



**Iowa  
Mississippi River Parkway Commission**

**2020-2021 Annual Report  
September 2021**



**AMERICA'S BYWAYS®**

**MARTIN L. GRABER, Chair  
Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**



2020-2021

# Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

## CONTENTS

Jim Janett  
Allamakee County

Vacant  
Clayton County

Jarod McGovern  
Dubuque County

Paula Mayer  
Jackson County

Leslie Webster  
Clinton County

Ann Geiger, Secretary  
Scott County

Paul Carroll  
Muscatine County

Vacant  
Louisa County, Treasurer

Lisa Walsh  
Des Moines County, Vice Chair

Martin Graber, Chair  
Lee County

**Mission Statement ..... 3**

**Vision Statement ..... 3**

**Goals and Objectives ..... 4**

**Iowa MRPC Commission Structure ..... 5**

**Commissioners' General Activities ..... 5**

**Iowa MRPC Budget ..... 6**

**Advocating Activities ..... 7**

Marketing ..... 7

Interpretive Centers..... 7

Travel Guide ..... 8

**The Road ..... 9**

**Young Museum and Interpretive Centers ..... 10**

## ADDENDUM

**Commissioners and Technical Members ..... 11**

**Minutes ..... 13**

**Annual Metrics Report..... 24**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission (IAMRPC) was organized to:**

- Preserve, promote, and enhance the scenic, historic, natural, archaeological, cultural, and recreation resources of the National Scenic Byway (NSB)/Iowa Great River Road (GRR) and the Iowa Mississippi River Valley.
- Foster economic growth of the Mississippi River corridor.
- Develop the National Scenic Byway/Great River Road.

## **ALL AMERICAN ROAD**

Established in 1991, the National Scenic Byways Program recognizes roadways with notable scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational, and archaeological qualities. Scenic America, a national environmental nonprofit that preserves and enhances the visual character and scenic beauty of America, led the charge to revitalize and restore funding for the program.

This past year the Great River Road was nominated and received the designation as an All-American Road (AAR). With the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s announcement of 15 All-American Roads, this marks the first additions to the program since 2009. This is a national designation and joins such roads as the Appalachian Trail and the California Scenic Highway. In addition to being a major task and accomplishment to achieve this status, this designation also gives the Road an opportunity for additional funding.

## **VISION**

The Iowa Great River Road will sustain rewarding lifelong experiences for Iowans and visitors from around the world through the support of a cooperative network of partners and stakeholder, each of which invest in and benefit from the conservation, development, promotion, interpretation, and management of the diverse intrinsic resources of the Iowa Mississippi River Valley.

*(Adopted December 15, 2014).*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Assist in coordinating the increase of investment and awareness of the National Scenic Byway/Iowa Great River Road and its amenities with roadside parks, scenic overlooks, educational experiences and opportunities and historic information.
- Continue the identification, documentation, and protection of the intrinsic resources of the Great River Road.
- Expand the local citizen awareness of the resources and importance of the Great River Road in Iowa and the adjoining states.
- Provide new travel experiences through effective interpretation and promotion of the Great River Road.
- Increase information services to residents and organizations along the Great River Road.
- Identify economic development opportunities based on the sensitive use of the Road's intrinsic resources.
- Sustain existing alliances with other organizations that are interested in the future of the Great River Road and develop new partnerships where needed.
- Identify volunteer opportunities for individuals and organizations along the Great River Road.
- Assist in coordinating the increase of investment and awareness of the Great River Road and its resources with development of a variety of amenities and delivery of programs for public awareness, interpretation, and promotion.
- Increase the awareness for Great River Road stakeholders of availability of public and private funding for resource conservation, transportation enhancement, interpretation, and promotion.
- Develop communication opportunities to tell the stories of the National Scenic Byway/Great River Road.  
Arrange community involvement meetings and workshops pertaining to a variety of Great River Road related topics...  
Advocate for the Great River Road Interpretative Centers.
- Advocate for the Great River Road research, planning, and development studies.  
Advocate for transportation related projects in the Great River Road Corridor that incorporate the principles of context sensitive design.
- Advocate for the use of sustainable design principles such as L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), native plant community restoration, multi-functional streets, etc.
- Conserve, develop, promote, and interpret, and manage the Iowa Great River Road.  
(Adopted December 15, 2014).

*A major factor in achieving these goals and objectives is partnering with area and national groups and associations that have similar goals and interests. By networking with other organizations, we can best utilize all our assets, including financial, contacts, and personnel.*

# IOWA MRPC STRUCTURE

The Iowa Commission consists of ten commissioners appointed by the Governor of Iowa representing the ten counties that border the Mississippi River. The commission by Iowa statute is gender and politically balanced. In addition, there are five technical members representing: Iowa Department of Transportation, Department of Economic Development, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Office of Tourism, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## Iowa Commissioners' General Activities

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The Iowa Chair and or his proxy participated in all National MRPC Board meetings and Executive Board meetings, as well as the Annual Meeting conducted via Zoom, September 17, 2020. The 2020 semi-annual meeting, scheduled in Baton Rouge, Louisiana was cancelled because of Covid-19. The majority of Iowa Commissioners also participated in the National MRPC meetings.

Commissioners visit the eighteen Interpretive Centers and focus particularly on their respective Centers within their individual counties and provide materials for distribution and review the activities of each center and address any concerns.

