



The Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) is a multi-state organization which works collectively to preserve, promote, and enhance the scenic, historic, and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor, and to develop the national, scenic and historic parkway known as the Great River Road.

Each state and province has its own separate commission which is established by state statute or Governor's Executive Order. Membership consists of state legislators, state and local officials and general members appointed by the governors, or state agency directors of the individual states and province.

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MRPC Gears Up for Mid-Winter Meeting 2000

The MRPC Mid-Winter Meeting is slated for February 3-5, 2000 at the charming Hotel St. Marie in New Orleans, Louisiana. Meeting check-in begins at 5 p.m. on February 3, with a welcome reception beginning at 8 p.m. The full realm of meeting sessions ensues on Friday and Saturday, February 4 and 5 with a Board of Directors Meeting, three General Sessions, Technical Committee Breakouts, State Commission and Committee Breakouts, and delegate and spouse luncheons. New to the agenda this year is a series of workshops on Non-Profit Fund Raising, Increasing Community Involvement and Measuring Outcomes. Led by area experts, these sessions are designed to bring delegates together to learn, brainstorm and provide support for collective and individual efforts on behalf of the Commission. Headlining the social agenda will be the Saturday evening dinner event with cuisine and hospitality served up "Louisiana style." Dress for evening and social functions is casual. Business attire is suggested for meetings.

All members and delegates should have received detailed registration material by mail. Please note that you need to register separately for your hotel and the meeting itself. The deadline for both is Wednesday, January 5.

The hotel rate for a three-night stay, double occupancy, is \$125 plus tax per person; two-night stay, double occupancy, is \$145 plus tax per person. There is a \$20 fee for each additional person per room. To make hotel reservations, call the Hotel St. Marie directly at 504-561-8951 and identify yourself as a member of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission to receive the special rates listed above.



Meeting registration runs \$85 for delegates and \$35 for spouses/guests. A late fee will apply to registrations made after January 5. For more information on any aspect of the Mid-Winter Meeting or to make meeting reservations by phone, call the MRPC National Office at 612-212-2560. *

In This Issue:

- Pilot Enke Looks to the Future
- MRC Sets International Marketing Plan for 2000
- New Faces at National MRPC Office and More...

New MRPC Pilot Talks About His Goals and Priorities for the Coming Year

In a recent interview with "News In Brief" (NIB) staff, new MRPC Pilot, Gene Enke reveals a bit about his link to the MRPC and his hopes for the coming year. Here's an excerpt:

NIB: How long have you been involved with the MRPC?

Enke: I was first appointed by Governor Branstad six years ago and was re-appointed this year by Governor Vilsac.

NIB: What other positions have you held on the Board during your tenure?

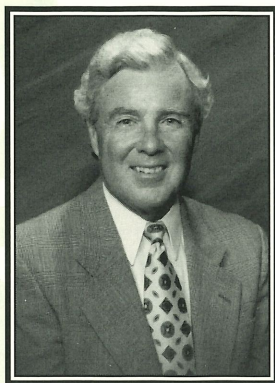
Enke: I served four years as the Iowa MRPC chair until being elected the National Pilot Pro-tem two years ago. As a state Chair, I also served on the National MRPC Board.

NIB: Are you a native to Iowa? And if so, have you always lived on the Mississippi River?

Enke: Yes, I'm quite proud to be a native of Iowa. I was educated at the University of Iowa and, indeed, have always lived near the River.

NIB: What are some of the major initiatives you'd like the MRPC to undertake during your term as Pilot?

Enke: Several come to mind. We are currently working toward designation of the entire Great River Road as a National Scenic Byway. Several states have already completed the first step: securing their individual state scenic byway designations. It is my goal to continue that work so that, by the year 2002, the entire Great River Road route will be preserved on a national level for generations to come. Working to meet that goal will be a top priority for me.



**Gene Enke,
New
National
MRPC
Pilot**

We are also working to complete a series of Great River Road Development Studies in each state which will enable us to plan for and market our assets to their fullest. Of course, securing investments for highway and amenity projects will continue to be a focus for me, as well as linking and promoting our newly created network of Mississippi River Interpretive Centers along the Great River Road. And finally, I want to expand regional tourism efforts domestically and internationally through the highly successful Mississippi River Country, U.S.A. International Marketing Program.

