



**Iowa  
Mississippi River Parkway Commission**

**2017-2018 Annual Report  
September 2018**



**AMERICA'S BYWAYS®**

**MARTIN GRABER, Vice Chair  
Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**



**2017-2018**  
**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

Vacant  
Allamakee County

Jenna Pollock  
Clayton County

John Goodmann  
Dubuque County

Barbara Besch  
Jackson County

Clyde Bradley  
Clinton County

Ann Geiger, Secretary  
Scott County

Ann Meeker  
Muscatine County

Jay Schweitzer  
Louisa County, Treasurer

Lisa Walsh  
Des Moines County

Martin Graber, Vice Chair  
Lee County

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## **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.

## **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 Semi-Annual and Annual Meetings. The majority of Iowa Commissioners also participated in the National MRPC meetings.

The National MRPC Annual meeting was hosted by Iowa and held in Marquette in October 2017 and attended by representatives from River Road States. In April, the semi-annual meeting was held in Quincy, Illinois and was attended by several of the Commissioners.

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.

The Iowa MRPC met on six separate occasions in the past year. October 19, 2018 at the Community Center in Princeton, Iowa; November 16, 2017 in Muscatine, Iowa; February 16, 2017 at the Hurstville Interpretive Center in Maquoketa, Iowa; June 14, 2018 at the Community Center in Princeton, Iowa, July 14, 2018 at the Community Center in Princeton, Iowa and October 15, 2017 at the Comfort Inn in Lansing, Iowa at the National MRPC semi-annual meeting. Minutes of these meetings are included as a part of this report.

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

# IOWA MRPC BUDGET

The FY2017-2018 budget for the Iowa MRPC was approved by the Iowa DOT for \$40,000.00. The budget includes 2018 National MRPC dues, Iowa Byways Foundation Membership, Eastern Iowa Tourism Dues, Marketing expenses, MRPC conferences and Iowa Commission meetings and travel expenses, and Administrative expenses.

## Fiscal Year Budget

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	Budget Item	Budget	Expenses	Balance
1	10-State MRPC dues	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00
2	Travel to Annual Meeting	\$4,600.00	\$4,715.22	\$(115.22)
3	Travel to semi-annual Meeting	\$4,500.00	0	\$315.48
4	Iowa MRPC meetings/ travel/meals	\$2,215.00	\$1,733.35	\$4,500.00
5	Iowa Byways Coalition Membership	\$500.00	\$750.00	\$481.65
6	Eastern Iowa Tourism Dues	\$135.00	\$135.00	\$0.00
7	Administration	\$300.00	\$353.00	\$(53.00)
8	Marketing (web, maps, newsletter, guides\$12)	\$500.00	\$15,801.55	-\$3,201.85
9	National Byways Foundation	\$150.00		
10				
		\$40,000.00	\$38,238.42	\$1,761.58

# ADVOCATING ACTIVITIES

## Marketing

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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.

Passports have been designed and are available at the Interpretive Centers for visitors to take and focus on visiting centers of which they may not have been aware. Stainless steel mugs have been purchased to be used as awards for completed passports and possibly as awards at some of the radio contests and spots. The passports are being tried and the distribution of the mugs is being fine-tuned.

Pottery mugs have been distributed to the Information Centers and visitor centers for sale to raise money to support the program. Both mugs have the Great River Road pilot's wheel on them.

The Commission is currently reviewing how to engage motorcyclists and is preparing to work with local businesses to create interest and traffic.

Previously used marketing has been used again. Radio ads in various markets highlighting the Interpretive Centers – area specific – were done in May, and September is advertising the \$500 contest for traveling the road. Last fall the MRPC had a photo contest for pictures from the Road.

## Great River Road Interpretive Centers

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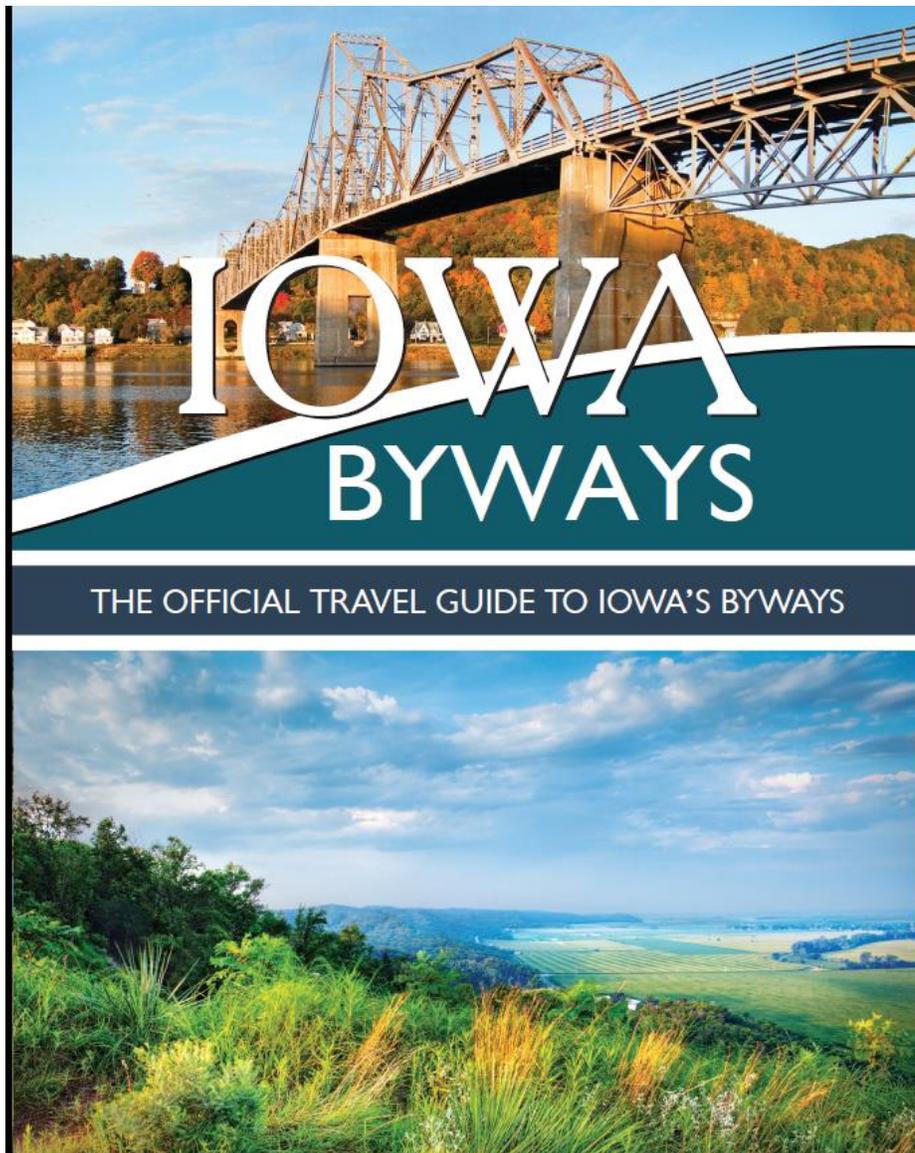
Last fall the new interpretive center in Lansing was opened and featured at the annual meeting. This past spring a new interpretive center was opened in Burlington by the Des Moines Historic Society. Each Center is supplied with Great River Road tear sheets, Iowa Byways Travel Guide, the MRPC National Maps and the Cultural Traveler. The Interpretive Center was encouraged to list their center and weekly activities on our new Iowa Tourism website – [www.iowatourism.com/greatriverroad](http://www.iowatourism.com/greatriverroad). The Interpretive Centers were 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 there counties.



