



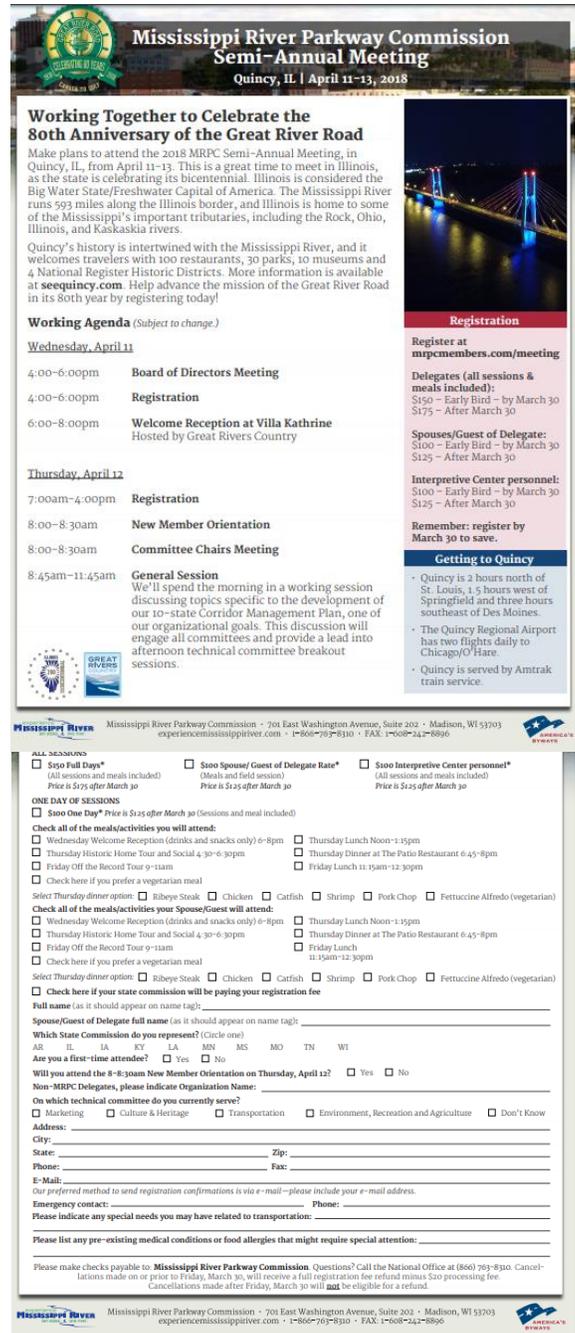
# 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER MARKETING REPORT

January-March 2018

## MEETINGS

### Semi-Annual Meeting – April 11-13 (Quincy, IL)

- Finalized agenda, transportation, meals, tour stops, and other meeting related details
- Registration
  - Set pricing, create registration form (hard copy and electronically)
  - Print and mail form and email out to members
  - Work with hotel and speakers
  - Send invoices, collect payments
- E-newsletters
  - Sent multiple e-newsletters to remind registration for meeting, hotel reservations and other news (see e-newsletters section)



**Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Semi-Annual Meeting**  
Quincy, IL | April 11-13, 2018

**Working Together to Celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Great River Road**

Make plans to attend the 2018 MRPC Semi-Annual Meeting, in Quincy, IL, from April 11-13. This is a great time to meet in Illinois, as the state is celebrating its bicentennial. Illinois is considered the Big Water State/Freshwater Capital of America. The Mississippi River runs 592 miles along the Illinois border, and Illinois is home to some of the Mississippi's important tributaries, including the Rock, Ohio, Illinois, and Kaskaskia rivers.

Quincy's history is intertwined with the Mississippi River, and it welcomes travelers with 100 restaurants, 30 parks, 10 museums and 4 National Register Historic Districts. More information is available at [seequincy.com](http://seequincy.com). Help advance the mission of the Great River Road in its 80th year by registering today!

**Working Agenda** (Subject to change.)

**Wednesday, April 11**

4:00-6:00pm **Board of Directors Meeting**

4:00-6:00pm **Registration**

6:00-8:00pm **Welcome Reception at Villa Kathrine**  
Hosted by Great Rivers Country

**Thursday, April 12**

7:00am-4:00pm **Registration**

8:00-8:30am **New Member Orientation**

8:00-8:30am **Committee Chairs Meeting**

8:45am-11:45am **General Session**  
We'll spend the morning in a working session discussing topics specific to the development of our 10-state Corridor Management Plan, one of our organizational goals. This discussion will engage all committees and provide a lead into afternoon technical committee breakout sessions.