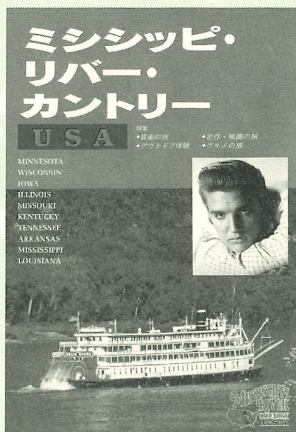
The Mississippi River is important to all of the MRPC states for economic development, recreation, tourism and agriculture. It is part of who we are, and binds us together in a very special and unique way. One of the great responsibilities of the MRPC is to raise the level of importance of our mighty river, its communities and the Great River Road throughout the nation and around the world. I am proud to lead this Commission into the new century and look forward to working with you all to preserve and promote this precious national treasure. *

Mississippi River Country Conducts Fall Sales Mission to Japan

Seven members of Mississippi River Country, U.S.A. traveled to Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka, Japan, for six days of meetings and special events with travel industry trade and media in September. The Sales Mission itinerary included a briefing at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, an interview with *Visit USA*, and meetings with travel industry giants such as Nikko Travel, Tabix Japan, OTOAA, the Global Youth Bureau, JTB World Vacation Chubu, Kinki Nippon Tourist, JALPAK, Japan Amenity Travel, Nippon Travel Agency and Hankyu Express International. Its purpose: to promote, encourage and bolster Japanese tourism to Mississippi River Country in the United States.

Members of the 1999 Japan Sales Mission team represented the entire Mississippi River Country, U.S.A. region. In addition, representatives from the states of Minnesota, Missouri and Tennessee took part answering questions specific to their states. The 1999 Japan Sales Mission team included: John Edman, Executive Director, Mississippi River Country, USA; Rob Imrie, Asia Marketing Manager, Minnesota Office of Tourism; Debra Lee, Asia Marketing Manager, Missouri Division of Tourism; Carolyn Mears, Director of Sales, Graceland Division - Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc.; Sheri Monroe, International Sales Manager, Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau; Scott Pauley, Outdoor Marketing Specialist, Missouri Division of Tourism and Kazunori Takikawa, Vice President Sales & Marketing, Access Inc., MRC Japan Office. *

During the Japan Sales Mission, the MRC unveiled the 4th edition of its Japanese Language Guide which features individual state highlights and attractions, travel information, calendar of events and more. Published by Nikkei, the Guide was distributed to the travel trade and media during the sales mission and is now available at all Northwest Airlines offices, American Centers and through Nikkei's distribution channels.



Mississippi River Country, U.S.A. Sets Sights on International Marketing for 2000

The MRC International Marketing Committee laid the groundwork for its 2000 marketing initiatives in November. Here are its plans at a glance:

- Japan, Australia/New Zealand and Mexico will remain target market priorities, with tour wholesalers, travel retailers and consumers as its specific target audiences.
- Travel Show and Trade Show Events on the 2000 Calendar include: TIA Pow Wow, World Travel Fair in Tokyo, Visit U.S.A. Japan Travel Fair and Visit U.S.A. Australia Seminars, Expo Vacaciones U.S.A. in Mexico City, Active America Travel Summit and NWA Travel Trade Destination Seminars.
- Familiarization Tours will be created for Japanese Wholesalers, as well as media from Japan, Australia and Mexico.
- Sales Missions will be conducted in Japan and Mexico.
- Travel and Trade Show Events and Promotions include: dinner event at Pow Wow, reception or event at Active America, raffle for Australia Visit U.S.A. seminars, development of a Japanese travel agent specialist program, Japan travel and trade seminars with Northwest Airlines and special promotions with regional marketing organizations as they arise.
- Collaterals, videos and the web site will be updated and offered in Japanese and Spanish as budgets allow.
- Research will continue on overseas arrivals, and economic impact and product assessment studies will be conducted.
- Advertising and Public Relations activities will continue on a regional basis throughout the year.
- The services of Access, Inc., the MRC representative in Japan, have been retained for 2000.

For more details or to find out how you can participate in these efforts, contact the MRPC National Office. *

Briefly...