# Iowa Great River Road

## Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties 2017

				State Tax	Local Tax
	Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	Receipts	Receipts
<u>County</u>	<u>(\$ Millions)</u>	<u>(\$ Millions)</u>	<u>(Thousands)</u>	<u>(\$ Millions)</u>	<u>(\$ Millions)</u>
ALLAMAKEE	\$ 42.74	\$ 4.29	0.21	\$ 2.65	\$ 1.05
CLAYTON	\$ 34.57	\$ 4.75	0.25	\$ 2.27	\$ 0.69
CLINTON	\$ 121.49	\$ 17.95	1.00	\$ 7.55	\$ 1.60
DES MOINES	\$ 138.93	\$ 25.47	1.07	\$ 7.08	\$ 2.02
DUBUQUE	\$ 351.76	\$ 57.90	3.00	\$ 20.23	\$ 4.83
JACKSON	\$ 32.52	\$ 4.52	0.24	\$ 2.36	\$ 0.69
LEE	\$ 61.82	\$ 9.59	0.51	\$ 4.10	\$ 0.90
LOUISA	\$ 14.30	\$ 1.85	0.09	\$ 1.25	\$ 0.36
MUSCATINE	\$ 83.74	\$ 13.11	0.72	\$ 5.80	\$ 1.04
SCOTT	\$ 659.14	\$ 108.33	6.41	\$ 43.08	\$ 10.45
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,541.01</b>	<b>\$ 247.76</b>	<b>13.50</b>	<b>\$ 96.37</b>	<b>\$ 23.63</b>
<b>STATE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$8,499.52</b>	<b>\$1,389.57</b>	<b>69.57</b>	<b>\$507.10</b>	<b>\$124.18</b>
<b>% of State</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
Prepared by U.S. Travel Association					

## THE ROAD

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The Iowa DOT has completed implementing the new Iowa GRR pilot's wheel signs and incorporating them into the Iowa Byway Signage project. Commission members have assisted the IDOT identifying locations in their respective counties for the new byway signs.

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## Burlington

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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 now showing its age. Burlington stopped letting vehicles travel across Cascade Bridge in 2008, but does currently allow pedestrian traffic. 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.



# ADDENDUM

This past winter our chair, Edith Pfeffer, unexpectedly died. Her dedication to the MRPC has been recognized not only within our state, but throughout the Great River Road network. Her work on behalf of this commission, and the Great River Road, was extensive, and the Commission does and will miss her presence.

## Commission

COMMISSIONERS	COMMITTEES	CONTACT INFORMATION	TERM
<b>ALLAMAKEE COUNTY</b>			
Vacant			
<b>CLAYTON COUNTY</b>			
Jenna Kristine Pollock 23929 Aspen Avenue Volga, IA 52077	<b>Nat'l Culture &amp; Heritage</b>	<a href="mailto:ipollock@claytoncountya.gov">ipollock@claytoncountya.gov</a> Ph: 563-380-7808 Cell: 563-880-1457	06/30/2021
<b>CLINTON COUNTY</b>			
Clyde Bradley 1655 Garrett Avenue Clinton, IA 42732		<a href="mailto:patty-bradley@hotmail.com">patty-bradley@hotmail.com</a> Ph: 563-242-1233	06/30/2019
<b>DES MOINES COUNTY</b>			
Lisa T. Walsh 6172 Nikonha Place Burlington, IA 52601	<a href="mailto:lwalsh@mybd.com">lwalsh@mybd.com</a> (work) Use cell & this email	<a href="mailto:lwalsh6172@gmail.com">lwalsh6172@gmail.com</a> Ph: 319-752-0912 Cell: 319-850-1950	06/30/2019
<b>DUBUQUE COUNTY</b>			
John A. Goodmann 1306 Tomahawk Drive Dubuque, IA 52003	<b>Nat'l Transportation</b> Work: 563-559-4350 Cell: 563-599-4350	<a href="mailto:igoodmann@real-good.com">igoodmann@real-good.com</a>	06/30/2019
<b>JACKSON COUNTY</b>			
Barbara Besch 202 South 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street Bellevue, IA 52301	<b>Marketing Committee</b> Ph: 563-872-5500 Cell: 563-357-8008	<a href="mailto:barbara.besch@gmail.com">barbara.besch@gmail.com</a>	06/30/2019
<b>LEE COUNTY</b>			
Martin L. Graber 2163 North Fork Drive Fort Madison, IA 52627	<b>Iowa MRPC Vice-Chair</b>	<a href="mailto:col_graber@yahoo.com">col_graber@yahoo.com</a> Ph: 319-372-1896 (work) Cell: 319-470-5522	06/30/2019
<b>LOUISA COUNTY</b>			
Jay Schweitzer P.O. Box 112 Columbus Junction, IA 52738		<a href="mailto:Jayts@yahoo.com">Jayts@yahoo.com</a> Work: 319-728-2219 Home: 319-728-3180	06/30/2021

## MUSCATINE COUNTY

Ann Meeker  
101 W. Mississippi Dr. Ste 700  
Muscatine, IA 52761

[ameeker@machlink.com](mailto:ameeker@machlink.com)  
Home: 563-263-5057  
Cell: 563-299-0917