Individually commissioners have been telling the Great River Road story in their individual counties. In addition, many commissioners meet with their elected officials and local citizens in addition to a formal annual meeting

The Iowa MRPC met on five separate occasions in the past year. October 14 16, 2019 at the Buffalo Bill Museum in LeClaire, Iowa; January 13, 2020, at the Muscatine History and Industry Center (Button Museum) in Muscatine, Iowa; March 16, 2020, at Connection Bank in Fort Madison, Iowa; June 26, 2020, was a called meeting by phone; and July 27, 2020, at the Buffalo Bill Museum in LeClaire, Iowa. Minutes of these meetings are included as a part of this report.

At the beginning of the Corona Virus pandemic, the Commission met in Fort Madison. The goal for the year was to focus on marketing. With the Baton Rouge conference already cancelled, the Commissioners voted to spend more money on advertising, which was the goal for the year. Radio ads generally ran the month of June. The Commission extended that to mid-May through June, and it was a fortuitous move, since the ads are designed to focus on the areas of the river most likely to be traveled by certain sections of the state's population. With driving having become the most popular way to travel, the ads highlighted the Interpretive Centers and the Great River Road as a whole for the day-drive traveler. In addition, the commission activated the dormant Facebook page and began getting hits.

The Fairport Fish Hatchery applied for and received a microgrant.

For additional information or current activities see our Iowa Great River Road Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/IowaGreatRiverRoad>).

# IOWA MRPC BUDGET

The FY-2021 budget for the Iowa MRPC was approved by the Iowa DOT for \$40,000.00. The budget includes 2020 National MRPC dues, Iowa Byways Foundation Membership, and Marketing expenses. The Covid-19 virus required the cancellation of the semi-annual meeting in Baton Rouge, and this year's annual meeting is anticipated to be virtual.

## Fiscal Year Budget

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Item	Description	Iowa DOT	Amount	Balance
1	MRPC Annual Dues	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
2	Annual Meeting	4,500.00	0	4,500.00
3	Semi-Annual Meeting	4,500.00	0	4,500.00
4	Travel/meals in-state	2,000.00	269.10	1,730.90
5	Iowa Byways Foundation	200.00	0	200.00
6	Administration	300.00	0	300.00
7	Marketing	13,450.00	28,194.00	(14,744.00)
<b>Total</b>		\$39,950	\$-35,963.10	\$+3986.90

# ADVOCATING ACTIVITIES

## Marketing

The Commission is continuing to focus on raising awareness of the Road and to catch the attention in different ways than have been used before.

By the time the Commission held its March meeting the semi-annual meeting was cancelled because of Covid-19, and the possibility of future meetings was in question. As a result of the impact this would have on travel along the Mississippi, the Commission expanded its previously discussed focus on marketing. One of the changes which eventually had the biggest impact was the increase of radio ads, which are regionally crafted, from six (6) weeks to eight (8) weeks, and the addition of billboards. There were billboards on the east coast, center, and west coast of Iowa. This had a positive result because with tourists now taking trips closer to home. The ads have resulted in a large increase in on-line traffic, which has shown longer times spent than is usual for on-line visitors. The national office is again sponsoring on-road activities.

Passports are still available at the Interpretive Centers for visitors to take and focus on visiting centers of which they may not have been aware. The Commission distributed 2,000 of them in the spring of 2021 and is having another 2,000 printed. They have been shown to very popular with visitors.

## Great River Road Interpretive Centers

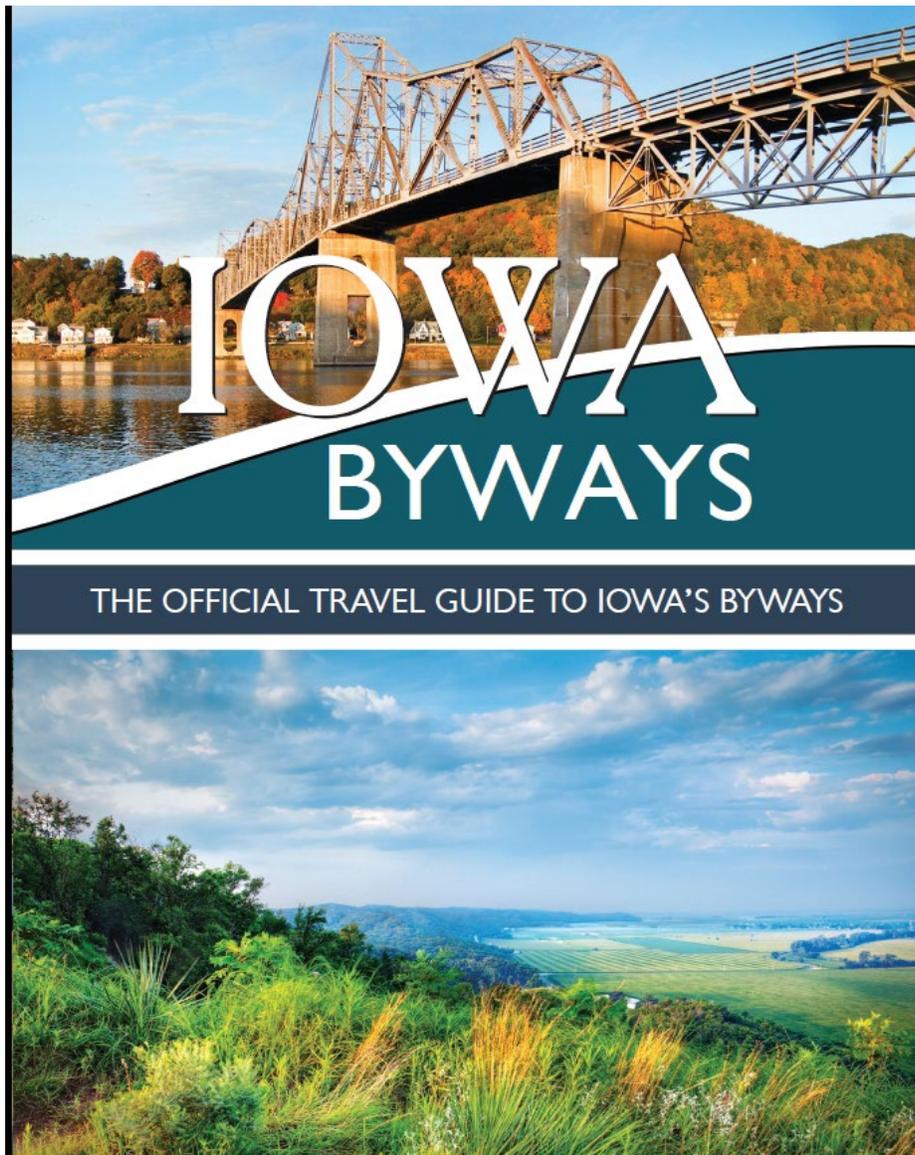
Iowa has 18 Interpretive Centers, which is more than any other state. Each Center is supplied with Great River Road tear sheets, small passports, Iowa Byways Travel Guide, and a banner. The banners have QR Codes to be cell phone friendly and seem to elicit a positive response. Each Interpretive Center is encouraged to list their center and weekly activities on our new Iowa Tourism website – <https://www.traveliowa.com/getinspired/iowa-5-great-river-road/23/>. The Interpretive Centers are also encouraged to list events on [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com).



