



Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

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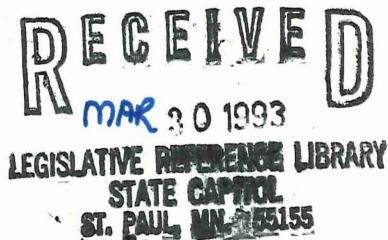
JOHN EDMAN, Executive Director
Pioneer Building Suite 1513
336 Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
(612) 224-9903

Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

1992 Annual Report

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Representative Don Frerichs, Chair
Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota

During calendar year 1992, the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Minnesota (MNMRPC) has been extremely involved with a number of different efforts to promote the resources of the Mississippi River and to develop the Great River Road.

The Commission's successes have ranged from the securing of Federal Scenic By-ways funds for projects along the Great River Road, cooperative development of highway and amenity needs of Great River Road projects with various state and local units of government, the development of a three year international marketing grant with the U.S. Travel and Tourism administration, the securing of Federal appropriations for a Mississippi River National Heritage Corridor Study, to the development and implementation of a Minnesota Mississippi River and Great River Road domestic promotion and public relations program.

The Commission's main focus has been to develop highways, parks, scenic overlooks and other amenities associated with the National Scenic and Historic Parkway along the Mississippi River in Minnesota known as the Great River Road.

The year 1992 saw the Commission build upon this focus by increasing efforts to promote domestically and internationally the various tourism resources found throughout the entire Mississippi, encourage economic development and historical preservation efforts, and increase cooperation among various state and federal agencies, local units of government, the private sector and other MRPC states.

The following is a brief summary of the activities of the Commission during 1992.

State Commission Meetings. The MNMRPC has held six business meetings throughout the state to plan and coordinate Mississippi River promotion and Great River Road development activities. The majority of these meetings have been held in St. Paul to reduce members travel costs. One meeting was out-state at the National MRPC Mid-Winter Meeting in Louisville.

MNMRPC Committees. The MNMRPC has established five new state committees. These include: Transportation, Historic Preservation and Natural Resources, Economic Development, Promotion, and Legislative. MNMRPC members serve on these committees along with appointed representatives of the appropriate state agencies.

MNMRPC Action Plan. The MNMRPC developed, approved, and implemented a new twelve month Workplan designed to guide the activities of the MNMRPC throughout the year. This plan targets promotion and development projects, responsible parties, and deadlines for project completion. As of August, the MNMRPC has completed nearly three fourths of the elements of this plan.

State Agency Director Meetings. The MNMRPC has held separate meetings with the Directors of the Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation, Trade and Economic Development and the Historical Society in the past year. The purpose of these meetings was to seek increased cooperation between and among these state agencies in the implementation of MNMRPC goals.

North Star Workshop. The MNMRPC participated in the invitation only North Star Workshop of the 1991 Federal Highway Bill. MNMRPC representatives provided input on the development of guidelines for the allocation of future Federal highway funds and gathered information on future funding possibilities for the development of the Great River Road.

MNMRPC Marketing Plan. Following a review of the MNMRPC's participation in the MN State Fair, the Commission determined that a new separate MNMRPC state marketing plan should be developed. A preliminary plan was developed and approved that included community involvement meetings, media/public relations, and state agency involvement. Implementation steps are now being developed.

Great River Road Development. The MNMRPC is working with communities along the Mississippi River to secure funding available in the 1992 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act for projects along the Great River Road. The Commission has been updating project needs and working with the Department to Transportation fund projects under the new Federal funding system.

State Aid Reclassification. The MNMRPC has held a series of meetings with the state aid engineer in order to include several remaining segments of the Great River Road on the state aid system. The Department of Transportation has highlighted these state aid reclassification needs and is now directing these concerns to the Commissioner for his consideration and action.

USTTA Grant. The MNMRPC, in cooperation with the other nine MRPC states, secured a \$120,000 international tourism marketing grant from the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. This three year marketing plan that this grant funds is designed to utilize the world wide recognition of the Mississippi River to promote the resources of the entire state, not just those attractions along the Great River Road.

International Fam Tours. Representatives of the Commission have participated in two familiarization tours for Japanese media representatives coordinated through Mississippi River Country, U.S.A. members represented the MNMRPC and group tour events and granted interviews about the resources of the Mississippi River and the Great River Road for international media.

Segment Brochures/Maps. The MNMRPC has worked with the Department of Transportation in reprinting and completing various MN Great River Road segment brochures and maps. The Department of Transportation has just recently reprinted a supply of these brochures and maps and are in the process of completing segment brochures for those sections yet to be printed.

Environmental Policy Statement. As a result of a meeting with the Commissioner of DNR, the MNMRPC has developed a draft environmental policy statement to help guide the commission's positions on various MNMRPC environmental matters. Various members of the Commission have suggested that the MNMRPC take a more active role in Mississippi River environmental matters.

Heritage Corridor Support. The MNMRPC has actively sought the support of the Minnesota Congressional delegation for continued support of the Mississippi River National Heritage Corridor Study. In addition, the Commission has, in cooperation with the MN Historical Society, gathered historical inventory information for submittal to the Heritage Corridor Commission.

Scenic By-ways. The MNMRPC has been successful in securing three separate Federal Scenic By ways grants for projects along the Great River Road in Minnesota. The MNMRPC has participated in the development of a state Scenic By-ways program and served on a Minnesota Scenic By-ways Commission.

National Annual Meeting. The MNMRPC has been working throughout the year in planning and coordinating all fundraising efforts, program activities, and social events for the National MRPC 54th Annual Meeting in Minneapolis. The Commission has sought the help of various private and public organizations for this year's meetings and has coordinated program and social events for delegates from the ten states and Ontario.

In conclusion, the year 1992 has without doubt been one of the most active years of the Commission in recent history. The Commission's emphasis has been not only to continue to development toward completing the highway and amenity plans of the Great Road, but to build on these efforts for the benefits of tourism and economic development. The Commission has increased their focus on activities in-state while also continuing cooperation with other interests in the region.

It is worth noting that throughout all of these efforts, the MNMRPC remains one of the leading members of the National MRPC. Not only does Minnesota continue to hold key leadership and administrative roles with the National MRPC, but MNMRPC activities and plans are often used as a model for the other nine states along the Mississippi River and the Great River Road.