06/30/2021

## SCOTT COUNTY

Ann Geiger  
226 N. River Dr, Box 226  
Princeton, IA 52768

**Iowa MRPC Secretary  
Marketing Committee**  
Cell: 563-508-3945

[geiger@mchsi.com](mailto:geiger@mchsi.com)  
Ph: 563-289-3267

06/30/2021

## MRPC TECHNICAL SUPPORT

### Iowa Department of Transportation

Mary Stahlhut  
Iowa DOT, Systems Planning  
800 Lincoln Way  
Ames, IA 50010

**Iowa MRPC Bd Administrator  
Nat'l Transp/Marketing**

[mary.stahlhut@iowadot.us](mailto:mary.stahlhut@iowadot.us)  
Ph: 515-239-1369  
Fax: 515-233-7857

### Department of Natural Resources

Margo Underwood  
609 S. Shore Drive  
Clear Lake, IA 50428

**Iowa MRPC Advisory  
Nat'l Enviro, Rec & Ag**

[Margo.Underwood@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Margo.Underwood@dnr.iowa.gov)  
Ph: 641-420-3896

### Department of Natural Resources Parks

[Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Randy.Schultz@dnr.iowa.gov)

### Economic Development Authority

Shawna Lode  
East Grand office Park  
200 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Iowa MRPC Advisory  
Nat'l Marketing**

[Shawna.Lode@iowaEDA.com](mailto:Shawna.Lode@iowaEDA.com)  
Ph: 515-725-3090

### US Army Corps of Engineers

Ron Deiss  
Clock Tower Bldg, Box 2003  
Rock Island, IL 60204

**Iowa MRPC Advisory  
Nat'l Enviro, Rec**

[Ronald.w.deiss@usace.army.mil](mailto:Ronald.w.deiss@usace.army.mil)  
Ph: 309-794-5185

### Iowa DOT Office of Systems Planning

Deb Arp

**Policy and Agency  
Support  
Grant Team Leader**

[debra.arp@iowadot.us](mailto:debra.arp@iowadot.us)  
Ph: 515-239-1681

Craig Markley

**Office Director**

[craig.markley@iowadot.us](mailto:craig.markley@iowadot.us)  
515-239-1027

Peggy Riecken

**Secretary/Claims**

[peggy.riecken@iowadot.us](mailto:peggy.riecken@iowadot.us)  
Ph: 515-239-1664

### National MRPC

Suzanne Thiede-Barnet  
222 State St., Ste 400  
Madison, WI 53703

**Consultant Leadership  
Executive Director**

[MPRC@pilchbarnet.cm](mailto:MPRC@pilchbarnet.cm)  
[susanne@pilchbarnet.com](mailto:susanne@pilchbarnet.com)

Lyn Pilch  
222 State St., Ste 400

**Marketing + Mississippi  
River Country**

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

## 2017-2018 Iowa MRPC Meeting Minutes

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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  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, Oct. 19, 2017  
Princeton Community Center- Boll's building  
428 S. River Drive, Princeton

### MRPC Call to order

Chair Edith Pfeffer called the meeting to order.

### Attendance

Roll call was taken with a quorum of the eight-member FY 2018 roster present.

#### Commissioners:

Edith Pfeffer, Chair, Martin Graber, VC.; Jay Schweitzer, Ann Geiger, Lisa Walsh, Jenna Pollock, Barbara Besch

#### Tech Members:

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program  
Jordan Taley, DNR

### Welcome and introductions

Pfeffer asked Taley to introduce himself. Taley works for the Department of Natural Resources at Wild Cat Den State Park. He is a full-time employee and noted the Mill Pine schoolhouse and Grist Mill are two largest attractions. No special activities are planned for the winter. Interpretive staff is there spring and summer. He said some of the largest groups come from schools.

### Minutes

The minutes were reviewed, and Geiger moved to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2017. The motion was seconded by Graber.

### Treasurer report

The printed report of the MRPC DOT appropriation budget was shared with a current balance of \$32,871.28. Walsh moved to approve the expense report. The motion was seconded by Geiger.

\*Approved.

## **Budget Planning**

In reviewing the state 2018 FY Budget report, the Commission discussed adjusting it to add \$150 for the National Byway Foundation. (<http://www.nsbfoundation.com/>) The funds could be transferred from marketing.

The Byways of Iowa Foundation (BIF) supports statewide Iowa byway efforts. The Iowa Great River Road did not participate last year and has benefitted from its art project with four projects located along the Road. Stahlhut explained there are two organizations supporting designated Iowa Byways. There is the foundation (BIF) which does the fund-raising; and the Byways of Iowa Coalition (BIC) which is boots on the ground (Byway managers and local stakeholders representatives) and makes requests to the foundation for project support and fundraising. BIC officers attend the BIF board meetings on behalf of their members. The art grant project is nearing completion. The foundation board recently voted to connect with a bus tour organization. There was discussion about giving \$500 to the Iowa Bi-Ways Foundation. The pros and cons of participating were discussed. BIF has been reorganized after some difficulties over the past two years and member fees no longer go to overhead or consultants and have been directed to shared efforts. Schweitzer said maybe good will should be exhibited by participating. No action was taken on BIF membership.

Graber moved to take \$150 from marketing budget to the National Scenic Byway Foundation. The motion was seconded by Pollock and approved.

The Commission discussed having a bi-annual newsletter. Schweitzer moved a newsletter be sent out by Pfeffer by January 2018 to all stakeholders. The motion was seconded by Walsh and approved.”

Pfeffer said Paula Mayer, a marketing agent is someone who could help with the newsletter. A \$500 fee was discussed to engage her, but no action was taken. Stakeholders need to be updated. Pfeffer said it would change after the November elections. Stahlhut said some of the problem is that there is no “general” address for many stakeholders. For example, to get to various legislators there is no general email – such as “city clerk” for a community. Pfeffer said Mayer has the ability to keep a digital contact list when complete.

Besch moved to approve FY 2016 - 2018 budget as amended. Graber seconded.  
\*Approved.

## **Interpretive Center Reports:**

Pollock said the summer was busy and successful.

## **Member Business**

Dan Petersen sent resignation as Muscatine representative. Pfeffer said Ann Meeker had been recommended for the position and the transition is in process.

