



**Iowa**  
**Mississippi River Parkway Commission**

**2021-2022 Annual Report**  
**September 2022**



**AMERICA'S BYWAYS®**

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



2021-2022

## Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

### CONTENTS

Jim Janett  
Allamakee County

Roger Thomas  
Clayton County

Jared McGovern  
Dubuque County

Paula Mayer  
Jackson County

Leslie Webster  
Clinton County

Ann Geiger, Secretary  
Scott County

Paul Carroll, Treasurer  
Muscatine County

Katherine Hammond  
Louisa County

Lisa Walsh, Vice Chair  
Des Moines County

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 All American 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, and All American Road.
  - 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

---

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 2021. The 2021 semi-annual meeting was cancelled because of Covid-19. The majority of Iowa Commissioners also participated in the National MRPC committee 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 18, 2021 at the Putnam Museum and Science Center, Davenport, Iowa; December 6, 2021 conference call; January 10, 2022 conference call; February 19, 2022, conference call; April 29, 2022 Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Camanche; July 18, 2022, Elkader. Minutes of these meetings are included as a part of this report.

The Commissioners voted to spend more money on advertising to continue the radio and added billboards. Radio ads generally ran the month of June. The Commission extended that to February – March and continued ads mid-May through June. The advertising area was extended to northwest Iowa, and added streaming. Billboards were added to the marketing budget, and a full-page ad was purchased in the fall campground issue of Travel Iowa. This now focused on activities along the Road to all four seasons. In addition, the commission activated the dormant Facebook page and began getting hits.

A project was brought to the Commission to build an interpretive route focusing on the northern journey through Iowa of Zebulon Pike using his own words. This would include brochures, streaming, and looping videos for each Interpretive Center. The Commission reviewed the initial plan and began working to secure funding which will become a multi-year project.

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 2021 National MRPC dues, Iowa Byways Foundation Membership, and Marketing expenses. The Covid-19 virus required the cancellation of the annual semi-annual in-person meeting, and two meetings were held over zoom. The 2022 fall meeting will be in-person in Memphis.

## Fiscal Year Budget

---

Item	Description	Iowa DOT	Amount	Balance
1	MRPC Annual Dues	\$15,000.00	\$7,500.00	0
2	Annual Meeting	0	0	0
3	Semi-Annual Meeting	0	0	0
4	Travel/meals in-state	517.44	517.44	0
5	Iowa Byways Foundation	250.00	250.00	0
6	Administration	49.97	49.97	0
7	Marketing	31,682.59	31,682.59	0
Total		\$40,000.00	40,000.00	0

# 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. It is adding the All American Road designation to its signage and advertising. Also adding the “winter” radio ads to its agenda, it added focus not only to spring, summer, and fall tourism, but the opportunity to see the river in winter and enjoy the American Eagles as they fish. It also funded a full-page ad in the fall camping edition of Travel Iowa.

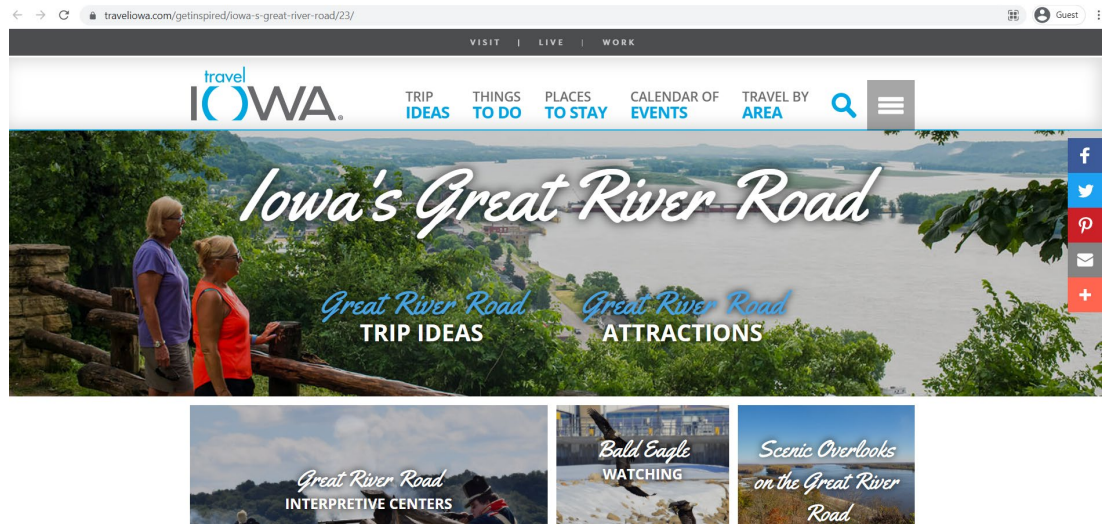
By the time the Commission held its March meeting the semi-annual meeting was cancelled because of Covid-19, and the possibility of future meetings was in question. As a result of the impact this would have on travel along the Mississippi, the Commission expanded its previously discussed focus on marketing. 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 did winter ads from February and March, and added 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, which added streaming, 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).

