



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

**2022-2023 Annual Report**  
**September 2023**



**AMERICA'S BYWAYS®**

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



2022-2023

## Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission

*Explore Iowa's Great River Road*

Jim Janett  
Allamakee County

Roger Thomas  
Clayton County

Vacant  
Dubuque County

Paula Mayer  
Jackson County

Lesley Webster  
Clinton County

Ann Geiger, Secretary  
Scott County

Paul Carroll  
Muscatine County, Treasurer

Katie Hammond  
Louisa County

Lisa Walsh  
Des Moines County, Vice Chair

Martin Graber, Chair  
Lee County

## CONTENTS

<b>Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vision Statement .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Iowa MRPC Commission Structure .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Commissioners' General Activities .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Iowa MRPC Budget .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Advocating Activities .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Marketing .....	7
Interpretive Centers.....	7
Travel Guide .....	8
<b>The Road .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Young Museum and Interpretive Centers .....</b>	<b>10</b>

## ADDENDUM

<b>Commissioners and Technical Members .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Minutes .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Annual Metrics Report.....</b>	<b>24</b>

## **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 is a national designation and joins such roads as the Appalachian Trail and the California Scenic Highway. In addition to being a major task and accomplishment to achieve this status, this designation also gives the Road an opportunity for additional funding.

## **VISION**

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

*(Adopted December 15, 2014).*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

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

# IOWA MRPC STRUCTURE

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

## **Iowa Commissioners' General Activities**

---

The Iowa Chair and /or his proxy participated in all National MRPC Board meetings and Executive Board meetings, as well as the Annual Meeting. The 2023 semi-annual meeting was conducted by zoom and the annual meeting was held in September at Memphis, Tennessee. The majority of Iowa Commissioners also participated in the National MRPC meetings.

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

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. The Commission met July 18, 2022 at the Freedom Bank in Elkader, Iowa, October 17, 2022 at the Toolesboro Interpretive Center in Wapello, Iowa; **January 13, 2020, at the Muscatine History and Industry Center (Button Museum) in Muscatine, Iowa; March 16, 2020, at Connection Bank in Fort Madison, Iowa; June 26, 2020, was a called meeting by phone; and July 27, 2020, at the Buffalo Bill Museum in LeClaire, Iowa.** Minutes of these meetings are included as a part of this report.

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

# IOWA MRPC BUDGET

The FY-2023 budget for the Iowa MRPC was approved by the Iowa DOT for \$40,000.00. The budget includes 2023 National MRPC dues, Iowa Byways Foundation Membership, and Marketing expenses. The semi-annual meeting was held as a virtual meeting and the annual meeting was held in Memphis, Tennessee.

## Fiscal Year Budget

---

Item	Description	Iowa DOT	Amount	Balance
1	MRPC Annual Dues	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$ 0.00
2	Annual Meeting	6,550.00	6,459.77	50.43
3	Administration	300.00	300.00	0.00
4	Travel/meals in-state	400.00	1,470.26	(1,070.26)
5	Iowa Byways Foundation	250.00	250.00	0.00
6	Marketing	25,000.00	31,745.20	(6,745.20)
Total		\$40,000	\$39,965.03	\$ 34.97

# 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 previously used.

Because the semi-annual meeting was cancelled as an in person meeting and rescheduled as a virtual meeting the travel dollars budgeted were reallocated to better promote the Great River Road. As a result of the impact this would have on travel along the Mississippi, the Commission expanded its previously discussed focus on marketing. One of the changes which eventually had the biggest impact was the increase of radio ads, which are regionally crafted, from six (6) weeks to eight (8) weeks, and the addition of billboards. There were billboards on the east coast, center, and west coast of Iowa. This had a positive result with tourists now taking trips closer to home. The ads have resulted in a large increase in on-line traffic, which has shown longer times spent than is usual for on-line visitors. The national office is again sponsoring on-road activities.

Passports are still available at the Interpretive Centers for visitors to take and focus on visiting centers of which they may not have been aware. The Commission distributed 2,000 of them in the spring of 2023. They have been shown to very popular with visitors.

