



2ND QUARTER MARKETING REPORT

April - June, 2019

MRCTI PACKETS

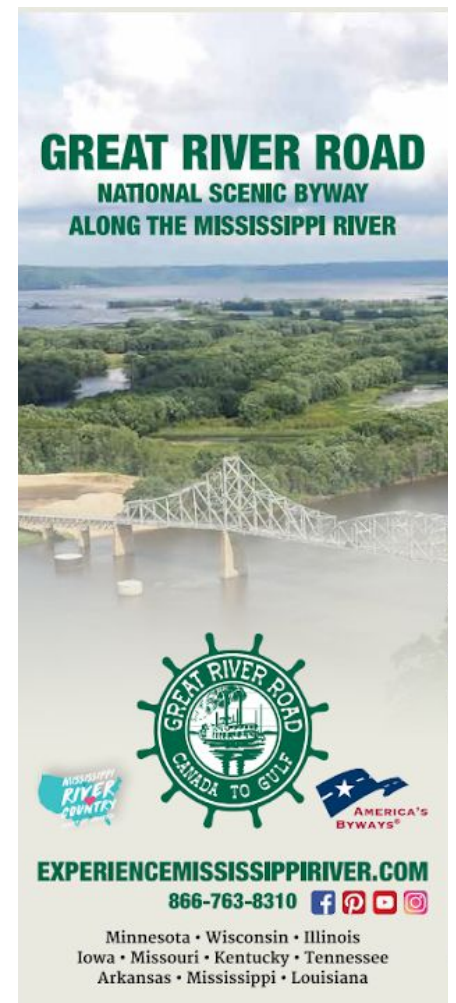
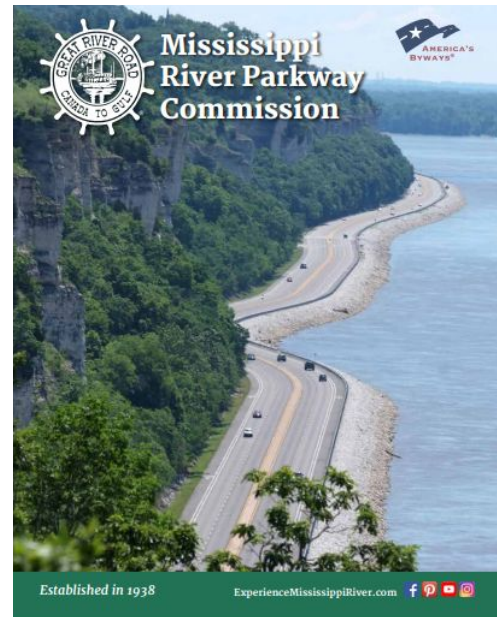
Packets

- Printed in-house
- Bound booklets
- Shipped to Anne before May 30th meeting
- Tracked packages

2019 GREAT RIVER ROAD MAP, CONT'D

Map

- Compile new updates to map
- Updated map files based on feedback received
- Uploaded new map files online and sent to states who submitted comments to review changes
- Collected approvals
- Prepped print-ready files and submit to printer
- Reviewed hard and soft proofs
- Collected shipping information/ Contacted states multiple times
- Sent tracking info



MEETINGS

Semi-Annual Meeting April 2-4

- Meeting planning
 - Finalized transportation
 - Finalized agenda and speakers
 - Finalized meals, beverages and snacks
 - Finalized hotel-related needs
 - Communicated with attendees prior to meeting
 - Created, copied and distributed attendee packets, nametags and supporting onsite materials
 - Created powerpoint slides
 - Drove to/from with meeting materials
- Registration
 - Updated online registration form to regular pricing
 - Collected registration forms and entered into database
 - Sent invoices/receipts
- Newsletters
 - Collected meeting minutes, wrote wrap-up newsletter

Annual Meeting September 17-19

- Registration
 - Finalized hotel registration
 - Set pricing, created registration form (pdf and electronic)
- Newsletter
 - Sent newsletter announcing registration

Conference Calls

- April 16 - Call with WI-MRPC
- May 23, June 4, June 25 - CMP Meetings
- May 8, June 4, June 25 - Marketing Committee
- April 26 - Anne Lewis was in the National Office