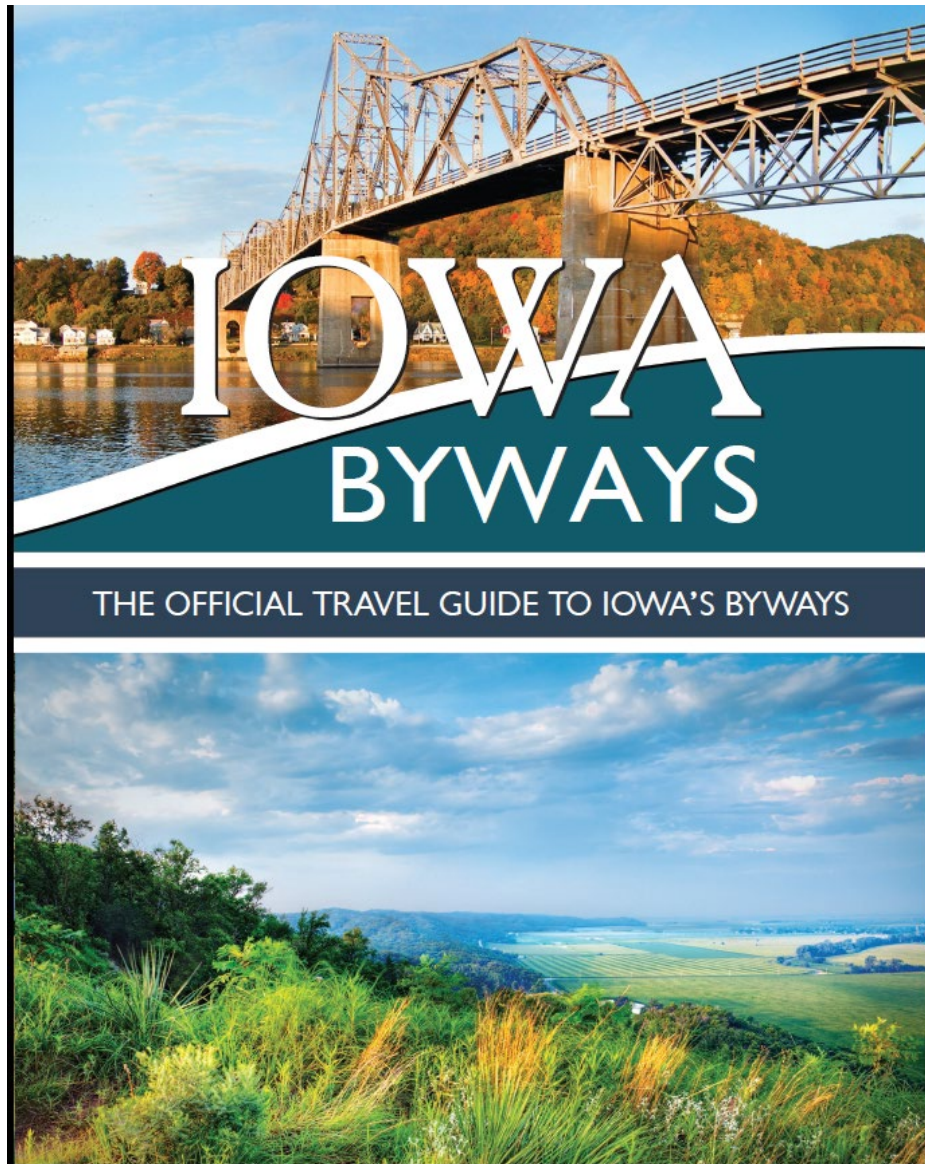


## Iowa Byways Travel Guide

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.iowabyways.org](http://www.iowabyways.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.



Requests for the Guide so far this year has numbered 2, 158



# **THE ROAD**

---

## **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. The City of Burlington has it on its extended development plan, and citizens continue to apply for grants and other funding to replace it. Lisa Walsh, Des Moines County Commissioner, has played an active part in support of those activities, and the Commission is lending support to the saving of the structure, or a viable replacement.

## **CANADIAN PACIFIC, SANTA FE RAILROAD MERGER**

The Canadian Pacific and Santa Fe railroads have applied to the Surface Transportation Board to add another fourteen (14) trains to its route transporting crude oil from Canada to Mexico. Ann Geiger, Scott County Commissioner, has been actively working in opposition to this merger, because the proposed route would cross the Mississippi River at Sabula and continue along the Great River Road to just south of Muscatine. In places, these trains would run right next to the road and within approximately 25 feet of the Mississippi River. Any derailment could result in damage to the road and anyone living next to it, or to the river.