## **Election of officers to serve until July 2018.**

Walsh nominated Geiger as secretary. Schweitzer seconded and the motion carried. Besch moved Schweitzer as Treasurer. Pollock seconded the motion and it carried. Schweitzer moved Graber as vice-chair. Walsh seconded and the motion carried. Schweitzer moved Pfeffer as chair. Walsh seconded the motion and it carried.

Chair – Pfeffer

Vice-Chair – Graber

Treasurer – Schweitzer  
Secretary – Geiger

### **National MRPC Committee Reports:**

Sustainability award nominations need to be in by April 1 for action by the fall.

Bicycle Ride along the GRR. Pollock is working with bikers in the northeast and is looking for biking enthusiasts in other counties in Iowa to participate. Pfeffer said Zane Pennock from Clinton would be a person to contact. Schweitzer has Louisa County enthusiasts. Geiger said there are several in Scott County, as did Walsh for Des Moines County. Pollock said the idea is to have each county have a bike ride. Send names of those interested to Pollock.

Transportation Committee – Corridor Management plans are being encouraged and application for people who want to get involved. Wisconsin has the 1994 design guidelines for the GRR to review. IDOT management plan and historic documents are done according to Stahlhut.

Graber said we have two new interpretive centers. The grant which allowed the development of Lansing has been discontinued, so that is the last of the interpretive centers which can use that for development. Iowa now has 18 along the “east coast.” Oak Alley Plantation in Mississippi was not adopted. Walsh said Burlington Historical Society is excited about becoming an interpretive center and paperwork is being completed. Geiger added it is the old Burlington Library building.

Discussion of grants and what could be submitted for.

Marketing Committee: Discussion about ad in Midwest Living. Besch said most of the discussion concerned about working with gentleman who was walking the GRR. Filled out the request for information to each state and responded to all questions. Will be sent in by mail.

### **Iowa legislative outreach meeting plans**

Next scheduled meeting is November 16 in Muscatine at the Community College. This is a change from the November 20 meeting date at the Button Museum.

Legislative members will be sent an invitation to the McAvoy Center 1403 Park Ave (old H61) in Muscatine for the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Pfeffer will send invitations for legislators to join us for lunch and meet with them in the afternoon. The board members were encouraged to contact their legislators.

Pfeffer read the correspondence. It was noted and filed.

### **Other Business**

Iowa MRPC Annual Reports

Pfeffer asked each commissioner to provide the number of 2017 MRPC Annual Reports they will distribute. DOPT will ship them to commissioners accordingly.

New Iowa Great River Road Banners for Interpretive Centers

Stahlhut showed the new Iowa byway signs. Commission discussed redesigning the tear sheets and a banner with pictures of interpretive centers and map. Marketing Committee will discuss a design. Banners and tear sheets will be available together. When fresh and complete active language

descriptions of all the interpretive centers is provided by commissioners, the banner and supporting materials can be designed.

#### Young House

A letter from a citizen of Belleview asking the Commission to help save the house of Joseph Albert Young. There is concern that the house which is part of the history of the development of the Road might be sold along with all the contents. Young was one of the founding members of the organization (Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission) and actively worked on the development of the Road. The Board said this was a possible project for a grant to save the building and development an interpretive center. Pfeffer said the possibility had been presented to Belleview previously and had not moved forward.

Geiger moved to have the Commission support the retention of the Young House as an historic site and possible interpretive center in the future by writing to SHIPPO and copies to the City of Bellevue and other interested parties including the national MRPC. Seconded by Graber.

\*Approved.

#### **Prioritization exercise**

Iowa Byways Program training meeting was attended by Pfeffer and Besch on October 11<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners took a survey for interpretive master planning next steps which was introduced at the Byways meeting. The top survey result was to start looking at how to unify the website(s) and use Tour Iowa to get achieve it. The key is to get information to the site. Part of the discussion centered around how to get inquiries regarding a specific site to the Tour Iowa site and vice-versa. Also discussed was the best way to reduce various streams of information; simplify; and get out to the public. Information is changed/corrected one place and that creates a domino effect involving all the rest of the information.

The meeting was adjourned.

Ann Geiger, Secretary



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting Notes  
Thursday, Nov. 16, 2017  
McAvoy Center  
1403 Park Avenue, Room 101-102  
Muscatine, IA

**MRPC Call to order**

Chair Edith Pfeffer called the meeting to order.

**Attendance**

Roll call was taken with a lack of a quorum of the eight-member FY 2018 roster present.

Commissioners:

Edith Pfeffer, Chair, Barb Besch, Jenna Pollock, and Ann Geiger

Tech Members:

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Legislators

Representative Andy McKeen – Jackson County; Representative Gary Carlson – Muscatine County; Representative Norlin Mommson – Clinton County; Monica McKurth– Davenport Councilman;

Others

Zachery Smith, Muscatine Journal

**Welcome and introductions**

Pfeffer asked Smith to introduce himself. Talley works for the Muscatine Journal and wanted more information about the Commission.

**Minutes**

Because of the lack of a quorum, the minutes from the October meeting will be approved at the next meeting.

**Treasurer report**

There was no Treasurer's Report.

**Budget Planning**

The Commission has not paid annual MRPC national dues. The Commission went over budget with the expenses of the national meeting. In-state travel meals are no longer reimbursable, unless there is an overnight stay. Iowa By-Ways money is still there and paid administration to do annual report. Those present agreed to spend for Travel Iowa and to add dollar amounts and expenditures to the budget.

**Member Business**

Pfeffer said Ann Meeker had been recommended for the Commission position in Muscatine County. She has accepted, and the transition is in process.

### **Interpretive Center Reports:**

Pollock said there would be cocoa and cookies at the Motor Mill will be open with decorations to start for the holidays. Deer cameras are working and they get deer and tourists taking their own pictures. Open every week-end next year starting in May and until the 2<sup>nd</sup> full week-end in October. The Center is open week-ends and by special appointments for school or other visits. The Center accepts donations only. Working on special programs for every week-end next year so there is something each week-end. Art show is a big success. **This year the theme is art, culture, and music.**

### **Bike Ride**

Pollock is not sure there can be a free-standing ride and it may be an addition or enhancement for existing rides. Pfeffer said Joe Taylor, Quad Cities Convention Bureau, is opposed to having another ride in the area. Pollock said she got the most responses from the Scott County group. Many ride websites are not posted for 2018 yet. She will have a better report in February.