## Iowa Byways Travel Guide

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The Iowa MRPC in cooperation with Iowa's other designated byways and the Iowa Department of Transportation is featured in the high-quality travel guide showcasing the Iowa Great River Road in four pages and the other ten designated Iowa scenic byways. This visitor friendly guide invites travelers to extend their Iowa visits and experience more of Iowa's nearby attractions that complement the GRR experience. The guide is free and can be viewed and ordered at [www.iowasbyway.org](http://www.iowasbyway.org). Commission members have worked hard to distribute this guide to the welcome and interpretative centers, CVB'S and other tourist attractions in their counties.



# THE ROAD

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## BURLINGTON

In Burlington's bluff top Crapo Park, the bridge spanning Cascade Ravine has been closed to motor and pedestrian traffic. The bridge built in 1896 connects downtown Burlington with Crapo Park via South Main Street and is the recognized route for the Iowa Great River Road. It is the oldest Bridge in Iowa and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is now showing its age. Burlington stopped letting vehicles travel across Cascade Bridge in 2008, and it was closed last year totally for walkers and well as bikes. A preliminary study has been completed and the City of Burlington has this on their list of bridges to be replaced. There is currently no timeline or funding available. As of this date, the bridge has not been replaced and no funding is available to the City of Burlington.

Early this year local citizens met in an attempt to determine the future of the bridge. Lisa Walsh, Des Moines County Commissioner, has played an active part in those discussions, and Martin Graber, MRPC Chair, has attended via telephone. The Commissioners have continued to be involved in the future of the bridge, lending support to the saving of the structure, or a viable replacement.



## MONTROSE

A portion of River Road near Montrose is still subject to wash-out, and it has been able to have at least one lane kept open this year. However, the problem still persists.

## **Bellevue**

This past year the Commission is still trying to get the information regarding the development of the Great River Road copies and put in a more secure, temperature-controlled environment. In this house is the paperwork for the development of the Great River Road as a national byway. The legal documents are signed by the governors of the states at the time it was approved by Congress in 1938. Also included are maps and letters sent back and forth to Washington D.C. Within a year the precursor of what is now the Mississippi River Parkway Commission was formed, and the documents for that are also included.

## **Iowa Interpretive Centers**

Driftless Area Education & Visitor Center  
Lansing, Iowa

Effigy Mounds National Monument  
Harpers Ferry, Iowa

Motor Mill Historic Site  
Elkader, Iowa

Guttenberg Fish Hatchery  
Guttenberg, Iowa

National Mississippi River Museum and  
Aquarium & National Rivers Hall of Fame  
Dubuque, Iowa

E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center/Mines of  
Spain Recreation Area

Hurstville Interpretive Center  
Maquoketa, Iowa

Heritage Center Museum  
Burlington, Iowa

National Pearl Button Museum  
Muscatine, Iowa

Sawmill Museum  
Clinton, Iowa

Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center  
Camanche, Iowa

Buffalo Bill Museum & River Pilots Pier  
LeClaire, Iowa

Putnam Museum of History &  
Natural Science  
Davenport, Iowa

Nahant Marsh Education Center  
Davenport, Iowa

Pine Creek Grist Mill  
Muscatine, Iowa

Toolesboro Mounds & Museum  
Wapello, Iowa

Old Fort Madison  
Ft. Madison, Iowa

George M. Verity Riverboat Museum  
Keokuk, Iowa

# ADDENDUM

## Commission

COMMISSIONERS	COMMITTEES	CONTACT INFORMATION	TERM
<b>ALLAMAKEE COUNTY</b> Jim Janett Allamakee County Conservation 1944 Columbus Rd Lansing, IA 52151	Nat'l Culture & Heritage	<a href="mailto:accb.director@gmail.com">accb.director@gmail.com</a> Ph: 563.538.0402 Cell: 563.-569712	06/30/2021
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<b>CLINTON COUNTY</b> Lesley Webster 420 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave Clinton, IA 52732	Nat'l Marketing	<a href="mailto:lwebster@clintonia.com">lwebster@clintonia.com</a> Ph: 563.559.2193 Cell: 309.267.8030	06/30/2025
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<b>LOUISA COUNTY</b> Vacant			
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[susanne@pilchbarnet.com](mailto:susanne@pilchbarnet.com)