## **Bellevue**

This past year the Commission is still trying to get the information, with no success, regarding the development of the Great River Road copies to 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

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	06/30/2025
<b>CLAYTON COUNTY</b>			
Roger Thomas 17650 Domino Rd Elkader, IA 52043		<a href="mailto:rrthomas@alpinecom.net">rrthomas@alpinecom.net</a> PH: 563-245-1084 Cell: 563-3780-8193	06/30/2025
<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	06/30/2023
<b>DES MOINES COUNTY</b>			
Lisa T. Walsh, <b>Vice-President</b> 6172 Nikonha Pl Burlington, IA 52601	Nat'l Transportation	<a href="mailto:lwalsch6172@gmail.com">lwalsch6172@gmail.com</a> Ph: 319.752.0912 Cell: 319.850.1950	06/30/2023
<b>DUBUQUE COUNTY</b>			
Jared McGovern 12451 Oakbrook Pl Dubuque, IA 52003		<a href="mailto:jmcgovern@rivermuseum.com">jmcgovern@rivermuseum.com</a> Work: 563.557.9545 ext.215 Cell: 563-590-8060	06/30/2023
<b>JACKSON COUNTY</b>			
Paula L Mayer 58414 50th St Sabula, IA 52070	Nat'l Marketing	<a href="mailto:iowamrpcpaulamayer@gmail.com">iowamrpcpaulamayer@gmail.com</a> Cell: 563.357.6292	06/30/2023
<b>LEE COUNTY</b>			
Martin L. Graber, <b>Chair</b> 2163 North Fork Dr Fort Madison, IA 52627	Nat'l Culture & Heritage	<a href="mailto:col_graber@yahoo.com">col_graber@yahoo.com</a> Ph: 319.372.1896 (work) Cell: 319.470.5522	06/30/2023
<b>LOUISA COUNTY</b>			
Katherine Hammond 12635 County Rd Ste 101 Wappelo, IA 52653		<a href="mailto:khammond@louisacountyia.gov">khammond@louisacountyia.gov</a> 563-260-4764	06/30/2025
<b>MUSCATINE COUNTY</b>			
Paul Carroll, <b>Treasurer</b> Nat'l Environment, Recreation and Agriculture (ERA) 504 Chestnut Muscatine, IA 52761		<a href="mailto:paulcarroll@mchlink.com">paulcarroll@mchlink.com</a> Ph: 563.299.5474	06/30/2025
<b>SCOTT COUNTY</b>			
Ann Geiger, <b>Secretary</b> 226 N. River Dr, Box 226 Princeton, IA 52768	Nat'l Culture & Heritage	<a href="mailto:geiger@mchsi.com">geiger@mchsi.com</a> Ph: 563.289.3267 Cell: 563.508.3945	06/30/2025

## MRPC TECHNICAL SUPPORT

### Iowa Department of Transportation

Emily Whaley  
Iowa DOT, Systems Planning  
800 Lincoln Way  
Ames, IA 50010

#### Program Manager

[Emily.Whaley@iowadot.us](mailto:Emily.Whaley@iowadot.us)  
Ph: 515.239.1629

### Department of Natural Resources

Margo Underwood  
609 S Shore Dr  
Clear Lake, IA 50428

#### Nat'l Enviro, Rec & Ag

[Margo.Underwood@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Margo.Underwood@dnr.iowa.gov)  
Ph: 641.420.3896

### Department of Natural Resources

Randy Schultz

#### Parks

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

### Economic Development Authority

Katie Kenne  
1963 Belle Ave Ste 200  
Des Moines, IA 50315

#### Iowa MRPC Advisory Nat'l Marketing

[Katie.Kenne@iowaeda.com](mailto:Katie.Kenne@iowaeda.com)  
Ph: 515-348-6258

### US Army Corps of Engineers

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

#### 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)  
Ph: 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  
Lyn Pilch  
222 State St, Ste 400

#### Consultant Leadership Executive Director

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

#### Marketing + Mississippi River Country

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

## **2021-2022 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:



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**10:00 a.m. October 18, 2021**  
**Putnam Museum and Science Center**  
**1717 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Davenport, Iowa 52804**  
**563-324-1933**

Graber called the meeting to order.

Present: Lisa Walsh, Paul Carroll, Paula Mayer, Jane Regan, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jerod McGovern

Others: Emily Whaley, DOT; Craig Markley, DOT; Leslie Klipsch, Putnam Museum

Mayer moved the minutes of the July 19, 2021. Regan seconded and the motion carried.