Geiger said the bike paths are being worked on in Princeton. Several grants have been applied for, but have not been funded. The group will continue to apply. The path is to North of Riverdale and south to edge of Buffalo.

### **Transportation**

Stahlhut said the installation of signs is continuing. Man in charge retired.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Funding memo was sent. Besch said she didn't see how it was applicable. It is basically for infrastructure. One area which might be applicable would be an overlook. Funds must be applied for through a government entity and they would distribute funds.

Pfeiffer has asked for a letter of support for the City of Clinton to put a road along the dike which would extend River Drive up to Lyons. It could be about 2-2.5 miles which would augment the bike path.

### **Marketing**

Besch said she was working on the passport. Geiger discussed the banners. Her suggestion was that we have an additional "booklet" which would incorporate a passport activity to describe the River Road and its opportunities. The committee will continue to work on them.

Each county should develop a "trip tick" for 1-3 days of activities for touring in every area. Focus on activities and views and recreation from the Road.

Geiger presented a mock banner sign for the Commission to consider. Based on the Commission's response, she and Besch will continue to work on the passport and banner for the next meeting. Everyone should send summer activities to Travel Iowa or to Mississippi River.com

The Commission broke for lunch with legislators.

\*\*\*\*\*

A video showing the Great River Road which was preceded with footage of the signing of the proclamation supporting the GRR by Governor Reynolds.

Pfeiffer noted the Commission is listed in Code of Iowa – 308. It gets \$40K a year in transportation budget. Of that amount, the Iowa group pays \$15K to the national organization.

Daily traffic on GRR has increased. It is difficult to gauge, because some roads are county, some state. Carlson asked if the numbers presented were strictly the River Road or across the other scenic byways in the state. Geiger said based on living on the GRR, traffic has continued to increase

**National marketing:** 2018 MRPC will advertise in Expedia \$500, Meredith Digital - \$2,000, Trip Advisor \$2,000 and Iowa Travel Guide \$2,500. The Commission reviewed spending for 2016-17.

Slides were shown focusing on impact of tourism on economy/employment.

The Commission requested funding for: staffing assistance; a social media manager for Facebook, Twitter, Blog, and Instagram; bike ride along the GRR; and Mississippi River Country (national marketing in Japan). The national marketing will cost \$20,000 to do it. Iowa and Kentucky bowed out.

Carlson asked about the National Geographic (NGO) site. Were we on the site? Mississippi River Trail (MRT) executive director left MRT to take the NGO site. The site is not working. A \$55,000 note was not paid by two communities and NGO voted recently to abandon the site. NGO has been sold and the site is not a focus of the organization.

McKeen said in his area there is more and more interest in tourism. He said it is important for local cities and counties buy into the effort and should participate. What could funds be used for? Pfeiffer said we need a staffer. We are the only commission that doesn't have a staffer.

What kind of increased support for funding from DOT. Pfeiffer said we have made requests for increased funding.

McKurth asked about funding from Deere or Arconic or other local corporations.

Carlson said we should think about using the term "visitors" as opposed to "tourists". It gives a different feeling.

McKeen said if we can show the increased traffic along the Road that is something which could be marketed.

Pfeiffer said she would like the hotel-motel tax changed. First 30 days of a motel stay is taxed. After 31-days any stay is free of hotel-motel tax. For those working or taking a vacation which extends beyond 30 days there is no tax which could be used by the counties along the Road.

Pfeiffer reported on Iowa Byways Sustainability Team. She said it was one of the better meetings. New signs and panels are going up in several of the interpretive centers. The Motor Mill is getting 16 new panels. Designs of panels match the byway panels and Besch said they are gorgeous.

## Meeting Schedule

There will be no meeting in December. There was discussion about changing the meeting day to Monday, and those present agreed to the change. The first meeting in 2018 will be Monday, February 5 at 10:00 at Nahant Marsh. If the site is not available, the Commission will meet at the Eldridge Library.

Ann Geiger  
Secretary



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 5, 2018  
Hurstville Interpretive Center  
18670 63<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Maquoketa, IA

### **MRPC Call to order**

Vice Chair Martin Graber called the meeting to order.

### **Attendance**

Roll call was taken with a quorum of the members present.

Commissioners: \_\_\_\_\_

Barb Besch, Jenna Pollock, John Goodmann, Lisa Walsh, Jay Schweitzer, and Ann Geiger

Tech Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program, Jason Gilmore, Department of Natural Resources, Mines of Spain

### Others

Senator John Bowman, discussed budgeting for the next state fiscal year. Wanted to know what the commission does to justify the budget. He said it had been suggested the MRPC was a duplicate of other groups. The commissioners responded. Graber said in many cases that was true. Geiger said traffic on the Road has increased in the 30+ years she lived there. And all that traffic results in economic development.

### **Welcome and introductions**

Graber recognized the death of former chair, Edith Pfeiffer. He read a letter from the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission complimenting the work she did and expressing she would be missed.

Pollock inquired about having some sort of national award or local award in Pfeiffer's name. Walsh agreed and asked if there were any awards within the Parkway Commissions. No one could identify anything immediately. Everyone agreed Pfeiffer had a significant impact on the organization not only in Iowa but nationally. Further discussion will occur.

### **Minutes**

On motion by Pollock and seconded Walsh, the minutes of the October 19, 2017 were approved. Notes of the November 16, 2017 meeting with legislators and other stakeholders were reviewed.

### **Treasurer's report**

The budget was overspent for the annual meeting by \$115.22. Will have to make an amendment later. The annual MRPC dues have not been paid as yet. Schweitzer moved to approve the budget. Goodman seconded the motion and it carried.

### **Interpretive Center Reports:**

Graber asked for reports from the interpretive centers as to what they anticipate for the summer before the season opens. Geiger said she would visit the Eco Center in Low Mor in Clinton County in addition to her own. Schweitzer said he would take the two centers in Muscatine County.

Gilmore helps manage two interpretive centers – Mines of Spain and Bellevue State Park. At Mines of Spain another employee was eliminated and not going to be replaced. Mines of Spain is 1,500 acres on the west edge of Dubuque. The nature center had an addition in 2007. 27,000 people went through last summer, and with the deletion of one employee it may not be able to deal with that number in the future. 18 miles of trails no camping; also canoes and kayaks are available. Mines of Spain has a friends group and they are very active. They are open 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the week. Bellevue State Park is open by appointment and they are looking for a friends group. There is a new trail developed which has boosted attendance.