**Marketing + Mississippi  
River Country**

[lyn@pilchbarnet.com](mailto:lyn@pilchbarnet.com)

## 2020-2021 Iowa MRPC Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission are always public record.

Public notices and meeting minutes are also posted here:

[http://www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/mississippi\\_river.htm](http://www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/mississippi_river.htm)



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**Conference call**  
**10:00 a.m. February 15, 2021**  
**800-509-6344. Passcode. 5778996**

**Statement:** The members of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission are holding this meeting by electronic means pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, Section 21.8, Code of Iowa. The meeting is being held by conference call originating from the F&M Bank and Trust, Burlington, Iowa to allow commissioners and the public to participate and avoid concerns related to the coronavirus, or COVID-19. The public can call in from a remote location and join by conference call. Public notice of the meeting has been issued in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.4

**MRPC Call to order and roll call** by Lisa Walsh, Vice Chair

Present: Jay Schweitzer, Jenna Pollock, Paula Mayer, Jim Janett, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Martin Graber, Jared McGovern

Others: LuAnn Reinders, Iowa Economic Development; Amy Zeigler, State Tourism Manager; Lesley Webster, Director Convention and Visitor's Bureau – Clinton; Paul Carroll, Muscatine Button Museum; Matthew Parbs, Director, Sawmill Museum

### **Approval of and June 26, 2020, and July 27, 2020, Minutes**

Mayer moved to approve the June 26, 2020, minutes. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried. Motion to approve the July 27, 2020, minutes by Janett. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Review and approval of Treasurer's report - no report**

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers**

Janett said Lansing was now open. People are anxious to leave their houses and it has approximately 20 visitors the first weekend. School groups will be coming now that restrictions are lifted.

Walsh said although the Des Moines Historical Center was closed over the winter, they made masks while closed for Covid. The Center is just about to open.

Schweitzer said Toolesboro opening was on hold because of archeological issues. Its board had not been able to meet but looking to April of 2022 to open.

Pollock said Motor Mill has a grand opening for new trail built in 2020 and is in a loop with city which it anticipates more traffic. Grants were applied to restore the inn for guests. She said they are looking for more programs to make up for past year.

Carroll talked said the Button Museum continues to have visitors. The Mill was closed for the winter. And there is a new friends group and working on fish hatchery.

Parb asked about more tear sheets. Geiger said last year's printing was for two years. He said they use a lot of them, and she suggested checking with the eco center in Camanche to see if they had an extra box.

Mayer said she is updating the passport for reprint and has gotten a couple of replies. When she has finished, she will send it to the state for printing. She will also work with Reinders and Zeiglar on ad design.

### **Ex-Official Member Reports**

Reinders introduced Zeiglar, and added she was formerly the digital marketing manager. Zeiglar discussed the Iowa Scenic Byways Passport which lists Iowa byways and gave an update. It has 2,500 businesses signed up since Jan 4 so far and 125 locations. There is a charge to sign up, but it must be located on a byway. Geiger asked if she was aware of the passport the MRPC already had. She said she was not. Mayer said it was supposed to be online. Mayer will send a digital copy to Zeiglar.

Reinders she is getting daily requests for information and Great River Road is at the top of the list because people are driving. There is a new packet for the travel guide for the GRR. People very interested in traveling GRR because it offers daytrips.

### **Reports on plans of expenditures for the current year**

Reinders said there were billboards available in Moline, Omaha, and Des Moines. Mayer asked if any other billboards are available without RFP process. Reinders said their buy included these three and to check with Markley regarding any others and if an RFP would be required. Geiger asked Mayer if she knew of any other companies other than Lamar, because if that was the case, it could be a sole-source purchase. She said she was not aware but there could be others. Mayer said she was interested in the northwest Iowa market.

Schweitzer moved to approve available billboards in Moline (\$850); Omaha (\$650); and Des Moines (\$800). Pollock seconded the motion and it carried.

Geiger moved to increase radio ads to eight weeks from six weeks not to exceed \$10,000. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried. On a later motion to amend by Schweitzer, the money was not to exceed \$8,000. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried.

Carroll suggested designing a graphic outlining for Zebulin Pike's move up the river for electronic (online) marketing or a future billboard. He said a designer had been identified for a fee of \$200. Schweitzer moved to hire a designer for a graphic not to exceed \$200. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

Pollock moved to approve two banner ads for the fall camping edition of the Iowa Travel Guide in the amount of \$2,500. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried.

Pollock moved to purchase online advertising through the State for April through June for \$450.00 Mayer seconded the motion and it carried. Mayer moved to amend the motion to add \$150 for sponsored listing adding March. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried.

Pollock moved to sponsor winter camping in the Iowa Travel Guild at a cost of \$10,800. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

Pollock moved to approve \$200 annual contribution to the Iowa Byway Foundation. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried.

Pollock moved to table discussion of the annual dues for national office until the next meeting. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Chairman's Report**

Walsh has attended two of the board meetings as a guest, and she suggested the Commissioners go into the 'members only' section on the website and look at the new guidelines for the national office. She said they hired an outside firm to do a three-hour board training which will be upcoming. The web page is also to be redone.

### **National and Committee Reports**

*Marketing Committee* – All American Roads will be funded for only 8 states. The Marketing Committee was divided regarding any funding because Pilch & Barnett is supposed to represent all ten states, but two states did not apply. Mayer said on the All-American Road app asks how to represent on signage, and under discussion but the committee was not in favor of removing the pilot's wheel and adding some other sort of identifier. No firm decision.

*Transportation* – 4 of ten states are making application for funding of \$16M from regarding Scenic America program. It has to do with roads on nationally designated roads. It has not funded since 2008, and applications must be in by 2021. Needs to revamp budget sheet and website.