**Registration**

Register at [mpcmembers.com/meeting](http://mpcmembers.com/meeting)

**Delegates (all sessions & meals included):**  
\$150 - Early Bird - by March 30  
\$175 - After March 30

**Spouses/Guest of Delegate:**  
\$100 - Early Bird - by March 30  
\$125 - After March 30

**Interpretive Center personnel:**  
\$100 - Early Bird - by March 30  
\$125 - After March 30

**Remember: register by March 30 to save.**

**Getting to Quincy**

- Quincy is 2 hours north of St. Louis, 1.5 hours west of Springfield and three hours southeast of Des Moines.
- The Quincy Regional Airport has two flights daily to Chicago/O'Hare
- Quincy is served by Amtrak train service.

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experiencemississippiriver.com • 1-866-707-8310 • FAX: 1-608-242-8896

**ALL SESSIONS**

\$150 Full Days\* (all sessions and meals included) Price is \$175 after March 30

\$100 Spouse/Guest of Delegate Rate\* (Meals and field sessions) Price is \$125 after March 30

\$100 Interpretive Center personnel\* (all sessions and meals included) Price is \$125 after March 30

**ONE DAY OF SESSIONS**

\$100 One Day\* Price is \$125 after March 30 (Sessions and meal included)

**Check all of the meals/activities you will attend:**

Wednesday Welcome Reception (drinks and snacks only) 6-8pm

Thursday Lunch Noon-1:15pm

Thursday Historic Home Tour and Social 4:30-6:30pm

Thursday Dinner at The Patio Restaurant 6:45-8pm

Friday Off the Record Tour 9-11am

Friday Lunch 11:15am-12:30pm

Check here if you prefer a vegetarian meal

Select Thursday dinner option:  Ribeye Steak  Chicken  Catfish  Shrimp  Pork Chop  Fettuccine Alfredo (vegetarian)

**Check all of the meals/activities your Spouse/Guest will attend:**

Wednesday Welcome Reception (drinks and snacks only) 6-8pm

Thursday Lunch Noon-1:15pm

Thursday Historic Home Tour and Social 4:30-6:30pm

Thursday Dinner at The Patio Restaurant 6:45-8pm

Friday Off the Record Tour 9-11am

Friday Lunch 11:15am-12:30pm

Check here if you prefer a vegetarian meal

Select Thursday dinner option:  Ribeye Steak  Chicken  Catfish  Shrimp  Pork Chop  Fettuccine Alfredo (vegetarian)

Check here if your state commission will be paying your registration fee

Full name (as it should appear on name tag): \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest of Delegate full name (as it should appear on name tag): \_\_\_\_\_

Which State Commission do you represent? (Circle one)

AR E IA KY LA MO MS MD TN WI

Are you a first-time attendee?  Yes  No

Will you attend the 8-8:30am New Member Orientation on Thursday, April 12?  Yes  No

Non-MRPC Delegates, please indicate Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On which technical committee do you currently serve?

Marketing  Culture & Heritage  Transportation  Environment, Recreation and Agriculture  Don't Know

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Our preferred method to send registration confirmations is via e-mail—please include your e-mail address.

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any special needs you may have related to transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any pre-existing medical conditions or food allergies that might require special attention: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Mississippi River Parkway Commission**. Questions? Call the National Office at (866) 769-8310. Cancellations made on or prior to Friday, March 30, will receive a full registration fee refund minus \$20 processing fee. Cancellations made after Friday, March 30 will **not** be eligible for a refund.

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### Conference calls

- 1/18 Marketing meeting
- 2/9 Board meeting
- 2/20 Marketing meeting
- 2/21 Call with IL-MRPC
- 3/20 Marketing meeting

### Arkansas State Tourism Conference

- 3/11-12 Susanne & Lyn attended and presented at conference

### MRCC Meeting in St. Louis

- 3/27-29 Susanne attended meeting

### Other travel

- Susanne and Lyn attended Edith Pfeffer's funeral on behalf of MRPC on 1/30

## ADMIN

### Fulfillments

- Nearly 1,400 requests in 1<sup>th</sup> quarter
  - Includes online requests, phone requests
- Mailing materials: print envelopes and letters
- Corresponded to emails, followed up phone calls/voice messages, research

### Financial

- Collect, file and organize cash and check donations, meeting registration and dues
- Monthly check reconciliation
- Pay related expenses
- Review fund statements and include in reconciliations

