



WISCONSIN MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

1998-1999

ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by:
Evan Zantow, Chairman





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On behalf of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WI MRPC), I am very pleased to present the Annual Report of the activities and accomplishments of the WI MRPC for the past fiscal year.

The year 1999 will go down in history as one of great significance for the Wisconsin Great River Road. In June the Secretary of Transportation, Charles Thompson declared the entire length of the Wisconsin GRR as the states first scenic byway under the interim state scenic byway program. Secretary Thompson's declaration stated (in part) "There is WI DOT consensus and local and National recognition that the Great River Road ... possesses such a high degree of unusual, exceptional, and distinctive scenic, natural, historical, recreational, culture features that will meet and most likely surpass all criteria"

Furthermore the WI MRPC in cooperation with adjoining and other Mississippi River States are proceeding towards submitting a multi state application to the Federal Highway Commission (deadline January 2000) for designation of the Great River Road as a National Scenic Byway.

While the Wisconsin MRPC is most grateful for the state designation and the prospect of National designation - the Commission also recognizes the increased responsibilities on their part in working with the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Tourism, Commerce, State Historical Society, the Regional Planning Commissions, and local constituency towards implementation activities commensurate with the stature of the designations.

During the past year the Wisconsin MRPC has met on a quarterly schedule. In addition WI MRPC representatives attended both the Annual and Midwinter MRPC meetings. Two of the four legislative memberships are in the process of being filled - as well as two of the county memberships. After 40 years of dedicated service, Roy Finley of Pierce County has announced his retirement effective the end of this calendar year.

The WI MRPC with the support of their Technical Committee has directed efforts towards various embellishment activities for the Great River Road including:

- ☐ Cooperative development of a Maintenance activity work plan for the GRR. This work plan identified such activities as location of selective clearing to enhance vistas, vegetation control along guard rails, noxious weed control, mowing policy and areas of roadway maintenance activities.

- A commitment to the DOT to assist in the solicitation of local governments to become local sponsors of Enhancement (ISTEA) projects along the GRR.
- The submission of two grant applications to FHWA for Scenic Byway projects namely: (1) State line Gateway entry Kiosks presenting an overview of the Wisconsin GRR and (2) Updating (where appropriate) of the 33 existing Historical Markers and the addition of new Historical Markers as identified in the previously completed WI GRR planning report (Blue print).
- Obtaining the commitment of local tourism facilities to take on the responsibility of being identified on the Great River Road map and publications as being GRR information and interpretive sources.
- The development of a Bikeway Implementation Plan for the entire length of the WI GRR through the special efforts of the WI's DOT Bikeway Planning staff. Efforts are now being directed towards funding grants from the Scenic Byway or Enhancement programs.
- Contact on an informal basis has been made with Owen Dutt, Navigator for the Upper Mississippi River American Heritage River Program offering WI MRPC assistance during his planned visit to Wisconsin's GRR participating Communities.
- A review of the boat access facilities along the Mississippi River as presented by Department of Natural Resource staff.
- Co-organized the dedication event for a 15 mile - \$4 Million GRR Improvement project in Pierce county. This project was the final segment within Pierce and Pepin counties to provide full width paved shoulders to accommodate bikers.
- The effort and successes of the Marketing and Promotion Committee are numerous and commendable as outlined in the attached report.
- The following summarizes the past year highway/bridge improvements and amenity project accomplishments:

18 miles highway = \$8.4 million
 4 bridges = \$.8 million
 4 amenity projects = \$.5 million

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report.
 If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Evan Zantow,
 Chairman, WI MRPC.



WISCONSIN MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

1999-2000 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a process for establishing objectives, goals, strategies and measures for carrying out the WORK PLAN for the Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission (WI MRPC) as outlined in the following mission statement:

Mission Statement

The Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission exists to preserve, promote and enhance the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the Wisconsin Mississippi River Valley, to foster economic growth of the River Corridor, and develop the National Scenic Byway known as the Great River Road.

The Commission seeks to coordinate activities with communities, local and state units of government and to cooperate with the other nine Mississippi River states and the Province of Ontario that comprise the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC).

Statutory Reference

The Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission is authorized by s 14.85 Wisconsin Stats Act 39, published August 14, 1991. (See attachment).

The membership of the WI MRPC consists of twelve voting members and five non-voting ex-officio members. One member from each of the eight Wisconsin counties bordering the Mississippi River are appointed by the Governor and two members each from the State Senate and the State Assembly are nominated by the majority leader of each House and confirmed by the Governor.