Meyer moved the treasurer's report Geiger seconded and the motion carried.

Graber said the National Office's fiscal year is on the Calendar year. The Commission paid \$7,500, half the national dues. He asked if the Commission wanted to pay the other \$7,500. There were no expenditures for the fall meeting since it was a zoom meeting, so the money is in the budget. Geiger moved to not pay the additional \$7,500 to the National Office by December 1<sup>st</sup> for it annual dues. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

Motion to authorize 5-year \$95.96 payment for GoDaddy to host Iowa website. Mayer said she would contact GoDaddy and asked for reimbursement. Moved by Carroll to approve the expenditure and reimbursement, Regan seconded the motion and it carried.

Discussion was held regarding the Iowa Byway Foundation. Walsh moved to approve a \$250 donation for the year. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried.

Geiger said she had been contacted by one of the radio stations to focus on winter activities for the Road, and any ICenter winter activities up to \$4,500. The Commission wants start the ads in November and run until February. Spreading ads out and running part of the week will stretch the budget. Motion to approve the running of the ads by Carroll, seconded by Regan and the

motion carried. Markley asked about taking bids since the amount of the expenditure was over \$1,500. A discussion was held referencing prior ads and the amount of free ads each station would offer. There are basically two conglomerates which control the stations in Iowa. Geiger asked why this would be any different than any of the other ads which the Commission has run for years. She asked if this could be done and approved by November and was assured it could be done. Mayer and Regan said they would get quotes.

Mayer asked about spending a small amount of money for facebook ads to see if it would be beneficial. Mayer moved to start with \$200 to run until the end of the year. Regan seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Geiger said there have been requests for road maps and the passport. Walsh said the National Office did not have enough money for the maps. Geiger said Janett requested some of the maps for Lansing from the National Office and they sent him one with the opportunity for a donation.

The passports are going to be reprinted. There was discussion about removing the stamp portion of the document, and some of the commissioners said some of the Centers liked having them. It provides some interest in pursuing other visits.

**Chairman's report.** Graber asked Walsh to give the report since he was not able to attend. Walsh said the National Office was very happy about the zoom attendance for the fall meeting. Other than running the video of the Road, there was no formal program. All the committees met for an hour and then gave reports to everyone. There was a discussion regarding sending a letter of support to Mississippi River Towns and Initiatives. Some of the board members were not in favor, and Walsh pointed out the amount of corporate financial support it had. A letter was finally agreed upon.

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers Ex-Official Members and others**

Markley reviewed the Guidance document for the Commission. There was a lengthy discussion regarding approval of Pilch and Barnett's job.

### **Update on Activities**

Cascade Bridge. Walsh said there is still no movement, but the new city manager seems to be more open to a solution than previous administrators.

Young Museum. Geiger said access has been impossible. The manager will not grant access and the material is sitting on the floor in unclosed archive boxes. She said the National Office sent a letter and it did not go well. Graber said former member, Attorney Jay Schweitzer, was pursuing the situation and thought the final resolution may have to go to the courts. Both Geiger and Regan suggested finding out when the board met and attend.

Fish Hatchery. Carroll applied through Toyota's Grant National Scenic Byway Foundation. The Hatchery received a \$2K grant for materials and site improvement. United Way and

River Action have used the facility for meetings. The Hatchery is doing a mussel display inside the building. It also got large family donation and Carroll would like to discuss the best use of it with them further. The trails have been improved. A friends group has been formed and Sandy Stephens, is the driver. Linn Pruitt, a member, is on the historic preservation commission.

Zebulon Pike. Carroll said he will get an update soon. Geiger suggested discussing it further in the Non-profit meeting.

Pine Creek Grist Mill. The Mill has closed for the season and has a new director – Ben Marcus.

Sawmill Museum. The Museum is celebrating its 10th anniversary with activities all year long.

Mines of Spain – It is awaiting a 28 E Agreement which would put management of the EB Lyons Center in the hands of Dubuque County Conservation. Hopefully there will be agreement by all parties and by November 10th it can go to the State Natural Resource Commission. The agreement will be between the City of Dubuque, Iowa DNR, Dubuque County Conservation, and the Friends of the Mines of Spain. The Friends of Mines of Spain have been working on this for 7 years.

Hurstville – It has been finishing up a new trail. At the Center the paving is complete. They are working on a Bridge next to connect the trail to the road. Eventually the trail will connect with the section coming north from Maquoketa.

Putnam Museum. Klipsch said the museum is open again with a mask requirement. It is restoring staff and visitors and school groups are coming back. Putnam is hosting a new exhibit opening in November called Winter Wheels - an antique motorcycle exhibit. It got an IMLA (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant for a regional history update. It is the only institution in Iowa to get one and is a multi-year project..