## 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### Toolkit

- Created logo “Celebrating 80 Years”
- Created style guide
- Updated letterhead
- Wrote talking points
- Wrote fun facts
- Add toolkit online
- Updated websites with 80<sup>th</sup> logo
- Updated fulfilment letter with new letterhead
- Updated envelopes with 80<sup>th</sup> logo
- Updated fact sheet



## E-NEWSLETTERS



## Tourism Results

- Average open rate: 25% (industry average: 17.3%)
- Average click rate: 4% (industry average: 2.3%)

## Members E-newsletters

- 2/23 – Register for the MRPC Semi-Annual Meeting, hotel info, directions to Quincy, 80<sup>th</sup> toolkit, Remembering Edith, GRR News
- 3/19 – Semi-Annual Meeting early bird deadline reminder, hotel reservation reminder

[View this email in your browser](#)




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### Join us in Quincy!

Make plans to attend the 2018 MRPC Semi-Annual Meeting in Quincy, IL, from April 11-13. This is a great time to meet in Illinois, as the state is celebrating its bicentennial. The Mississippi River runs 593 miles along the Illinois border, and Illinois is home to some of the Mississippi's important tributaries, including the Rock, Ohio, Illinois, and Kaskaskia rivers.

Quincy's history is intertwined with the Mississippi River, and it welcomes travelers with 70 restaurants, 30 parks, 10 museums and four National Register Historic Districts. Help advance the mission of the Great River Road in its 80th year by [registering today!](#)

#### Register now and save

We have a [full agenda](#), as well as time set aside to learn more about the Quincy area. [Register by March 30 to save.](#) Early bird registration is \$150 for delegates and \$100 for spouses or guests of delegates. Interpretive Center personnel may register for \$100.

After March 30, registration increases to \$175 for delegates, \$125 for spouses or guests of delegates and \$125 for Interpretive Center personnel.

Help advance the mission of the MRPC by [registering today!](#)

#### Hotel reservations

A special room rate is available now at the conference hotel, the Quality Inn & Suites of Quincy. To reserve a room, call 217-222-2666. Rooms are \$79 per night—ask for the MRPC room block rate. Make your reservations today!

#### Getting to Quincy

- Quincy is 2 hours north of St. Louis, 1.5 hours west of Springfield and three hours southeast of Des Moines.
- The Quincy Regional Airport has two flights daily to Chicago/O'Hare.
- Quincy is served by Amtrak train service.

Don't miss this important meeting: [Register today!](#)

#### 80th anniversary toolkit

This year the Great River Road is celebrating its 80th anniversary. It's an ideal time to highlight the route's history and heritage and encourage people to travel on the byway. We've assembled a [toolkit](#) to help promote this important milestone. The kit includes 80th anniversary logos, a style guide, talking points and fun facts. You'll find the toolkit on the [Forms & Resources](#) page on [mrpcmembers.com](#).

#### Remembering Edith

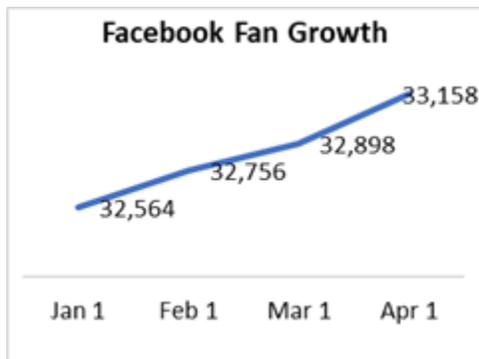
The Great River Road recently lost one of its biggest champions. Edith Pfeffer, Iowa MRPC chairwoman passed away January 26. Edith was an engaged MRPC member who worked tirelessly to forward the commission's mission. While many of us saw her passion for advancing the Great River Road, her commitment to service began at home in Clinton. Edith was an active community organizer for numerous important local causes over the last four decades. Her work helped strengthen the Clinton area, the state of Iowa, and the Great River Road. She will be missed.

#### The Great River Road in the News

The Great River Road has received some outstanding media pickups recently, including a piece from Metro, a free UK tabloid with a circulation of more than 1 million.