*Environment* No report

*Recreation and Agriculture* No report

*Heritage and Culture* No report

## **Update on Activities**

Update on Cascade Bridge in Burlington Community won and the bridge. Probably be replaced and not repaired. Also, no demolition costs reported. May be a new grant application to see if funds are available.

Update on Young Museum, Bellevue. Mayer said she spoke with Luecke, the director, and because of personal factors, activity on the museum is not moving forward. The Commission has concerns about the documents and their condition. Mayer offered to scan them to make the information available for the public and put the originals in a safe, climate-controlled environment. The idea was rejected. Schweitzer will do some research on the board of directors and structure of organization.

## **Future meeting schedule: Monday, April 19, 2021**



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**Conference call**  
**10:00 a.m. April 19, 2021**  
**800-509-6344. Passcode. 5778996**

**Statement:** The members of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission are holding this meeting by electronic means pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, Section 21.8, Code of Iowa. The meeting is being held by conference call originating from the F&M Bank and Trust, Burlington, Iowa. The public can call in from a remote location and join by conference call. Public notice of the meeting has been issued in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.4

**MRPC Call to order and roll call** by Martin Graber, Chair

Present: Lisa Walsh, Jenna Pollock, Paula Mayer, Jim Janett, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jared McGovern, Jay Schweitzer

Technical Advisors: Emily Whalen, Amy Zeigler, State Tourism Manager

Others: Paul Carroll, Muscatine Button Museum; Jim Elias, Matthew Parbs, Director, Sawmill Museum

## **Approval of the February 15, 2021, minutes**

Janett moved to approve the February 15, 2021, minutes. Walsh seconded the motion and it carried.

## **Motion to approve Treasurer's Report**

Geiger moved to approve the Treasurer's Report in the amount of \$13,800. Seconded by Walsh and the motion carried.

## **Budget discussion**

### *Review current expenditures*

Reviewed the expenditures approved at the last meeting at the last meeting totaling \$24,400.

### *Annual Dues to the national office*

Geiger moved to approve \$5,000 dues to the national organization. Pollock seconded the motion. Janett moved to amend the motion to send annual dues of \$7,500 to the national organization. Walsh seconded the amendment which was approved with Pollock opposed. Motion to approve the amended motion approved with Pollock opposed.

All American Road possibilities. The Commission discussed the possible implications of funding as a result of the All-American Road program.

## **National committee appointments**

*Marketing Committee* - Pollack, Mayer

*Transportation* - Walsh

*Environment, Recreation, Agriculture* - Janett, Carroll (upon appointment)

*Heritage and Culture* - Geiger, Graber

## **Comments from Interpretive Centers**

Button Museum - Pike's Peak Presentation – Jim Elias gave a presentation showing how Zebulon Pike's trip up the Mississippi can mix history with local areas makes it more interesting. Actual notes and first-person voice in recording talking about his trip up the Mississippi would be a good tourism interest. Possible radio spots, brochure, using his words linking the trip up the river. Geiger requested they research some ideas and prices for distribution at a May 4 called meeting.

Sawmill has webcam which focuses on river. Clinton is end of RAGBRAI

Motor Mill is opening Memorial Day weekend and open just on Saturdays, because of Covid, through Labor Day.

Camp Langwood having some activities in Louisa County. County Conversation will be involved.

Visitors at are restricted to 35 people at the Driftless Center at Lansing. Janett said the numbers are picking up.

**Ex-Official Members reports and others** - None

**Chairman's Report** – Covered in other discussion.

### **National and Committee Reports**

*Marketing Committee* - None

*Transportation* - Working to get meeting notes done in a reasonable fashion and cleaning up the website.

*Environment Recreation and Agriculture* - None

*Heritage and Culture* – None

### **Update on Activities**

*Cascade Bridge*

Walsh said the new city manager is more supportive regarding the bridge and its future. June 2 zoom meeting regarding and how preservation is important funds and how the community can be involved.

*Young Museum*

Mayer will follow up with Schweitzer as to what if anything he found after looking into it.

### **General Discussion**

#### **Increasing public awareness**

*Facebook*

Tracy Branble and Emily had a discussion MRPC Facebook. Discussion on Iowa policies. Mayer asked who is managing the page. Because nothing was posted since October – it is a dormant page. DOT will tag any information regarding a byway posting if it is not a private business. Individual byways can do postings, promoting MRPC, may have to discuss promoting individual businesses. Mayer wanted to know who is managing the page. It would not be Iowa DOT. The page is still owned by Stahlhut. Whalen will call and ask her to be removed as owner. Whalen Stahlhut ownership to turn the page over to Mayer as administrator who said there should be more than one administrator.

*Travel Iowa's Scenic Byways Passport Program* – update. Still working on getting up and running.

*Iowa Byways news monthly letter* – Janett said he tried to access the site to post an article about the Driftless Center.

#### **All American Road**

Discussion on Iowa's role in Great American Roads based on webinar. Geiger said the Pike project may fill some of the boxes.

#### **Future meeting schedule May 4, 2021**



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**Conference call**  
**10:00 p.m. May 4, 2021**  
**800-509-6344. Passcode. 5778996**

**Statement:** The members of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Foundation is holding this meeting by electronic means pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, Section 21.8, Code of Iowa. The meeting is being held by conference call originating from the F&M Bank and Trust, Burlington, Iowa. The public can call in from a remote location and join by conference call. Public notice of the meeting has been issued in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.4

**MRPC Call to order and roll call** by Martin Graber, Chair

Present: Lisa Walsh, Paula Mayer, Jenna Pollock, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jared McGovern, Jay Schweitzer, Jim Janett, and Jane Regan

Technical Advisors: Emily Whalen,

Others: Paul Carroll, Muscatine Button Museum

### **Discussion and final approval of annual budget**

Currently we have \$8,100 left in the budget. Geiger said she just submitted \$280 in billing which needs to be subtracted from that.