## **Iowa Byways**

Mayer has emailed all ICenters requesting updates to include in the next Byways newsletter, and she emailed Jared Nielsen for assistance in being host to the November Byways meeting.

**Next meeting will be January 10<sup>th</sup>. Geiger will check on the Camanche's Eco Center**





**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**Conference call**  
**10:00 a.m. December 6, 2021**  
**800-509-6344. Passcode. 5778996**

**Call to order and roll call**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 10:45

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

Absent: Paula Mayer

Others: Emily Whaley, Iowa DOT; Gerod Strong, Iowa Capitol Dispatch; Katie Kenne, Iowa Tourism

Strong said he was new with the Dispatch and has been joining meetings when possible. Graber said he would be glad to meeting with him and telling him more about the organization when he is in Des Moines.

**Discussion and approval of winter radio ads**

Geiger said she spoke with Pat O'Brien at WENN and they said they would do the promos and put them on MP3's for \$3,000.

Regan said she would reach out to IHeart, and other radio companies to cover the state. She would ask them to focus on NW and central Iowa She asked for a dollar amount to spend. The Commission would like to spend \$7,500 on radio ads.

A discussion will take place at January meeting on the google ads which Travel Iowa has and a review of available budget.

Janett said Lansing got a lot of central and northwest Iowa this past fall visiting. He asked if the ads needed to be tweaked. Regan said yes. When asking for ideas for the winter ad, Walsh said there is eagle-watching, the road is open, and the river is beautiful. Janett suggested in the ad it be mentioned to check with the local centers for programs, hours, and activities during the winter. Graber wanted to be sure everyone knows there are ICenters open all winter for visitors. Regan asked that each of the ICenters have their information up to date with Travel Iowa and she would discuss with Mayer.

Regan suggest IHeart come up with a time frame for running the ads, and get the Saturday morning ads.

Motion to approve the radio ads by Webster up to the amount of \$7,500. The motion was seconded by Walsh and it carried.

Presentation by Anne Lewis, Pilot. Janett moved to table until the January 10, 2022 meeting. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried.

Janett asked if the National Office had scheduled any in-person meetings in the future. Graber said they were trying to do one in the spring, but with the new variant that may have changed. He will get the information and let everyone know.

## **Adjourn**



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Conference Zoom call  
10:00 a.m. January 10, 2022**

**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. Interested parties may attend in-person or join the meeting by conference call by dialing 312-626-6799, passcode 793745 (long distance charges may apply), or online at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86562712897>. Passcode 793745. The phone line will be active shortly before the meeting and discontinued immediately after the meeting ends.

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

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Lisa Walsh

Present: Paul Carroll, Jim Janett, Katie Hammond, Jared McGovern, Roger Thomas, Jane Regan, Leslie Webster, Paula Mayer, and Ann Geiger

Others: Emily Whaley, DOT; Katie Kenne, Iowa Economic Development, Matt Parb, Sawmill, Kelley Brown, Jackson County ED, Jim Elias, Zebulon Pike project

## **Welcome and introductions**

New members Roger Thomas, Clayton County, and Katherine Hammond, Louisa County greeted the Commission.

## **Approval of October 10, 2021 and December 6, 2021 minutes**

On motion by Janett seconded by Carroll the October 2021 minutes were approved.  
On motion by Carroll seconded by Webster the December 2021 minutes were approved.

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

On motion by Geiger moved to table the report until the next meeting, seconded by Mayer and the report was tabled.

### **Budget discussion**

Regan said the radio ads are going into production starting this week and will run through February. She will forward them to everyone when they are finished. The Tri-State area and western Iowa are the focus. McGovern asked why we were advertising in Western Iowa. Geiger said at a meeting several years ago she became aware the people on the western portion of the state were uninformed about the Road and tourism from the western part of the state has improved.

Co-ops in digital campaign have two spots left at \$1,500. Kenne said they were made available last year for \$2,500 instead of \$3,000, and she would use that price again.

On motion by Mayer to take the 2 slots for digital coop ad for \$2,500 with a second by Webster and the motion carried.

Kenne said the Commission has sponsored listing \$450 Apr – June on traveliowa.com for lodging, with sponsors listed at the top. Last year it did \$600 – Mar – June. From Mar – June had almost 102,948 impressions. Click rate of 1.59%. It is a very high percentage. Very little difference in prices from last year for this year. Availability will change.

Last year had a reach of 4,676 people looking at the ads on facebook. Mayer suggested adding northern IL to the list of ad hits. Mayer updated the success of the facebook page. She has 1,500 people who follow the page, and she checks the "likes". She has been sharing over the Travel Iowa Passport program. Geiger said if we can cover Galena, we will get through to the Chicago market.