## Great River Road Interpretive Centers

Iowa has 18 Interpretive Centers (ICenters), 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 the Iowa Tourism website – <https://www.traveliowa.com/great-river-road-interpretive-centers/> . The Interpretive Centers are also encouraged to list events on [experiencemississippiriver.com](https://www.experiencemississippiriver.com).

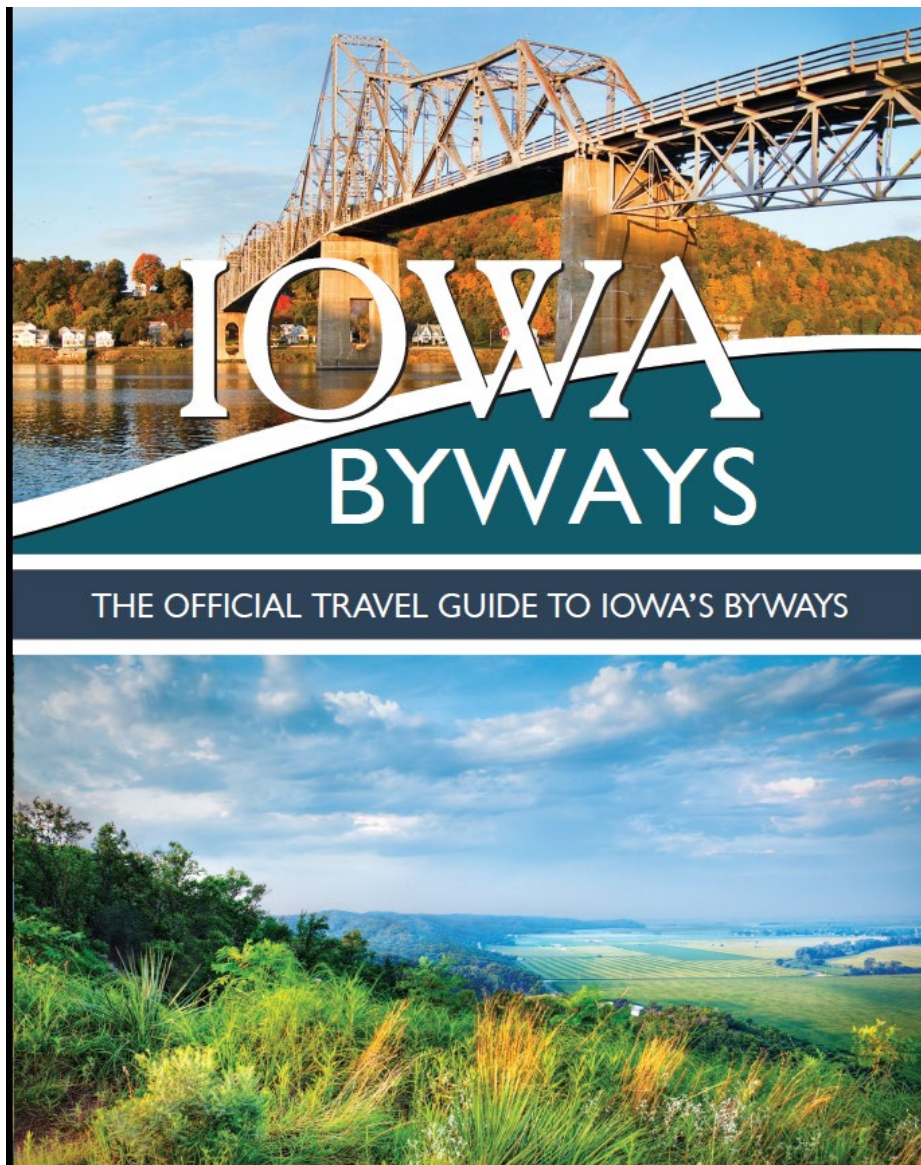




## Iowa Byways Travel Guide

---

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 <https://iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/iowas-byways-home>. Commission members have worked hard to distribute this guide to the welcome and interpretative centers, CVB'S and other tourist attractions in their counties.





# THE ROAD

---

## 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 in 2021 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.

Vice Chair, Lisa Walsh, Des Moines County Commissioner, has played an active part in those discussions, and Martin Graber, MRPC Chair, has attended via telephone. Walsh applied for a Scenic America grant to repair or replace the bridge which is on the Great River Road. The good news is the grant has been approved for almost \$1,000,000.00!