Mayer said it would be \$900 for paper boards for any location in Iowa from Lamar Advertising. So far, the three ads approved in February, and Mayer would inquire as to what areas they have available. Graber asked if Mayer and Walsh would research that.

Geiger moved to do 4 paper billboards for the month of June. Seconded by Walsh. Motion carried. That is \$3,600.

Motion to raise the radio ad budget to by Graber, to an additional \$4,000. Second by Walsh. Motion carried.

Carroll will get more information regarding the Zebulon Pike project for the next meeting and discuss some project goals, discuss the material in the Young House, and set the annual budget.

The next meeting will be July 19.

Adjourn



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
10:00 a.m. July 19, 2021  
Sawmill Museum,  
2231 Grant St, Clinton, Iowa 52732

## **MRPC Call to order and roll call**

The meeting was called to order by Martin, Graber, Chair.

Present: Martin Graber, Chair; Lisa Walsh, Vice-Chair; Paula Mayer; Jim Janett, Paul Carroll, Leslie Webster; Jared McGovern; Jane Regan, and Ann Geiger

Others: Emily Whaley, DOT; Matt Parbs, Clinton Sawmill Leslie Klipsch, Putnam Museum; Jim Elias, Pike Project; Brian Ritter, Nahant Marsh; LuAnn Reinders, Amy Ziegler

## **Welcome and introductions**

### **Approval of April 19, 2021, and May 4, 2021, Minutes**

Janett moved to approve the minutes of April 19 and May 4, 2021, meetings. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Review and approval of Treasurer's report**

Carroll, moved to amend the budget report to \$35,963.10. Seconded by Walsh. Mayer moved to approve the amended report. Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Budget discussion**

Byways Foundation Membership is due. Regan said the MRPC basically gave them a donation, because it is not an Iowa byway, per se. Mayer suggested paying the \$250 membership. Mayer moved to pay the Iowa Byway Foundation dues. Walsh seconded and the motion carried.

Janett moved to budget \$4,500 for national meetings. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

## **National and Committee Reports**

**Marketing Committee.** No Report. Changing away from monthly meetings.

**Transportation.** Helped direct how committee reports are to be housed on web. Committee is co-chaired. It was instrumental in speakers for last spring's meeting and helping with fall meeting. Regan asked about signage for AAR, and it was discussed that possible addition to existing GGR signs and that would be at the DOT's expense.

**Environment, Recreation and Agriculture.** No report.

**Heritage and Culture.** Reviewing the I Centers and how they relate to the GRR. Meetings are changing from annual or bi-annual meetings to every two months. Next one scheduled for the end of the month.

### **Chairman's Report**

Annual meeting will be October 5, virtually. Martin said any award nominations are due in September. He also said the road to Montrose north of Ft. Madison was washed out, but it has one lane open now. He said the road may wash out again, but for now it is open.

### **Election of Officers**

Walsh moved to approve the existing slate. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried. Mayer moved to appoint Carroll as treasurer. Webster seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers and Others:**

Lansing – Janett said the center was open and said the number of visitors coming down the river is increasing, and they experienced visitors from 37-38 countries and all 50 states.

Nahant - The Center was closed until May 1<sup>st</sup> except for small groups and special events. The Center is discussing expanding its hours. Will be building another building and expanding walking and bike trails. Seeing more and more bikers. They have acquired another piece of land and are cleaning it up now. The piece will allow them to hook up to the MRT along the river. Signing is very important and when the sign went up on I-280 it made a huge difference. Have 10 research interns now.

National Aquarium – The Aquarium hosted the first excursion vessels last week. It just opened a new 9,000 square foot exhibition building. It has a working a belt-driven machine shop. They are overseeing a greenhouse and working with mussel reproduction.

Sawmill - Parbs said the Sawmill has 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October and will have blacksmiths, woodcrafts, chainsaw artists and more. GGR and Lincoln traffic is increasing, and they are working with local firefighters to create an exhibit on the history of fire in Clinton.

Putnam – Klipsch said the museum is open now and is doing great. It opened in May and traffic is increasing. The riverboats have started their cruises which brings visitors. There are over 1,000 kids signed up for camp. The giant screen movie opened with limited capacity. The director has redone the floor plan and is looking for a way to make some of the 240,000 archived items in some way more accessible.

Pine Creek Gristmill just reopened. Carroll said the Button Museum is still transitioning with new staff. Going through a formal strategic plan by fall. Fairport Fish Hatchery is revived. The history of the hatchery is to be reviewed and determined how to best be presented. 1<sup>st</sup> USDA facility west of the Mississippi to study the mussels. Exelon is funding a reestablishment of mussels.

Mines of Spain is undergoing transition and may be run by the city from this time forward and will be starting from scratch.

Hurstville's numbers are coming up and the Eco Tourism Center in Camanche has a new indoor shooting range in the basement which just started up.

Walsh said the Burlington center is still on limited hours.

Toolesboro is reporting lots of visitors, according to Geiger, and they have had positive comments about the facility and the visitors are taking lots of information.

### **National committee appointments**

Marketing – Mayer and Webster

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture (ERA) – Carroll

Culture and Heritage - Graber, Geiger, Janett

Transportation – Walsh

Iowa Byways – Webster, Mayer

**Tourism Department** – Reinders introduced Ziegler to the Commission and said the Scenic Byways is offering passports for specific activities. Gift cards were offered to help build a road trip and were gone in about 2 days.