Mississippi River Parkway Commission Annual Meeting
La Crosse, Wisconsin | September 17-19, 2019

Join us in La Crosse!
The 2019 MRPC Annual Meeting will take place September 17-19, 2019, in beautiful La Crosse, Wisconsin, a vibrant university town situated between towering bluffs and the Mississippi River. It's a community with brewers and bike trails, riverfront parks and charming boutiques. The river shaped the community's history and remains an important part of life in La Crosse today.
The agenda focuses on several important topics, including working with federal agencies (featuring representatives from the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge) and an update on the National Scenic Byway Program. We'll also discuss the 10-state Corridor Management Plan.
Make plans to attend the Annual Meeting—register today!

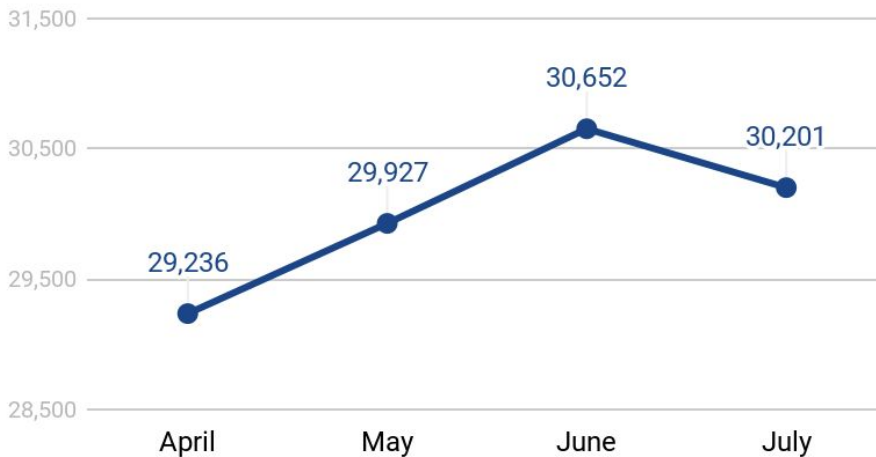
Registration
Delegates (all sessions & meals included):
• Early bird (before Aug. 30): \$225
• After August 30: \$250
Spouse/Guest of Delegate:
• Early bird (before Aug. 30): \$150
• After August 30: \$175
One-day Registration (one day of sessions and meals included):
• \$130
Register at mrpcmembers.com

Hotel Reservations
Radisson Hotel
200 Second Street South
200 Harborview Plaza
La Crosse, WI 54601
Hotel reservations can be made by calling (608) 784-6680. Make sure to mention the Great River Road block to get a special rate of \$129 (standard room, two queen beds).
The room block is available now until Saturday, August 17.

Mississippi River Parkway Commission • 701 East Washington Avenue, Suite 202 • Madison, WI 53703
experiencemississippiriver.com • 1-866-763-8310 • FAX: 1-608-242-8896

E-NEWSLETTERS

Subscribers



June 6 e-newsletter

- Subject line: Notes from an epic adventure
- Wrote article: Notes from an epic adventure
- Also promoted Drive the Great River Road App
- Open rate: 29.5% (industry average: 17.2%)
- Click rate: 5.8% (industry average: 2.3%)

June 13 e-newsletter


- Subject line: Discover the flavors of the Great River Road!
- Promoted Flavors of the Great River Road Giveaway, Weekly Instagram Giveaways, and Flavors page
- Open rate: 18.9% (industry average: 17.2%)
- Click rate: 4.5% (industry average: 2.3%)

Members E-newsletters

- 6/7 - Topics: Annual meeting, Semi-annual meeting recap, Upcoming deadlines, Updated travel maps, Interpretive Center signs, Agritourism assets, Relay of Voices, The Great River Road in the news
- 6/13 - Topic: Flavors of the Great River Road toolkit now available
- 6/28 - Topics: Annual Meeting registration and hotel reservation, Meeting agenda, Flavors of the Great River Road promotion update, Nomination deadlines and Certificates and GRR traveler stories

Win \$300 for a foodie getaway | Instagram giveaways | Share your favorites

View this email in your browser
Forward to a friend



FLAVORS

OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD




GIVEAWAY




Enter to win \$300 for a Great River Road food trip!