## Bellevue

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

## Iowa Interpretive Centers

Driftless Area Education & Visitor Center  
Lansing, Iowa

Effigy Mounds National Monument  
Harpers Ferry, Iowa

Motor Mill Historic Site  
Elkader, Iowa

Guttenberg Fish Hatchery  
Guttenberg, Iowa

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

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

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

Hurstville Interpretive Center  
Maquoketa, Iowa

Heritage Center Museum  
Burlington, Iowa

National Pearl Button Museum  
Muscatine, Iowa

Toolesboro Mounds & Museum  
Wapello, Iowa

Old Fort Madison  
Fort. Madison, Iowa

George M. Verity Riverboat Museum  
Keokuk, Iowa

# ADDENDUM

## Commission

COMMISSIONERS	COMMITTEES	CONTACT INFORMATION	TERM
<b>ALLAMAKEE COUNTY</b> Jim Janett 600 Main St. Lansing, IA 52151	Heritage & Culture	jim.janett@gmail.com PH: 563-568-9712 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	06/30/2027
<b>DES MOINES COUNTY</b> Lisa T. Walsh, <b>Vice-President</b> 6172 Nikonha Plc Burlington, IA 52601	Nat'l Transportation	<a href="mailto:lwalsh6172@gmail.com">lwalsh6172@gmail.com</a> Ph: 319.752.0912 Cell: 319.850.1950	06/30/2027
<b>DUBUQUE COUNTY</b> Vacant			
<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 Wapello, 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@machlink.com">paulcarroll@machlink.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	06/30/2021

## 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

Lora Friest  
East Grand Office Park  
200 E Grand Ave  
Des Moines, IA 50309

#### Iowa MRPC Advisory Nat'l Marketing

[Lorafriest@iowaEDA.com](mailto:Lorafriest@iowaEDA.com)

Ph: 515.725.3090

### 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

Garret Pedersen

Iowa DOT

#### Office Director

[garret.pedersen@iowadot.us](mailto:garret.pedersen@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-Branet  
222 State St, Ste 400  
Madison, WI 53703  
Lyn Pilch  
222 State St, Ste 400

#### Consultant Leadership Executive Director

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

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

#### Marketing + Mississippi River Country

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

## 2022-2023 Iowa MRPC Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission are always public record. Public notices and meeting minutes are also posted here:

<http://www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/MISSISSIPPI-RIVER-PARKWAY-COMMISSION>



**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: xxx \*Meeting code xxx Passcode: xxx. 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 Janett, 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 decision-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 as it does 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. Janett 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



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting, 10:00 a.m. October 17, 2022  
6568 Toolesboro Avenue, Wapello, IA 52653**

**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 xxx Passcode: xxx

**MRPC Call to order and roll call**

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

Present: Lisa Walsh, Katie Hammond, Jim Janett, Paul Carroll, Lesley Webster, Jared McGovern, Roger Thomas, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Paula Mayer, excused, Jane Regan

Others Present: Emily Whalen, Iowa DOT; Leslie Kliptsch, Putnam Museum; Lora Friest, Iowa Tourism Office; and Lorna Artz-McComb, Iowa Naturalist

Graber welcomed the visitors, and Freeze introduced herself as the new liaison to the tourism office. The office has been recently reconfigured and new personnel assigned to the various committees and commissions.

**Approval of July 18, 2022 minutes**

Janett moved to approve the July 18 minutes. Thomas seconded the motion and it carried.

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

The Commission reviewed the report and it was noted, for the record, it was incomplete. Reicken explained the missing expenditures. Walsh moved accept the treasurer's report as explained. Hammond seconded the motion and it carried.

**Budget discussion and allocation**

Friest said there is one billboard left on the IDEA's annual buy, and it is in Minneapolis. After discussion Webster moved to purchase the space for May and June in the amount of \$2,100. Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

The annual radio ads were discussed and divided into two portions. One portion would run February through March, and the second portion would run April through

May. Each section would be approximately \$2,000. Geiger moved to approve the ads for a four month period NTE \$4,000. Janett seconded the motion and it carried.