• Executive Committee Meets in November

The MRPC Executive Committee met November 8 in St. Paul, Minn. Reviewing financial reports and setting overall Commission and committee budgets for 2000 were among a variety of topics addressed at this day-long powwow. Other topics included: bolstering committee activity, state commission status, plans for a 2nd Quarter MRPC presentation to the Mississippi River Congressional Caucus and current activity on the National Scenic Byways designation process.

• New faces in the National MRPC Office

MRPC Executive Director, John Edman, has realigned his Minneapolis office staff to better manage the needs of the Commission. Please note the new roles of the following personnel and their phone numbers for future reference:

Danielle Elbert, Marketing Coordinator, 612-212-2558. Danielle is responsible for organizing MRPC participation in trade and consumer travel shows, sales missions, workshops, special events, familiarization tours and the administrative activities of MRPC standing and technical committees.

Jean Anne Kucera, Administrative Assistant, 612-212-1257. Jean Anne will continue to provide overall administrative support to Edman and the Commission, coordinating all business meetings, travel, telecommunications, data base maintenance, financial reporting, invoicing and fulfillment of consumer requests.

Sue Ryan, Media Specialist, 612-212-2231. Sue will continue to work on a variety of MRPC promotional materials, assuming the role of editor for *News In Brief*.

• 1999 MRPC Awards Presented

At the annual MRPC meeting in August, Pilot Gene Enke presented the 1999 Mississippi River Parkway Commission Award to the State of Wisconsin for its efforts to promote and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River and, specifically, for its work in securing Wisconsin's first scenic byway designation for the entire length of its portion of the Great River Road. For individual achievement, the MRPC bestowed the 1999 Distinguished Service Award to Minnesota's Andy Golfis, a 16-year veteran of the Minnesota MRPC. Congratulations to all.

• In Memoriam

George Koenigsaecker, age 83, of Muscatine, Iowa passed away in September. Koenigsaecker served on the MRPC for many years as an officer in the National Commission, a member of the state parkway commission, a member of the National Heritage Corridor Study Commission, and President of the Great River Road Association. He is survived by two sons, three daughters and 10 grandchildren.

Ken Beck, age 60, Genoa, Wisconsin, passed away suddenly in November. Beck, an 11 year veteran of the Wisconsin MRPC will be remembered for his enthusiastic commitment to promoting the Great River Road and the Mississippi River Valley. He is survived by three sons, Jonathan, James and Joseph, all of Genoa; two sisters and two brothers.

States Continue to Make Headway on Scenic Byways Designation



The National MRPC has set a goal of attaining National Scenic Byway designation for the entire, 10-state, Great River Road by the year 2002. Though, up front, it may seem like an application process that could be neatly packaged and easily submitted, the reality is it's dependent on individual state efforts — and that will take time.

The first step in the federal designation process is for each state to individually attain State Scenic Byway designation. Next, there's a series of required studies and plans that must be completed and in place for each state before the federal application can be submitted. Because so much of the designation process is unique to each state, the National MRPC is assuming a support role to the state commissions as they plan for, carry out and finalize each step.

Thus far, the majority of states have completed the first steps of securing State Scenic Byway designation. Four states have completed all requirements for the federal application and will be collectively submitting their proposal in January 2000. Four other river states are on course to submit their federal application by the year 2001. We will keep you informed as progress on this exciting project continues, and you can be sure it will be a hot topic at the Mid-Winter Meeting. For updates or more information, call the National MRPC Office. *

Happy Holidays

Representatives of Mississippi River Country traveled to Tokyo in late November to participate in the Japanese Association of Travel Agents (JATA) trade show.



Nearly 1,000 contacts were made during the five day event, which included meetings with travel trade, media and consumers. Pictured are Yumiko Mitsui, Access Inc. and Rob Imrie, Minnesota Office of Tourism.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| ☉ Mid-Winter Meeting, New Orleans | February 3 – 5 |
| ☉ Visit USA Seminars, Australia/New Zealand | February 7 – 15 |
| ☉ Expo Vacaciones USA, Mexico City | March 22 – 24 |
| ☉ Active America Travel Summit, Seattle | April 11 – 13 |
| ☉ Pow Wow, Dallas | May 13 – 17 |

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