### **Update on Activities**

There is no access to the Young House. Walsh said the national office is sending a note to the board of directors to inquire about acquiring the original documents and digitizing them for public use. Geiger said she is very concerned about the material which is sitting in open archive boxes on the floor of the building. Deterioration is inevitable and the manager has denied any attempts to copy the material. Inquiries with legal counsel indicated it could take a year to make any progress. Graber said he would like to see the national office move to the site. The Commission discussed the possibility of All American Road funding to help preserve the material. McGovern said there is money coming to the Governor's office which might be available for some projects. Walsh talked about possible funds coming through Scenic America.

The Cascade Bridge in Burlington is being discussed by a new city manager who may be coming up with new ideas. Still no movement.

Zebulon Pike project Jim Elias. Lewis and Clark historically stole the publicity. Each of the ICenters have some relation to Pike. The concept is to use Pike in his own words as to what he saw as he came upriver. The project would be used for radio, billboards, etc. using his journals for the verbiage. Should have it ready for next tourism season. Webster said it sounds good to link all the interpretive centers. McGovern thought the time frame was too aggressive for the river museum.

Geiger asked if this program is something that can be rolled out slowly working its way upriver. Geiger moved to approve NTE \$3,000 to have Elias begin to put together a program to roll out the project for the Pike project for further discussion at the Foundation meeting. Seconded by Weber. Motion carried. Geiger moved to amend the motion to \$1,500. Janett seconded the motion and it carried.

Regan said some of the counties allow UTV's to travel the highway and are very busy. She also said the campgrounds and river parking areas are full of vehicles.

## **Increasing public awareness**

### Social - Facebook

Mayer, in April, obtained Admin rights to Iowa Great River Road (and has produced or shared 76 posts since that time. Posts include those that provide hype about the Iowa Great River Road as well as shared posts from interpretive centers, Chambers, Iowa Mississippi photography groups, events, and places along the Iowa Great River Road that are sought out. <https://www.facebook.com/IowaGreatRiverRoad>)

She used the delivering of the passports to the north ICenters as a series of posts as well to highlight the trip and the availability of the passports. She is planning communications with the interpretive centers to request they tag the Iowa Great River Road as well in order that notifications go out alerting of posts we can share to lessen search time.

Number of people who like the page is at 1,069 | Number of people who follow the page is 1,157. Facebook Page Reach is currently at over past 7 days 1,053 (The number of people who saw any content from your Page or about your Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more. Reach is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of your posts by the same people.)  
Reach in 2021 compared to 2020 is up 770%

### Fall guide

Need original eps of Iowa Great River Road logo.

### Passport

Mayer will request another 2000 passports be printed. Graber asked if something can be added to note the All-American Road designation. Maybe a small sign on the GRR logo. Mayer said she would investigate it. Webster and McGovern asked for a couple of changes and Mayer review possibilities

### Website Domain

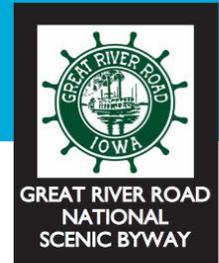
Currently, IEDA owns the domain, but has asked if the intent is for the IA DOT to own it, or release it to the public/IA MRPC. The IA DOT/Systems Planning Bureau is OK with releasing this domain to the IA MRPC for ownership. The renewal rate is \$18.99/year or more, if additional privacy features are purchased. The domain expires on 11/09/2021. Iowa Great River Road domain is paid until November 1 and will need to be renewed. The exact annual price needs to be determined. Mayer moved to continue to the Iowa Great River Road and domain name and move to MRPC budget. Webster seconded the motion and it carried.

The radio ads once again were very effective. Geiger said she heard from some of the Wisconsin members they hear them several times a day.

