocks divided into city lots with roads wide enough to turn a horse- or mule-drawn wagon. The wide main street followed the existing stagecoach and freight wagon trail from Fort Apache to the Beale’s Road (the route surveyed in 1857 for the planned railroad and predecessor of U.S. Route 66). Within a year of its founding, Snowflake was a prominent center of Mormon settlement in Arizona and the county seat of Apache County (1879–1881).

In 1881, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (Santa Fe Railway) reached Horsehead Crossing—the settlement at the confluence of the Puerco and Little Colorado Rivers just south of Beale’s Road. Needing ties, they hired John W. Young, son of the famous Mormon Leader Brigham Young, to procure the wood for the rail. A year after the railroad’s completion, Young founded a new town a few miles west of Horsehead Crossing and named it after the Santa Fe’s first engineer, H. R. Holbrook. Because of its access to the rail, Holbrook prospered and so did Young. From this railroad town, the territorial version of SR 77 to Show Low became an important route for the flow of goods and services to Fort Apache and much of the White Mountain region.

SR 77 between Oracle Junction and US 70 winds it way through-down the San Pedro River Valley to its intersection with the Gila River at Winkleman and then cuts a route through mountainous terrain until it reaches US 70. This section of SR 77 was added to the state Highway System in 1938. It too, was an old road developed to link the mining communities near Mammoth with larger communities and railroads north and south. In 2008, the state of Arizona designated as 38-mile stretch of SR 77 as the Copper Corridor Scenic Road East.

For more information please visit www.azdot.gov/Highways/Arizona_Historic_Roads