Janett moved to have a committee of Regan, Mayer, and Webster look at marketing options: radio, billboard, digital. This will consider reallocating a portion of the budget from one item to another, as was done last year. Meyer will look at billboards and join the rest of the committee to review and determine what ads to use and report to the Commission. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried.

Walsh said she thinks the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiatives is a strong avenue of support. They have several corporate sponsors which we can gain a lot from them and maybe matching some of our projects with them. Janett said he thinks the national office should be giving a media buy using all 10 states. The Commission discussed how to recognize the All American Road designation on its road signs. Jane asked if the Iowa DOT was going signs to recognize them, along with the other 8 states. Whaley said she had not heard anything as yet.

The Commission is preparing another run of the Great River Road Passport for distribution this spring. Please review and provide any updates you'd like made. The last one was printed spring 2021 and Mayer has written to the ICenters for any updates before printing. She will add a table of contents in the PDF bookmarks.

### **National committee appointments and Reports**

#### *Marketing Committee*

Webster said the state committee was looking at a new Lincoln Byways guide

#### *Transportation*

Walsh said the committee is trying to get the web page fixed properly. Also thanked Mayer for getting some information.

#### *Environment Recreation and Agriculture*

No report

#### *Heritage and Culture*

Geiger said Louisiana has three locations working as one moving forward for approval. Suggested a summary on each ED center at the national level.

### **Chairman's Report - None**

### **Presentation by Anne Lewis, Pilot**

Lewis reviewed the goals and activities of the MRPC at the national level. And said it is still looking to having an in-person meeting in Memphis in October.

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers**

Webster said sawmill had low numbers over the holidays. Numbers were lower than expected. Probably Omicron. Food and beverage fest is January 27th and is always sold out. IT features local food and alcohol vendors. The Mill is still holding early childhood playdates, and they are still open.

Janett said Lansing is still open and things have slowed down. They have had visitors from all 50 states and 40 countries. They are getting nice year-end donations through their foundation.

Hammond said they got some funding from the county and made a video and have [www.louisaadventures.com](http://www.louisaadventures.com) which shows the things you can do on the GRR in Louisa County.

### **Future meeting date, Friday, April 29, 2022 in Camanche Eco Center**



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Called Meeting  
10:00 a.m. February 18, 2022  
800-509-6344. Passcode. 5778996#**

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.

Because there is a limited agenda for this meeting, and we are expecting this meeting to be of relatively short duration, the expense of transporting the Commission members to another common location to attend the meeting in person is unnecessary, excessive, and impractical. 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 Statement**

The meeting was called or order by Martin Graber, Chair; Lisa Walsh, Vice-Chair; Leslie Webster, Jim Janett, Paula Mayer, Jane Regan, Katie Hammond, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Roger Thomas, Paul Carroll, Jerod McGovern

Others: Joni Sojka, IHeart Radio, Kati Kenne, Iowa Tourism Office

**Discuss and approve radio and digital advertising**

Regan led the discussion and thanked Sojka from IHeart. Sojka addressed the Commission with her recommendations based on the meetings with the MRPC committee. She said WMT she felt was the best coverage for the east coast of the state, and it also brings in western Illinois. Looking at the week of March 31 – April 14<sup>th</sup>. Then central Iowa focusing on a younger group using a top 40 station. The western KTLI station brought in business last year so that is being included. WZZE is also being added from Madison – a top 40 station. She focused on the material she sent to the Commission.

IHeart streaming is being focused on heavily. Streaming stations are used by travelers and those who are involved with outdoor activities. \$4,860 is the intended cost.

Mayer said the bus tourism industry will be hit with these stations also. Webster said the committee was very intentional with focusing on who and when.

Motion to approve the proposal for the radio ads for the end of winter season in the amount of \$4,860 by Mayer, and seconded by Webster. Motion carried.

Janett asked if there was a way to track the effects of the radio ads. Regan said the hits on the website normally are used to track. Geiger said on the national level Iowa always has more activity than any other state during the radio ads.

Next meeting April 29, 2022 tentatively at the EcoCenter in Camanche.



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**April 29, 10:00 a.m. in Camanche, Iowa**  
**The Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center**  
**39442 291<sup>st</sup> Street, Rock Creek Marina**

**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. Interested parties may attend in-person or join the meeting by conference call by dialing 312 626 6799 Meeting code 895-7119-1588 Passcode: 065376 or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89571191588?pwd=QTV0L05oUUUv4UmxCUFk1NXVkdEpSUT09> The phone line will be active shortly before the meeting and discontinued immediately after the meeting ends.

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

The meeting was called or order by Chairman Graber.