### **Future meeting schedule**

The commission agreed to have third Monday meetings with committee meetings in between.

Graber opened a discussion about how the Commission wants to conduct future meetings and how to deal with the open office. Geiger suggested leaving things the way they are until June when elections occur at the commission. Graber said he was going to look into having online meetings or skype or some other format rather than on-site meeting.

### **Semi-Annual meeting in Quincy, April 13, 2018**

The Commission discussed who will be going and will not to see if a quorum will be present to have a meeting. Not enough will be present. Senator Bowman asked about new commissioners, and he was told the Governor's office will not be appointment new members to the Commission until June. Geiger asked if, since there has been a death, if something can be moved forward. Graber said if one of the commissioners is not available, it may make it impossible to have a meeting. Bowman said he would look into it.

## **Committee reports**

*Culture and Heritage* – Schweitzer said there was nothing new.

*Marketing* – National marketing is thinking of going with one big financial supporter like many other organizations. Geiger said she did not have the banner design ready yet because after seeing the passport design she changed direction and will have something within the next month. Besch had a mock-up of the passport which Geiger is having the banner match. Besch said most of the interpretive centers had stamps, and the passports would be at the centers. Passport draft tentatively approved to be continued for final version.

On motion by Geiger the Commission agreed to purchase the material for the banners for an amount not to exceed \$300. Schweitzer seconded the motion and it carried.

Geiger inquired about the Iowa Byways guide update. Next version to be printed in May or June. Other than corrections, there will be no changes to the existing guide. Discussion on how to get things online. Stahlhut suggested making a page of just for the Iowa Great River Road.

*Transportation* – One call with transportation committee and nothing outstanding.

*Environment, Recreation, Heritage* – No report

*Bike Ride* – Pollock sent for information regarding a bike ride with places to stay during a ride. She contacted county engineers a note to discuss availability of highways but have had no responses as yet. Schweitzer asked about portions of the route. Discussion about how it would work and where it could go with regard to traffic, etc. Pollock will resend memo for information for county participation. Graber and Schweitzer said maybe the ride would not necessarily have to be from one end of the road to the other but could be done in sections. Geiger said RAGBRAI would end in Davenport again, so the bicyclists in her area are focusing on that event. Pollock said she thought trying to do anything in 2018 would not be possible with the amount of work to be done. Schweitzer suggested focusing on promoting other rides this year.

## **Chairwoman's Report**

None

## **Ex-Official Member Reports**

Stahlhut, Iowa DOT asked if someone from the commission could attend a monthly meeting for the Iowa Byways program. Goodman said he would attend on behalf of the commission. She reviewed the byways from the corridor management plan.

### **Corridor Management Plan interpretation implementation**

Review of the Schmeekle Reserve interpreters presentation on Iowa Byways information hubs.

### **2015 Iowa Great River Road Corridor Management Plan**

FY 2018 goals, priorities, resources, challenges, and partnering opportunities. Graber called attention to the 2018 portion of the plan. He said there were little changes.

Adjourned

Ann Geiger  
Secretary



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 4, 2018  
Princeton Community Center  
428 S. River Drive  
Princeton, IA

**MRPC Call to order**

Vice Chair Martin Graber called the meeting to order.

**Attendance**

Roll call was taken with a quorum of the members present.

Commissioners:

Martin Graber, Lisa Walsh, Barb Besch, Jenna Pollock, and Ann Geiger

Tech Members:

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Others:

Craig Markley, Iowa DOT, Jane Regan (by phone), Lisa Voges, Dept of Culture of Affairs

**Welcome and introductions**

Markey will update the Commission on duties and responsibilities. Voges will give short report.

**Minutes**

On motion by Pollock and seconded by Besch, the minutes of the February 5, 2018 were approved.

**Treasurer's report**

There was no formal Treasurer's report. The Commission reviewed the balance left in this fiscal year's budget.

**Interpretive Center Reports:**

Pollock said the center was open and ready for business.

**Future meeting schedule**

The commission agreed to have third Monday meetings with committee meetings in between. Meetings would take place in July, October, January 2019, and April 2019

National MRPC Annual meeting will take place October 23-25 in West Memphis, Arkansas.

## Committee reports

*Culture and Heritage* – Lisa Voges - Art Summit from Iowa Arts Council is August 3 in Ankeny. There are three tracks for the one day summit. Cost is \$50. Our Town is a grant opportunity for an art project designed as a partnership between with communities and universities. Name of grant is Arts Build Communities. It is a \$10K grant with no match required. The grant is to focus on some aspect of improvement in community. The Commission suggested applying for a grant for the Young House in Bellevue. Besch will forward the information to the community member focusing on the project.

*Marketing* – Besch said the passport was almost complete. She wanted to proof it once more before finalizing.

Geiger distributed the design for the new banners. The Commission approved of it and requested that photos of each interpretive center be added to the sign for those who do not have smart phones and do not use apps.

Geiger inquired about the Iowa Byways travel guide. She said the marketing committee was told changed needed to be done by July of 2017, but they have not heard anything as yet. Besch pointed out one of the inaccuracies. Stahlhut said the guide was going to be corrected for inaccuracies this year and a complete reworking of it will be done in the future. There was no specific dated mentioned.

With approximately \$15k left in this fiscal's year budget which needs to be spent before June 30<sup>th</sup>, Regan suggested doing billboards and radio for \$13K. Walsh moved to allocate \$13K for advertising before June 31 with Regan and the marketing committee making the decisions. Geiger seconded. Motion carried.

Motion to amend by Besch, seconded by Walsh. To adjust the billboard and radio number to include any additional marketing activity and payment of designer fees. Amendment carried and revote on original motion which carried.

Besch gave a report on the national marketing meeting. The summer promotional activity is "Flavors on the Great River Road Giveaway. There is a \$500 prize. The interpretive centers are/were to have received promotional cards. There is confusion as to whether or not they were automatically sent or need to be requested. August starts the Pilot's Wheel program for marketing.

Besch asked if the Commission wanted to support advertising in Midwest Living. Pollock moved not to fund the Midwest Living campaign, seconded by Walsh and the motion carried.

There was more discussion about a national sponsor for the Great River Road but no one has stepped forward to contact a sponsor.

*Transportation* – No report

*Environment, Recreation, Heritage* – No report

*Bike Ride* – Pollock said she has not heard anything from any of the other counties in the state other than Scott.