## **National committee appointments and Reports**

*Marketing Committee* – No report

*Transportation* - The biggest portion of the meeting was discussing the electric charging stations. Francis and Linsey asked for state update when they returned home. Geiger said she sent a list a while ago, and the DOT is no longer keeping track. It said most people get their information from websites or social media, so it quit making that report. McGovern suggested contacting the ICenters on a regular basis to see if they had, or added charging stations. Francis was happy to report she has secured all missing documents for the 10 states.

*Environment* – There was a lot of discussion at the national meeting about pollinators. IDOT has a program to help with that. McGovern said he would look into it. Hammond said there is a pollinator patch at Toolesboro

*Recreation and Agriculture* - Nothing

*Heritage and Culture* - Still working on better communication between ICenters. The current national chair is resigning to move up the governing ladder and inquired as to whether or not Janett would be interested in chairing the committee. The Commission congratulated him and encouraged him to take the position.

## **Chairman's Report**

Walsh, who attended the board meeting at the Memphis meeting on behalf of Graber gave a brief report on the comments regarding Commission's letter to the National Board. She said there was a mix of responses with two members being angry, and others recognizing the concern. Graber said he is going to request a written response to the comments from the board.

The Commission asked about the amount of money the national office gets every year. Graber said if all ten states pay, the amount of \$150,000. Right now the number of payments amount to \$72,500.

## **Comments from Interpretive Centers**

Hammond thanked everyone for coming to Toolesboro and gave a brief update on the facilities. She also said she was working the DOT to get signage on H61 from both directions as to how to get to the site.

## **Reports and Updates**

Zebulon Pike project. Carroll apologized and said he was over-committed and said Geiger previously offered to help and he declined. Geiger and Carroll will get together with Elias and put together a sheet to give to potential funders for the project.

Railroad Merger - Geiger said it is wait and see for the most part to see if the Surface Transportation Board will approve the merger. She said there has been no response from Senator Grassley or any of the national legislators.

**Future meeting date** – The next meeting will be in January with the date and location to be announced later.



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Conference/Zoom call  
09:00 a.m. November 4, 2021**

**MRPC Call to order and roll call**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Martin Graber.

Present: Lisa Walsh, Jim Janett, Katie Hammond, Leslie Webster, Paul Carroll, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Roger Thomas, Jerod McGovern, and Paula Mayer

Others: Emily Whaley, Iowa DOT, Newman Abuissa, IDOT

**Budget discussion**

Motion by Carroll to pay \$250 to the National Scenic Byway Foundation. Seconded by Hammond, and motion carried.

Motion to approve outstanding billboard bill by Webster for \$3,975 for billboards. Seconded by Walsh.

Motion for approve byway sign inventory by Webster to approve mileage for inventory. Carroll moved to approve and Hammond seconded the motion carried.

Next meeting Nahant Marsh, January 13.



**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 xxx passcode xxx (long distance charges may apply). 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 November called meeting 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. MvGovern 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 <https://www.tri-rivers.org/great-river-road> 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  
9 00 a.m. March 7, 2022**

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; Jim Janett, Paula Mayer, Katie Hammond, Paul Carroll, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Roger Thomas, Jerod McGovern, Jane Regan, Leslie Webster

Others: Emily Whaley, Iowa DOT, Kati Kenne, Iowa Tourism Office

**I. Discuss and approve outdoor advertising**

Mayer presented options for the purchase of billboards. She showed a map of 10 locations, and her suggestions for which she felt had the most effect. The billboards would run May 15 – July 15. She said she would use the same design as last year and add the All American Road designation. The billboards selected were located: HY-20, NW Dubuque; HY-61 S Dubuque; Hy-61 Muscatine; I-80/I178 at Annawan II; I-80 Des Moines; and a second I-80 Des Moines.

Motion to approve the purchase of billboards up to an amount of \$5,700 by Mayer and seconded by Carroll. The motion carried. Using same billboards as last year.

**II. Future meeting reminder and adjourn**

The next meeting is scheduled April 29 at the Eco Center in Camanche. Geiger said she is waiting for a call back to see if it would be able to host a zoom meeting. Location may have to be changed.



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
The Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center  
39442 291<sup>st</sup> Street, Rock Creek Marina  
Camanche, Iowa**

**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 xxx Meeting code xxx Passcode:xxx 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: Lesley 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, and February 18, 2022, and March 7, 2022 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 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 be 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.