Present: Paul Carroll, Paula Mayer, Jim Janett, Katie Hammond, Roger Thomas, Lisa Walsh and Ann Geiger

Absent: Leslie Webster, Jerod McGovern

Others: Katie Kenne, Iowa Tourism; Rachelle Kjellberg, Travel Iowa; Emily Whalen, DOT

### **Approval of January 10, 2022, February, 18, 2022, and March 7, 2022 minutes**

A motion to approve the January 10, 2022, February 18, 2022, and March 7, 2022 minutes by Janett and seconded by Carroll. The motion carried.

## **Review and approval of Treasurers Report**

Geiger moved to approve the Treasurer's Report and it was seconded by Carroll. The motion carried.

## **Budget discussion and allocation**

The Commission discussed approving the annual radio ads for May and June. Geiger moved to approve the ads in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 for May and June. Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

Billboards previously approved were complete for the summer. Mayer presented an invoice for \$1,835.00.

The Commissioners discussed an ad for the fall tourism brochure as they had done last year. After discussion with Kenne and Kjellberg, it was agreed the Commission would be billed in two billings. The first will total the amount left in the Commission budget after the summer radio ad billing had been received. The balance would be paid out of the budget for the next fiscal year. Motion to approve and ad with the two-part billing was made by Carroll. Mayer seconded the motion and it carried. Mayer will work to prepare the ad.

Mayer discussed the opportunity for the Commission to have kiosks through an NSBP grant. The Driftless Center has already begun working on one. There are three sizes of the kiosks, and Bellevue already has indicated interest. Suggestions for others include Clinton, Guttenberg, McGregor, Burlington, theirs. Kiosks will be further discussed but are in favor. Some communities are already in favor: Bellevue, Clinton, Lansing. Hammond said she will discuss it with Louisa County, and Carroll will discuss it with Muscatine County. Geiger said Scott County has kiosks through River Action. The Commission would be able to cover its match through in-kind.

## **National committee reports**

### *Marketing Committee*

National is trying to get a grant to accommodate interactive website. It needs input from some of the Iowa ICenters, and some have responded and some have not. Mayer and Geiger have both sent notices to the ICenters which have not responded, and Mayer has sent a copy of the passbook to the national office to use for reference. Geiger she she would like to add the "Six Littleton Brothers" attraction to the Toolesboro information for the future.

### *Transportation*

Walsh said most of the discussion was on the Memphis meeting in September. Arkansas is going to spearhead the grant for the Scenic America Byway for the balance of the states which have not applied. Kim Williams is going to spearhead.

### *Environment- Nothing*

*Recreation and Agriculture - nothing*

### *Heritage and Culture*

Janett said the committee is trying to update the ICenter application form. He provided Driftless Center as an example. The committee is review the criteria for new applicants. It is getting contact info for a new travel guide.

### **Chairman's Report.**

Graber said he was asked what does the MRPC have to do to repair the relationship with Iowa. Walsh said Illinois is coming back, but one of the members is still in line for a board position. She said states which have not paid or paid in full should not be having positions on the board or management. Also need to have members serve on a committee. Geiger said she agreed with Walsh that the organization needs a reboot.

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers Ex-Officio Members and Others**

Comments from Interpretive Centers – Janett said the Driftless Center has had an uptic in attendance.

Whalen called the Commission's attention to the updating of the IAppoint. She said her understanding was the existing one was still usable.

### **Reports and Updates**

Geiger made the Commission aware of the potential merging of the Santa Fe and Canadian Pacific Railways. Essentially it would being 14.5 trains down the Great River Road every day. It will affect Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois in addition to Iowa. She said Illinois already has a website, and meetings from cities along the east coast of Iowa have been occurring to mitigate the situation.

#### National Rivers Hall of Fame nominations

Janette said he would like to nominate John Bickedel who was instrumental in establishing the Hall of Fame and a former MRPC member. Geiger suggested Charles Young, who was the main developer of the Great River Road be added.

Janette moved to nominate Bickedel for the award. Geiger amended the motion to add Young. Carroll seconded the amended motion, and it carried. There is an online National River Hall of Fame template.

Mayer said she was told the passports were finished, and she thought they would be available for this meeting, but she has not seen them yet.

Future meeting date – July 18, 2022 with the location to be determined





**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission**  
**July 18, 2022 10:00 a.m.**  
**Freedom Bank**  
**210 South Main Street, Elkader**

**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. Interested parties may attend in-person or join the meeting by conference call by dialing: 312 626 6799 6\*Meeting code 826 1950 1928 Passcode: 453728. The \*phone line will be active shortly before the meeting and discontinued immediately after the meeting ends.

**MRPC Call to order and roll call**

Present: Martin Graber, Lisa Walsh, Roger Thomas, Paul Carroll, Jim Janet, Jerod McGovern, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Leslie Webster, Jane Regan

Others: Emily Whaley

**Welcome and introductions**

**Approval of April 29, 2022 minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes by Janet seconded by Walsh, and the motion carried.