### **Chairman's Report**

Submit county lists for 2018 National MRPC Year of Art, Culture, and Music on the Great River Road Graber reviewed the April National MRPC board meeting report. He said a lot of time was spent discussion the national strategic plan. Finalization of the discussion should be at the fall meeting.

The NATGO site was a contractor not NATGO who did it and it was not going to go forward. However someone donated some money so it may still be viable.

The Commission discussed the Corridor Management Plan, and whether or not the Commission actually uses it. Graber said there was little change for 2018. Some of the Commissioners said it works as a guide, but as for specifics, it was not used. Part of the issue, it was determined, was that after the entities were originally contacted and the report was designed, there was no contact with the stakeholders to show/discuss the results.

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

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT – GDRC road signs are all out. There are problems in Burlington according to Walsh with Alliant Energy. Stahlhut said she was in contact with the City, and they were going to reinstall the signs. There was clarification that the Byways of Iowa Foundation can have 501's. The membership has dropped from \$500 to \$250 for each of the byways for membership.

Pollock moved Motion to pay \$500 Byways of Iowa Foundation for 2 years, seconded by Besch and the motion carried. [SEE ATTACHMENT]

Craig Markley, Iowa DOT reviewed the required and official duties of the MRPC. There is a \$40K budget from the state. DOT manages the budget. In June and July the departments at state level start to put next fiscal year's budget together. Geiger asked if state could have a separate line item to pay the \$15,000 for the national organization. With a \$40K budget and \$15K coming off the top for the national dues, that does not leave a lot left to promote the GRR. The Commission needs a page of information including how funding has been used previously. Missouri, Kentucky, Mississippi don't pay national dues.

Stahlhut said the Governor's office does not have official notification of retirement from Muscatine.

Regan said there are problems getting people to serve. Employed people have to take vacation days and don't want to do that. Geiger said the small town along the river have long been ignored and suggested contacting them would be a possible recruiting opportunity. She said her interactions with the smaller communities has been positive and there is a level of enthusiasm there. She also suggested partnering with the local libraries for dissemination of information and possible interaction.

Walsh noted there were support groups from the State for the MRPC but they have not attended any meetings. It would be nice if the Commission had some contact or attendance.

## **Discussion**

In attempt to further market the GRR, the Commission discussed hiring someone part-time to manage information and activities along the river. This could include hiring more than one person to equal one full-time person. The Commission discussed dividing the state into three sections, which it logically fits now. The northern section could end at either Dubuque or Clinton; the middle portion could include Muscatine, or end just north of it; and the southern portion would go to Keokuk. Because of the vast differences in population and geography, the three regions are different and would require someone who is familiar with their region. Funding will require discussion, as will qualifications and duty descriptions.

The next meeting will be Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. Location will be announced later.

Adjourned

Ann Geiger  
Secretary



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 16, 2018  
Princeton Community Center  
428 S. River Drive  
Princeton, IA

**MRPC Call to order**

Vice Chair Martin Graber called the meeting to order.

**Attendance**

Roll call was taken with a quorum of the members present.

Commissioners:

Martin Graber, Lisa Walsh, Barb Besch, Jenna Pollock, Jay Schweitzer, Clyde Bradley, Ann Meeker, and Ann Geiger

Tech Members:

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Others:

Jane Regan, Foundation Treasurer

**Welcome and introductions**

Graber introduced the new commissioners: Clyde Bradley, Clinton; and Ann Meeker, Muscatine.

**Minutes**

On motion by Pollock and seconded by Schweitzer, the minutes of the June 6, 2018 were approved.

**Treasurer's report**

Motion to approve the final 2019 fiscal year's budget by Schweitzer and seconded by Walsh. Motion carried.

The Commission reviewed and discussed the 2020 budget proposal. Next year's budget needs to be submitted before November. The Commission will discuss it at the October meeting. Schweitzer moved to move an extra \$250 to the travel line. Walsh seconded the motion and it carried.

**Interpretive Center Reports:** None

## *Marketing Committee*

Besch gave a report on the national marketing meeting. The national office is concentrating on the lower half of the road with the southern states. She also reported the commission can get state maps free except for shipping if the dues are paid.

Geiger said everyone should email her as to how many cases of maps they need and she will find out shipping.

Byways guide is updated and needs to be printed – hopefully this week.

Passports were passed out and are first to go to the interpretive centers. No gift is associated with them when filled, but if individual centers want to give a prize that is up to them. The Commission thanked Besch for her work getting them completed.

Geiger apologized to the Commission. She said she understood the banners had been sent to the State with the revision suggested at the last meeting. Stahlhut said they have not been received. Geiger will follow up.

Regan presented both the metal and ceramic mugs to the commission. The ceramic mugs are made with Mississippi mud and are safe for human use, but not dishwasher or microwave safe. She said they could be used as an incentive gift or as a fund-raiser for the interpretive centers. A suggested price would be \$22-\$25 each.

Stahlhut said if the mugs were to be sold, they would have to be approved by the DOT because state money was used to purchase them. Regan asked if there were parameters which were available to the commission to help make the decision as to how to pay for the mugs. Stahlhut was not able to contact anyone at the DOT to provide any information during the meeting and did not have the information. The Commission requested information as soon as possible as to whether or not the metal mugs could be sold or how they could be used.

Meeker moved to request the foundation fund the \$1800 ceramic mugs and to request the DOT to fund the metal mugs out of the MPRC budget funded by the DOT within DOT guidelines and to give direction to the commission. Bradley seconded the motion and it carried.

*Transportation* – Nothing.

*Environment, Recreation, Heritage* – Nothing.

## **Chairman's Report**

Graber reminded commissioners to submit county lists for 2018 National MRPC Year of Art, Culture, and Music on the Great River Road.

Graber reviewed the July National MRPC board meeting report. He distributed an agenda from the national meeting. National dues are due on the calendar year. September 1, 2018 state reports due,

the distinguished service report due, interpretive centers reports are due, honorary membership nominations are due.

The Commission placed Edith Pfeffer's name for consideration for the Honorary Membership Award. Meeker moved to present her name for nomination and Besch seconded. Motion carried. Graber will fill out the nomination form.

Graber said it would be a good idea for Commissioners to meet with the Governor. Regan said that has traditionally been done in August. Graber will follow up.