Discover the flavors of the Great River Road this summer! Explore the rich culinary heritage of the cities and towns along the Mississippi River by sampling fresh fruits and veggies, fried cheese curds, Cajun cuisine and everything in between.

Enter today, and you could win \$300 for a foodie road trip along the Great River Road, which follows the Mississippi River from northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Plus, we'll be sharing our fans' recommendations all summer long for [the best places to eat and drink](#) along the route!

Enter now!






Check out our weekly Instagram giveaways

Follow us on Instagram @greatriverroad for even more chances to win! Use the hashtag #GRRFlavors to submit your best food photos—we're giving away a \$25 gas card every week!

Follow us on Instagram



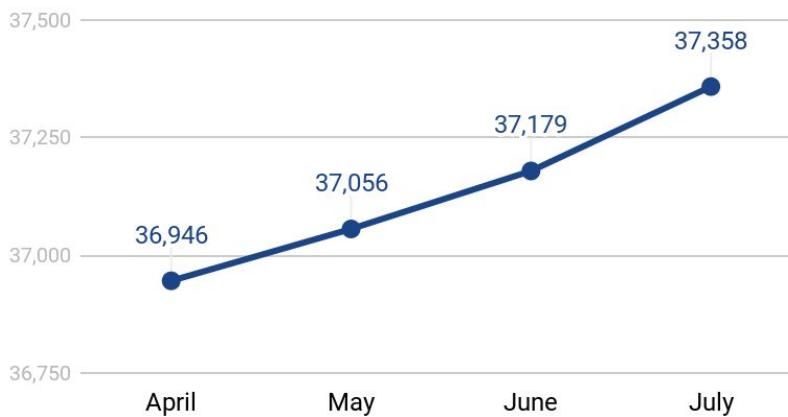
Share your favorite Great River Road flavors

Got a great lunch spot or favorite ice cream shop (or something else delicious) along the Great River Road to share? Tell us your favorites [here](#), then [browse suggestions](#) from our fans.

Find flavors

FACEBOOK

Facebook Fan Growth



Facebook fans	New Facebook fans	Facebook updates
37,358	412	50

Top posts

- April 22 – “Happy Earth Day! Marvel at the beauty of the Mississippi River Region at some of these awe-inspiring overlooks along the Great River Road” w/link to blog
 - Drove traffic to experiencemississippiriver.com
 - 9,879 people reached, 456 reactions, comments & shares, 307 post clicks
 - 9,879 people reached organically
- April 17 – “We’d suggest a lot more than 10, but this is a good start from USA TODAY 10Best...” w/link to article “10 places you need to see when driving the Great River Road”
 - Drove traffic to 10Best.com
 - 8,533 people reached, 158 reactions, comments & shares, 706 post clicks
 - 8,533 people reached organically
- June 7 – “Road trip! USA TODAY 10Best called the Great River Road one of the best voyages you can take this summer” w/link to article “10 of the best road trips you need to take this summer”
 - Drove traffic to 10Best.com
 - 7,833 people reached, 207 reactions, comments & shares, 338 post clicks
 - 7,833 people reached organically
- April 26 – “Nice to see a couple Great River Road towns (Visit Natchez and Visit Clarksdale) make this list” w/link to article “Vote - Best Historic Small Town Nominees: 2019 10Best Readers’ Choice Travel Awards”
 - Drove traffic to 10Best.com
 - 6,231 people reached, 97 reactions, comments & shares, 392 post clicks
 - 6,231 people reached organically; 1,746 reached via paid ad

- April 29 – “Explore the sights of the Great River Road with these webcams” w/link to blog
 - Drove traffic to experiencemississippiriver.com
 - 5,665 people reached, 141 reactions, comments & shares, 205 post clicks
 - 5,665 people reached organically

Advertising

Page likes

- Page likes ad for Great River Road Facebook page - runs year-round
- 19,292 impressions
- 540 clicks
- 2.80% click-through rate
- Added 177 fans

Post engagement

- Post engagement ads on various posts - runs year-round
- 18,052 impressions
- 416 clicks
- 2.30% click-through rate
- Received 3,078 engagements