The current membership of the Commission for 1999 is as follows: Kenneth Beck (Vernon County); Senator Alice Clausing (D) State Senate; Charlie Dietrich, (Grant County); Roy J. Finley (Pierce County); State Representative (R) (Vacancy); State Representative (D) (Vacancy); Donna Krebsbach (Buffalo County); Senator Brian Rude (R), (State Senate); Trempealeau County (Vacancy) and Evan Zantow (La Crosse County).

Ex-officio members: Brenda Blanchard (Secretary Department of Commerce); George Meyer (Secretary Department of Natural Resources); Charles Thompson, (Secretary Department of Transportation); Richard (Moose) Speros, (Secretary, Department of Tourism); and George Vogt, (Director, State Historical Society).

Technical Support

Statutory authority provides for a Technical Committee to advise the Commission. The members named by their respective agencies are: Marty Beekman, P.E. (District 6 WisDOT); Gary Brunner, P.E. (District 5 WisDot; Michael Rewey, P.E. (District 1 WisDOT); Louis Cornelius, (Department of Commerce); Rick Dexter, (State Historical Society); Gretchen Benjamin and Terry Moe, (Department of Natural Resources); Debra Skinner, (Department of Tourism); Robert Fisher (Mississippi River Planning Commission); and Frank Huntington, (Southwest Regional Planning Commission).

Standing Committees

The By-Laws of WI MRPC provides for standing committee and membership is appointed by the chairman. The 1999 standing committees are as follows: Legislative, Tourism and Promotion, Transportation, Economic Development, Environmental, and Historical.

Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures of the WI MRPC

OBJECTIVE: To assist in coordinating development and preservation of the Great River Road in Wisconsin and its embellishments, such as roadside parks, scenic easements, and scenic overlooks. To seek assistance from other State agencies in all efforts to create a unified development of the Great River Road and its collateral features.

GOALS: To cooperate with similar committees or commissions in other MRPC States and the Province of Ontario in the furtherance of the ultimate development of the Great River Road from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and to promote and seek designation of the Great River Road as a National Scenic Byway.

STRATEGIES: To encourage the development and implementation of a Great River Road planning blue print by each of the ten MRPC State Commissions from a holistic perspective which would be applicable to individual states

MEASURES: The Wisconsin MRPC meets a minimum of four times each year. The WI MRPC Work Plan is subject to a review annually and a detailed written report is submitted to the Governor of Wisconsin, the National MRPC Board of Directors, County Board chairs of each of the River Counties, and each of the State Agencies.

Text of s.14.85 Wis Stats.

(1) There is created a Mississippi river parkway commission consisting of the following members:

(a) One member from each of the counties of Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, La Crosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon.

(b) Two senators and 2 representatives to the assembly. The two major political parties shall be represented in the membership from each house.

(2) The secretaries of commerce, department of tourism, natural resources and transportation, and the director of the historical society or their designees shall serve as non-voting members of the commission.

(3) Each member under sub. (1) shall be appointed by the governor for a 4-year term. Any vacancy shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term by the governor as soon as practicable.

(4) The commission shall elect its own chairperson, and officers other than a chairperson from its members as its work requires. The commission chairperson shall:

(a) Be the sole voting representative of this state at meetings of the national Mississippi river parkway commission.

(b) Report to the commission on the activities of the national Mississippi river parkway commission.

(c) Serve as secretary, designate a member of the commission to serve as secretary or require an election by the commission of a commission secretary.

(d) Notify the members of meetings of the commission and keep a record of its proceedings, or delegate these responsibilities to the commission secretary.

(5) the commission shall:

(a) Assist in coordinating the development and preservation of the great river road in Wisconsin and its embellishments, such as scenic easements, roadside parks and scenic overlooks.

(b) Assist other state agencies in all efforts to create a unified development of the great river road in Wisconsin and any of its collateral features.

(c) Cooperate with similar committees or commissions in other states and Canadian provinces in the furtherance of the ultimate development of the great river road from Canada to the gulf of Mexico.

(d) Consult with appropriate regional planning commissions regarding the Mississippi river parkway.

(e) Assist in promoting as an attractive travel destination the great river road in Wisconsin and the unique historical, cultural, aesthetic and recreational features along the route of the great river road, such as local communities, off-road parks and forests, and water related facilities.

(6) The commission shall meet quarterly and may meet at other times on the call of the chairperson.

(7) The departments and agencies of this state shall, within existing appropriations and to the best of their respective abilities, cooperate with the commission in the execution of its functions.