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

Motion to approve the minutes by Thomas, seconded by Hammond, and the motion carried.

**Budget discuss allocate for rest of year**

Motion to approve the ad for the fall Travel Iowa in the amount of \$10,600 by Mayer seconded by Walsh, and motion carried with McGovern abstaining.

Discussion regarding dues to the National Office. Dues are \$15,000 and last year the Commission paid \$7,500. Janet said policy and procedures need to be followed for performance and we should pay the dues.

The Commission discussed specifics as to why the dues were not paid in total last year, and if they should be paid in total this year. In addition to the dissatisfaction with the performance of

Pilch and Barnett, Geiger and Walsh said the board is not following its own policies. Non-paying members are voting and are in decisions-making positions. Graber said he is not sure the entire board is aware of why there is dissatisfaction in Iowa with the organization. Thomas suggested Graber write a letter to the Pilot and copy each of the board members with Iowa's position. Geiger will send a copy of the contract with Pilch and Barnett to each of the Commissioners.

Motion by Janet to pay the national dues at \$7,500 with the balance being paid after consideration of the response to the letter by the Iowa Commission later in the year. Seconded by Walsh. The motion carried with McGovern opposed.

Tentative list for attendance to the annual meeting in Memphis in September: Walsh, Geiger, Hammond, Janett with the rest of the Commission still considering.

Iowa is responsible for a portion of the program at the annual meeting to address how it gets as many responses to its ads.

### **Pike Project**

Carroll said he is beginning to work on the Pike project and will hopefully have a video this fall to provide to the ICenters. Graber said he will talk with Watkins and Carroll said there is a group of reinactors in Missouri to see if something can be done this fall and locate the group of reinactors who have the keel boats.

### **National committee appointments and Reports**

*Marketing Committee* – No report other than website

*Transportation* – Going well. Shape files are being sent to the National Office, and are pushing to get them done by the DOT is working on P&B to get things done.

*Environment, Recreation and Agriculture* – No report

*Heritage and Culture* - There are some ICenters that need to be approved.

### **Chairman's Report**

Already covered in other portions of the meeting.

### **Comments from Interpretive Centers**

Driftless Center. Janett said it is very busy with people who are anxious to get out after Covid.

Toolesboro. Hammond said the number of international visitors is down. Siding being replaced by State Historical Society. Planted Buffalo Grass on mounds and burning it to preserve the prairie grass. They are working on promotions. Camp Langwood Education Center is being improved.

Mines of Spain. McGovern said the facility is open for the first time in a while. The Mississippi River Museum is seeing huge numbers of visitors, and will give all the school children an outdoor experience with new displays and projects. It also added STEM to its program. The museum just

updated its comp plan. County is using rescue money for tourism and to the Field of Dreams to increase and do improvements.

Carroll went to Burlington for a Viking cruise line public meeting. Thanked Walsh for the invitation and networked afterward.

## **Reports and Updates**

National Rivers Hall of Fame nominations – Janett said he wants to nominate John Bickel, and Geiger suggested submitting for Young. More information to follow.

Zebulon Pike project – Some of the summer radio ads included reference to the project.

Kiosks – Mayer said the MRPC grant application has been submitted. Sept. 2022 funding will be released and will be continued over several years. MRPC finding will be a few years out. All the details have been sent. Specifics on who is writing final the grants is not known as yet.

Travel Iowa come will be launching new web site this month. Mayer will review to see how the MRPC will be impacted. Facebook hits are up 52% in last 28 days to 1,143 people with 2,67 regular followers. Geiger said she thought that was good considering the page is fairly new.

ICenter reviews. Geiger reminded the Commissioners to visit the ICenters in their county and to send them to her. She will send them as a group to the National Office.

Rail Merger. Geiger gave an update on the potential merger of the Canadian Pacific and Santa Fe railroads which will add 14 more trains to its schedule moving crude oil from Canada to Mexico along parts of Iowa's Great River Road and next to the Mississippi River. She said the trains would cross from Illinois to Iowa at Sabula and run down Iowa's east coast to the south side of Muscatine where it would turn west. Portions of the tracks run less than 50 feet from the river, and trains go off the tracks regularly. An example is the coal car that dumped into the river near Lansing a few weeks ago. Janet said there were 5 cars that dumped into the river. The Iowa Environmental Committee said if the oil dumps into the river, it will not pool but go into the river bottom and stay. Geiger spoke with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and the Environmental Committee and both said they would like to hear from citizens. Geiger will send information to the Commissioners to encourage people to respond to the STB which has the final say.

Future meeting date - October 17 - Toolesboro