



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Explore Iowa's Great River Road

August 25, 2017

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Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Chair
Culture and Heritage Committee
Mississippi River Parkway
Madison, WI

Dear Dr. Hawkins and Committee Members:

It is my privilege to recommend the Driftless Area Education & Visitors Center, 1944 Columbus Road, Lansing, Iowa for National Interpretive Center status as the 18th National Interpretive Center in the State of Iowa along the Great River Road. The new building housing the Driftless Area Education & Visitors Center was built in part with a National Scenic Byways grant received in 2012. The center relates to all eleven of the MRPC themes with emphasis that it is home to rare and threatened landforms, waterways, plant and wildlife species; how the tributaries have provided food, transportation, wildlife habitat, industry, and recreational opportunities across cultures and history; and finally shows how life has changed along the river. The center contains accessible, comprehensive exhibits that provide high quality learning experiences and information for the byway visitor as well as local residents. The byway traveler will have a greater appreciation for scenic, historic, recreational, archaeological, natural and cultural qualities of the Great River Road, a national scenic byway and an America's Byway. Located in the Driftless Region - Mysteries of the Driftless will be available for viewing and learning more about the unusual land formations the traveler is viewing.

Exhibits include the history of statewide and federal protection of the area; mural depicting a mound-building scene along the Mississippi River; material culture recovered from Late Woodland period; local artifacts, history books, folk life, and photographs; transparent glacier graphics over a map of the area; overview of cultural history from Woodland, Mississippian, and Ojibwa people; historic photographs of commercial fishermen and equipment used to bring in large hauls of fish; a 1950's boat used by fishermen containing period-appropriate artifacts inside the boat; fur trade involving different economic systems; the rise and fall of sawmills and logging operations in the Upper Mississippi River Valley; and lastly an exhibit showing the Mississippi River is a working river explaining the 27 lock and dams and how they have changed the course of the river and its wildlife habitats forever.

The Iowa MRPC Commission, the Allamakee County Conservation Board, and the citizens of Northeast Iowa are extremely proud of this new facility and feel it is worthy of nomination as Iowa's 18th National Interpretive Center. It is with great pride the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission recommends the Driftless Area Education and Visitors Center for National Interpretive Center status as the 18th National Interpretive Center in the State of Iowa along the Great River Road.

Yours very truly,

Edith Reiss Pfeffer, Chair
Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
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