(8)(a) The annual membership dues for the commission shall be paid from the appropriation under s. 20.395 (4) (aq).

(b) The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but, except as provided in par. (c), shall be reimbursed from the appropriation under 20.395 (4) (aq) for 75% of actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing their duties under guidelines for reimbursement established by the department of transportation.

(c) The chairperson of the commission shall be reimbursed from the appropriation under s. 20.395 (4) (aq) for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing his or her duties under guidelines for reimbursement established by the department of transportation.

(d) If permitted by law, any state agency or local public body, board, commission or agency may allocate funds under its control to fund programs recommended by the commission to undertake activities relating to the promotion of economic development is consistent with the department's statewide economic development plans, priorities and resources, the department shall have primary responsibility to support the activities of the program. If the department of tourism determines that a program recommended by the commission to undertake activities relating to the promotion of tourism is consistent with the department's statewide tourism marketing plans, priorities and resources, the department shall have primary responsibility to support the activities of the program.

(9) The commission may establish a technical committee to advise the commission. The members of the committee shall include at least one employee each from the department of transportation, the department of tourism and the department of commerce. The commission shall request the department of transportation, the department of tourism and the department of commerce to designate employees to serve on the committee and may request any other state agency to designate an employee to serve on the committee.

(10) Unless specifically provided otherwise by the commission with respect to committees or other similar bodies, a majority of the voting members constitute a quorum to do business.

History: 1975 c 39, 199 ; 1977 c 418:1979 c .34 s 2102 (52) (a); 1985 a 29s3202 (51); 1991 a. 39; 1995 a 27 ss.66 to 68, 9116 (5)

WISCONSIN MRPC
1998-1999 WISCONSIN PROMOTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by: Donna Krebsbach, Chair promotion committee

Date: 7/30/99

The 12 members of the Wisconsin Great River Road promotion committee remains strong, active and dedicated to the major goal of this committee - TO PROMOTE THE ENTIRE WISCONSIN GREAT RIVER ROAD from Prescott to Kieler. Meetings are held monthly along with numerous sub committee meetings. This has been a memorable year.

Some of the accomplishments

- **Received a \$15,000 annual contribution** from Dept. of Tourism-~~10/99~~ 10/98
- **Bank Accounts:** 2 separate accounts were set up at the Bank of Alma, Alma WI.
1-WI MRPC Promotion account 2-WI MRPC Great River Road account
Promotion a/c-Dept. of Tourism contribution money and designated money
Great River Road a/c - other money/donations
- **Donations Received:** Grant County \$1,000 - West Central ITBEC \$1,000 - Southwest ITBEC \$2,000 - NSP \$1,000 -these donations for matching grants/map distribution
- **The new Wisconsin Great River Road map/brochure** completed-100,000 copies
Distribution will begin during 1st week of August 1999.
- **Attraction/Inventory Guide** was updated-July 1999 and being distributed.
- **Internet Domain Name** is registered: **WiGreatRiverRoad.org** our E mail address: **WIGRR@Pressenter.com** Web master: PressEnter, Inc. of River Falls, WI.
Note: The Home page is not up yet-still in development stage.
- **Internet Presence:** Currently we have a presence- Pressenter.com did place our old GRR Brochure(developed by Wi. Dept. of Tourism several years ago) on their site: **www.pressenter.com/org/riverrd/** we also linked this to several other sites.
Note: this will be deleted when we have our own home page completed.
- **GRR Tourist Information number:** 1-800-658-9424 (CVB -LaCrosse) they will fulfill the requests-we have been publishing this 800#.
- **Destination Marketing Grant**-Dept. of Tourism: We are in the process of developing the grant and will submit by Sept. 1, 1999
- **New GRR Theme: Re Discover Wisconsin's Great River Road**
- **1999/2000 Marketing Plan:** updated
- **1999/2000 Budget:** has been submitted to Dept. of Tourism-not approved yet.
- **Governor's Tourism Conference:** attended by several members also 2 members attended: Tourism Day in Madison. Several other special meetings/conferences were attended by promotion committee members.
- **Resignation:** Donna Krebsbach, Chair of promotion committee resigned effective March 1, 1999-due to unforeseen events-it was not accepted-and will remain Chair until further notice. Mona Hudson, Cassville Tourism Director resigned from the committee-she retired and moving away from the river and road. She was presented an award from MRPC-Chair, Evan Zantow and received letters of appreciation from Secretary, Moose Speros & Governor Thompson.