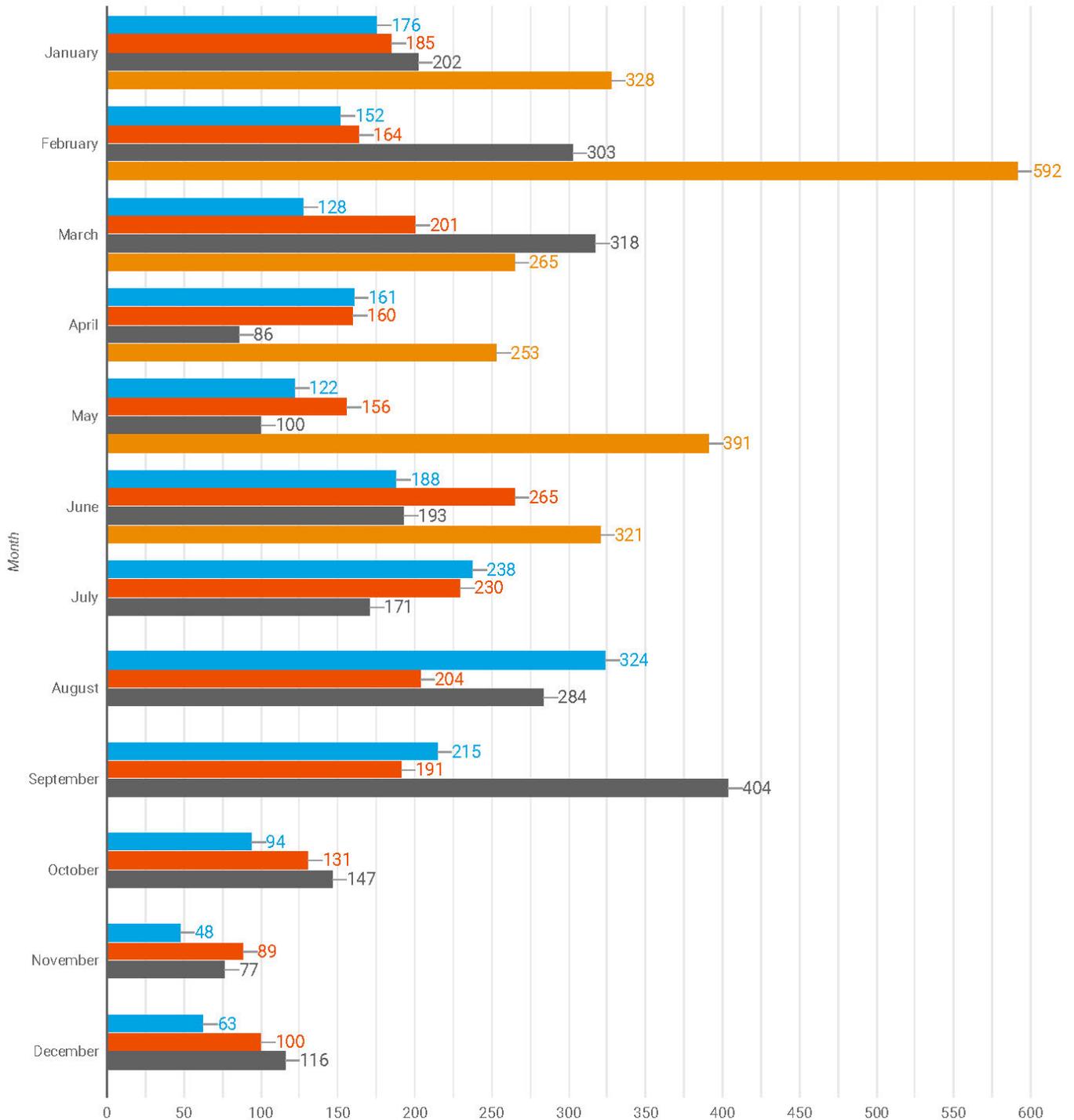
Future meeting schedule will be October 18. The site to be announced.

# Iowa Travel Guide Requests

Referred by [www.mississippiriverexperience.com](http://www.mississippiriverexperience.com)



**2018 Iowa Travel Guide Requests: 1,909**  
**2019 Iowa Travel Guide Requests: 2,076**  
**2020 Iowa Travel Guide Requests: 2,401**  
**2021 Iowa Travel Guide Requests: 2,150 (Jan - June up 79% over 2020 ytd and 90% increase over 2019 ytd.)**



# Iowa Scenic Byways Passport 2021 YTD

January through June, 2021 - YTD



## Sign-Ups by City

City	Sign-Ups
Cedar Rapids, IA	221
Unknown	200
Des Moines, IA	178
Council Bluffs, IA	165
Davenport, IA	136
Omaha, NE	135
Ankeny, IA	128
WDM, IA	112
Iowa City, IA	106
Ames, IA	100
Waterloo, IA	82
Riverdale, IA	80
Urbandale, IA	72
Marion, IA	61
Cedar Falls, IA	60
Dubuque, IA	58
Sioux City, IA	49
Muscatine, IA	42
Pleasant Hill, IA	41
Johnston, IA	38
Boone, IA	37
Mason City, IA	37
Waukee, IA	36
Decorah, IA	35
Bellevue, NE	35
Spring Hill, IA	35
Clinton, IA	33
Altoona, IA	32
Burlington, IA	31
Lincoln, NE	31
Marshalltown, IA	29
North Liberty, IA	28
Clive, IA	27
Fort Dodge, IA	27



**5,542**  
Sign Ups  
January - June, 2021

## Sign-Ups by State

State	Sign-Ups
Iowa	4,472
Nebraska	316
Unknown	200
Illinois	128
Minnesota	119
Wisconsin	60
Missouri	46
Michigan	21
Florida	16
South Dakota	14
Texas	11
Colorado	11
Ohio	10
California	10
Kansas	10

## Check-Ins By Byway

Scenic Byway	Check-Ins
Harrison County Historical Village & Iowa Welcome ...	120
John Wayne Birthplace Museum	70
Cutler-Donahoe Covered Bridge	65
Madison County Chamber Of Commerce & Welcom...	65
Iowa Quilt Museum	60
Cedar Covered Bridge	59
Winterset City Park	58
Holliwell Covered Bridge	54
Imes Covered Bridge	53
George Stout Storybook Sculpture	52
White Rose Friendly Gas Station Man	50
George Washington Carver Park	50
Ox Yoke Inn	49
Amana Heritage Museum	49
Casey Creamery	48
Larry Schlue Memorial Sound Park	48
Dexter Community House	48
Belle Plaine Area Museum	48
Bonnie & Clyde Bank Robbery Site	48
Wapsipinicon State Park	48
Drew's Chocolates	47
Dexter City Museum	47
Driftless Area Education And Visitors Center	47
Vesterheim The National Norwegian-American Mus...	46
Roseman Covered Bridge	46
1915 Lincoln Highway Bridge & Park	46
Jesse James Historic Train Robbery Site	44
St Charles Welcome Center	44
Stuart Herald	43
Pioneers Pub & Grub	42
Preston's Station	41
Madison County Historical Complex	41
Hogback Covered Bridge	41
1948 National Plowing Matches Site	41
National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library	41
Murph's Creamery & Grill	40
Menlo Caf�	40
Barrow Gang Shootout Site	39
Heart Of The Bohemie Alps	39
Otter Creek Lake & Park	39
The Electric Thread At The Hotel Millwright	39