Who will man a booth – if there is one – at the Iowa State Fair this year. Walsh volunteered. A discussion was held as to what is needed and the tear sheet would be given out, and a banner is needed and info to pass out. Consider inviting the CVVB's. Stahlhut will let the Commission know the dates identified for all the byways to have a booth at the fair. Motion to attend the fair for one day and pay \$250 for the entry fee by Schweitzer and seconded by Meeker. Motion carried.

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

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT, will follow up on how the drink containers can be used regarding State funding. Passports were free for the first printing to see how popular they are. After that the marketing committee can look at it and see how many more we need and how they will be funded.

The Commission asked where the latest economic impact regarding the Road was located. At the bottom of the Travel Iowa website is the economic impact of the travel on the Great River Road. Regan said the report was going to be completed every five years. She said the Commission needed that impact statement more often than every five years.

### **Discussion**

Graber suggested the commission look at the plan and decide the best way to move forward. The Commission should decide on a project for the year based on the Plan and move forward

### **Future meeting schedule**

The next meeting will be in October on October 15<sup>th</sup> which is the Monday before national meeting. The Commission discussed of phone meetings in between. Graber also suggested a telephonic meeting between quarterly meetings. Still working with DOT as to how to do it. ICN may be the way to do it.

Meeting adjourned

Ann Geiger  
Secretary

# Great River Road

GA View 5\_30\_17 Travel Iowa, Great River Road Segment

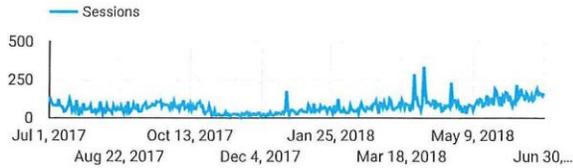


Jul 1, 2017 - Jun 30, 2018

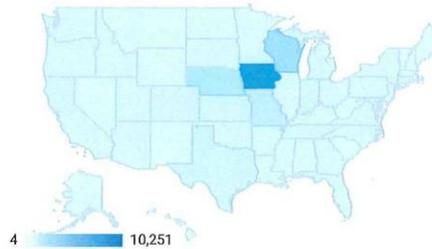
## Key Metrics

Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
23,403	17,398	27,140	16.81%	7.56	08:25	205,309	01:16

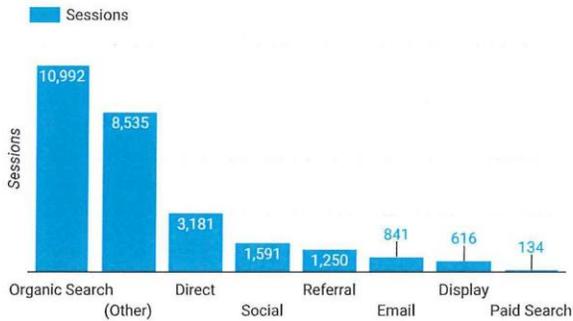
## Trending Sessions



## Sessions by Origin

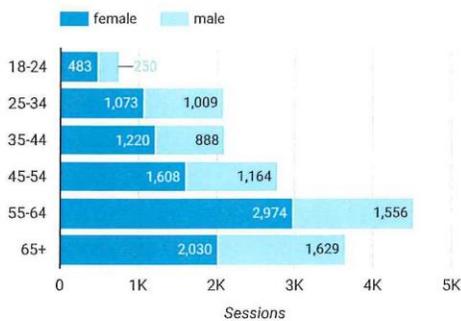


## Acquisition/Channel of Origin



Region	Sessions
1. Iowa	10,251
2. Illinois	3,957
3. Wisconsin	2,608
4. Nebraska	1,668
5. Minnesota	1,621
6. Missouri	918
7. Texas	470
8. California	349
9. Kansas	293
10. Colorado	280
11. Indiana	272
12. Ohio	267
13. Michigan	263
14. North Carolina	237
15. Florida	203
16. New York	177
17. Arizona	168
18. South Dakota	168
19. Georgia	159
20. Pennsylvania	147

## Sessions By Age / Gender



1 - 20 / 149 < >



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

September 1, 2017

Vacant  
Allamakee County

Jenna Pollack  
Clayton County

John Goodman  
Dubuque County

Barbara Besch  
Jackson County

Edith Pfeffer, Chair  
Clinton County

Ann Geiger  
Scott County

Daniel Petersen, Secretary  
Muscatine County

Jay Schweitzer  
Louisa County

Lisa Walsh  
Des Moines County

Martin Graber, Vice-Chair  
Lee County

[www.iowagreatriverroad.com](http://www.iowagreatriverroad.com)

Dear Culture and Heritage Committee:

For the past year and a half I have been working to get an interpretive center for Des Moines County in Burlington, Iowa. When appointed to the IMRPC representing Des Moines County over 18 months ago I was surprised that there were no centers in our county. One of my tasks has been to get an interpretive center approved. I am happy to report that my work is starting to take form. Last month I submitted to Edith Pfeffer and Martin Graber the Great River Road Network of Museums and Interpretive Center Nomination Form for the Heritage Center Museum, which is operated by the Des Moines Co. Historical Society. This past month, at our July meeting, our group concluded that this center was worthy of being an interpretive center. Their application is to be presented to the National Heritage and Culture Committee in September. If approved, Iowa would then have 17 interpretive centers.

Edith Pfeffer and I met with Lindsey Schier and Alex to do a walk-through of the center. Edith Pfeffer was very impressed with the center and what it offered to visitors. She kept commenting "why has this center not applied for application until now?" The Heritage Museum is operated by the Des Moines Co. Historical Society, which is a private, non-profit organization. The mission of the organization is to "provide opportunities for education, research and preservation of the history of Des Moines County". This building was originally the Burlington Public Library. Ten years ago the historical society purchased this building and transformed it to what it is today. This building has been a landmark for our county for many generations. This build has a lot of charm. When I first went to visit Lindsey about making an application, I was amazed at how inviting and charming the building was plus what a wonderful job they had done preserving the building. I told Lindsey that I think a lot of local people such as myself need to explore museums in their own home town. I admit I had not spent much time there since it changed ownership. I love the great open rooms and wonderful permanent collection. I love that they kept the original book stacks featuring the stained glass windows. There is a wonderful lower level with a great room in honor of Bart Howard known for his song "Fly Me to the Moon".

I want to thank the committee for considering this application. I hope this will encourage others in Des Moines Co. to make their application. It is great to see old buildings utilized for other things instead of being torn down.

Sincerely,

Lisa Walsh  
IMRPC – Des Moines County Commissioner