- [The Great River Road: A trip from the source to the mouth of the Mississippi](#), [metro.co.uk](#), January 19, 2018
- [Travel close to home along Great River Road](#), New Richmond News, January 30, 2018

## Facebook



Facebook fans	New Facebook fans	Facebook updates
33,158	594	52

### Top posts

- 3/30/2018– [“Photo Friday: the impressive Black Hawk Bridge in Lansing connects Iowa to Wisconsin” w/photo and link]
  - Drove traffic to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 10,843 people reached, 573 reactions, 55 comments, 76 shares, 726 post clicks
  - 10,843 people reached organically
- 3/14/2018– [“Don’t miss Iowa’s Great River Road!” w/link to blog]
  - Drove traffic to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 9,187 people reached, 209 reactions, 16 comments, 36 shares, 460 post clicks
  - 9,187 people reached organically; 3,493 reached via paid ad
- 2/16/2018– [“Here’s a look at a new attraction slated to open along the Wisconsin Great River Road” w/link to La Crosse Tribune article]
  - Drove traffic to [lacrossetribune.com](http://lacrossetribune.com)
  - 7,981 people reached, 226 reactions, 13 comments, 34 shares, 472 post clicks
  - 7,981 people reached organically
- 3/14/2018– [“We’re celebrating our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018” w/link to blog]
  - Drove traffic to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 6,463 people reached, 181 reactions, 8 comments, 32 shares, 337 post clicks
  - 4,640 people reached organically; 1,823 reached via paid ad
- 3/25/2018– [“OK, but the views \*are\* stunning” w/link to JSOnline article about Perrot State Park]
  - Drove traffic to [jsonline.com](http://jsonline.com)
  - 5,960 people reached, 183 reactions, 1 comment, 30 shares, 408 post clicks
  - 5,960 people reached organically
- 1/31/2018– [“Get out on the road this year” w/link to blog]
  - Drove traffic to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 5,722 people reached, 167 reactions, 11 comments, 45 shares, 263 post clicks
  - 5,722 people reached organically

## Advertising

### Page likes – winter 2018

- Page likes campaign; ran 1/10-2/28/18
- 10,025 impressions
- 326 clicks
- 3.25% click-through rate
- Added 255 fans

### Page likes – spring 2018

- Page likes campaign; runs 3/16-5/31/18 (stats through 3/31/18)
- 2,533 impressions
- 133 clicks
- 5.25% click-through rate
- Added 110 fans

### Post engagement – winter 2018

- Post engagement on various Facebook posts; ran 1/10-2/28/16
- 13,398 impressions
- 736 clicks
- 5.49% click-through rate
- Received 651 post engagements

### Post engagement – spring 2018

- Post engagement on various Facebook posts; runs 3/16-5/31/18 (stats through 3/31/18)
- 4,314 impressions
- 356 clicks
- 8.25% click-through rate
- Received 302 post engagements

### Engaged fans (those who are liking, commenting and sharing)

- 64% women (23% ages 55-64), 35% men (11% of which are ages 55-64)
- Top engaged cities (in order): Lansing (IA), Waukon (IA), La Crosse (WI), St. Louis, Cedar Rapids (IA)

**Suggested Page**

 **The Great River Road**  
Sponsored

Plan your 2018 getaway today! Drive the Great River Road, which follows the Mississippi River through 10 states through the heart of America.



The Great River Road  
Landmark & Historical Place  
33219 people like this

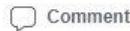
 **The Great River Road**  
Sponsored · 

If you're planning a Great River Road getaway this year, we've got some helpful tools, including a free 10-state map. Order your copy today!



experiencemississippiriver.com  
**Order a FREE Great River Road 10-state map - Experience Mississippi River**

  91      3 Comments · 30 Shares

 Like     Comment     Share

## Takeaways

- We continue to see steady, positive response to the Great River Road Facebook page, topping 33,000 fans by the end of the first quarter of 2018. We're seeing good responses and interaction with posts as well, even those we do not promote with Facebook advertising dollars.
- Facebook ads performed exceptionally well, especially once we switched our creative over to spring photos and language (this usually tends to be the case, as people are generally more excited about warm weather than winter). Our post engagement ads in particular performed well, garnering a click-through rate of higher than 8% despite only running for a few weeks (the average click-through rate for travel/tourism ads is 0.263%).

## PINTEREST

- Added pins to state boards
- Highlighted interpretive centers across all Mississippi River states

## WEBSITE POSTS

Researched and wrote blog articles that appeared on [experiencemississippi.com](http://experiencemississippi.com) homepage

- January: 18 reasons to travel the Great River Road in 2018
- February
  - Must-see attractions in the Show Me State
  - Celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great River Road
- March: Uniquely Iowa Great River Road stops

## PR/PUBLICITY

- On Air Radio Interviews with Greg Taylor, Program Director – Host of AM 1230 KWNO, Winona, MN:
  - 1/16 Reasons to travel GRR in 2018
  - 2/14 Places to love along the GRR
  - 3/14 Best spots to grab a beer along the GRR
- Lonely Planet series of communications
  - Corresponded with editor to set up article/photo shoot in May
- Step By Step
  - Reached out to researcher looking to schedule video documentary series about Mississippi River

## WEBSITE

### www.experiencemississippiriver.com

2018-01-01 to 2018-03-31

Total Pageviews	92,853
Total Unique Pageviews	72,870
Total sessions	40,470
Unique users	33,705
New users	81.90%
Returning users	18.10%
Pages viewed per session	2.3
Time spent per page visited	0:59
Avg. session duration	2:16

#### Top 10 most visited pages

	pageviews	avg. time on page
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/	10,653	1:39
homepage	8,476	1:13
/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	6,876	1:60
/river-attractions/	6,325	2:23
/interactive-tools/fun-facts/	5,731	4:13
/itineraries/	3,596	1:07
/interactive-tools/maps/	3,380	2:08
/app/	2,454	3:18
/states/louisiana/	2,107	2:06
/states/minnesota/	2,037	1:54

#### Top 10 Referring Sites

	sessions	avg. session duration
facebook.com	2,360	1:21
msn.com	436	2:03
drivethegreatriverroad.com	229	1:43
pinterest.com	175	0:30
doityourselfrv.com	174	3:40
duckduckgo.com	140	1:50
thrillist.com	124	2:33
justfreestuff.com	86	2:07
kiddle.co	86	1:39
openlightbox.com	78	0:06

<b>Top 10 Metro Areas</b>		
	sessions	avg. session duration
Chicago IL	2,816	1:59
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	2,664	2:38
St. Louis MO	1,180	2:03
Madison WI	1,062	2:53
Milwaukee WI	926	2:37
New York NY	885	1:50
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	831	1:41
Los Angeles CA	760	2:22
Atlanta GA	748	2:01
New Orleans LA	710	1:29

<b>Top 5 Channels</b>		
	% sessions	avg. session duration
Organic Search	68.90%	2:21
Direct	16.90%	2:19
Referral	7.50%	2:07
Social	6.40%	1:18
Email	0.30%	3:01

<b>User demographics</b>			
	age	% sessions	avg. session duration
	55-64	23.80%	2:42
	65+	18.40%	3:07
	45-54	17.80%	2:12
	25-34	16.10%	1:60
	35-44	15.40%	2:10
	18-24	8.50%	1:55
	gender	% sessions	avg. session duration
	female	51.70%	2:21
	male	48.30%	2:24

<b>Device usage</b>		
	% sessions	avg. session duration
Mobile + Tablet	49.60%	2:05
Desktop	50.40%	2:38

## Takeaways

Users (-8.8%) and sessions (-6.6%) were down slightly this quarter. Pages per session and average session duration improved by about 2%.

88% of the sessions were by new users. Organic search was the main source of new traffic this quarter and Google was the top search engine (63.6% of organic users). The top landing pages for new users were: the Great River Road – The Best Drive in America blog post, the homepage and the Fun Facts page.

The number one way returning visitors reached the site was also via organic search (64.8% of returning users). The top landing page for returning visitors was the blog post: [/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/](#)

Of the people that visited the site, it was about a 50/50 split between male and female. The top two age groups that visited the site were 55-64 and 65+.

73% of the site's sessions were done using the Chrome and Safari browsers. This is good news and means that the majority of users are getting the optimal web experience out of the site.

Mobile & tablet visits made close to 50% of the sessions this quarter.

Facebook referrals were about even with what they were last year; it was still the top referrer this quarter and brought in 1,946 sessions. The top landing page for Facebook referrals was: [/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/](#).

The top exit pages on the site were:

- [/interactive-tools/fun-facts](#)
- [/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america](#)
- homepage
- [/river-attractions](#)
- [/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map](#)

Many of these pages were also the top landing pages via organic search. This could mean that users are finding the content they are looking for on these pages and then leaving the site. But it could be useful to encourage more exploration beyond these pages.

## Ongoing web checks & maintenance

- Monthly website checks
  - Tested and updated links as necessary
  - Checked copy and photos, ensured content was current
- Mrpcmembers.com
  - Updated member info
  - Added 80<sup>th</sup> Toolkit
  - Added to News & Announcements/Homepage

## NATGEO Scrape

- Continued scraping to get all fields
- Multiple runs to collect info from all fields
- Reviewed and compared each run
- Researched and trial other applications
- Ran photos scrap, organized and filed
- Completed scrapping content

## MOBILE APP

### Total downloads to date: 14,507

- iOS
  - # of downloads in Q4 quarter: 731
  - # of downloads to date: 10,061
- Android
  - # of downloads in Q3 quarter: 483
  - # of downloads to date: 4,446
- **134% increase since 1<sup>st</sup> quarter last year (8,311 new downloads)**