Flavors of the Great River Road - sweepstakes

- Post engagement ad for Flavors of the Great River Road contest entry page
- 5,239 impressions
- 274 clicks
- 5.23% click-through rate
- Received 1,412 engagements

The image shows three screenshots of Facebook posts from the 'The Great River Road' page. The top post is a sponsored post with a green gear icon, titled 'Explore America's greatest drive: The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River through 10 states from northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Plan your trip today!' and features an aerial view of a bridge over a river. The middle post is also sponsored, titled 'Road trip! USA TODAY 10Best called the Great River Road one of the best voyages you can take this summer.' and features a scenic view of a coastline. The bottom post is sponsored, titled 'Enter today for your chance to win \$300 to sample the flavors of the Great River Road!' and features a graphic for a 'FLAVORS OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD GIVEAWAY' with an 'ENTER NOW!' button.

The Great River Road
Sponsored · 🌐

Explore America's greatest drive: The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River through 10 states from northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Plan your trip today!

The Great River Road
The Great River Road National Scenic Bywa... 👍

👍❤️ 36 1 Comment

The Great River Road
Sponsored · 🌐

Road trip! USA TODAY 10Best called the Great River Road one of the best voyages you can take this summer.

10BEST.COM
10 of the best road trips you need to take this summer

👍❤️ 112 2 Comments 42 Shares

The Great River Road
Sponsored · 🌐

Enter today for your chance to win \$300 to sample the flavors of the Great River Road!

FLAVORS OF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD GIVEAWAY
ENTER NOW!

EXPERIENCMISSISSIPPIRIVER.COM
Experience the Flavors of America!
Enter to win \$300 to explore foodie fare along the Mi...

👍❤️ 77 6 Comments 6 Shares

Flavors of the Great River Road - blog posts

- Post engagement ads for Flavors of the Great River Road blogs
- 2,571 impressions
- 124 clicks
- 4.82% click-through rate
- Received 521 engagements

Flavors of the Great River Road - landing page

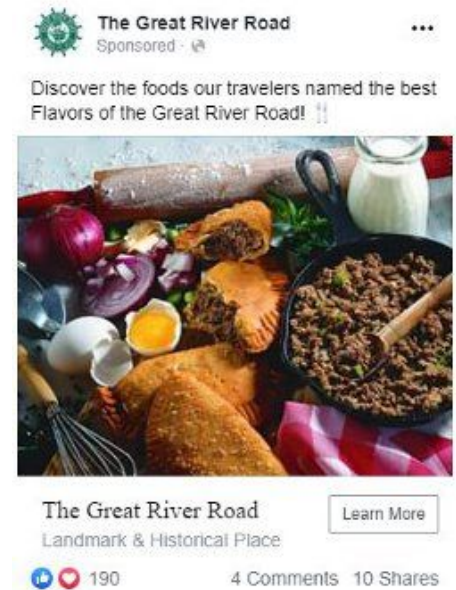
- Post engagement ads on fan submissions and other pages
- 4,237 impressions
- 247 clicks
- 5.83% click-through rate
- Received 1,020 engagements

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

- 68% women (21% of which are ages 55-64), 31% men (9% of which are ages 55-64)
- Top engaged cities (in order): St. Louis, Dubuque, Chicago, Alton, Davenport

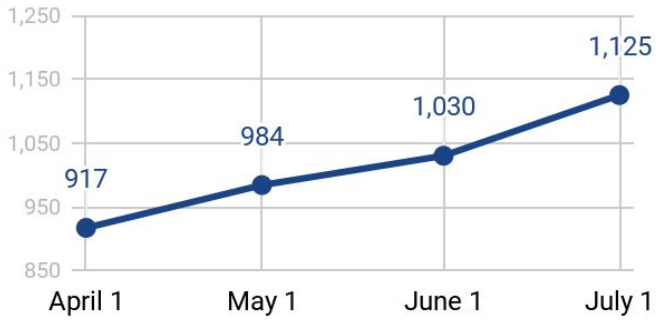
Takeaways

- Our April blog post (about webcams in Great River Road destinations up and down the Great River Road) performed extremely well on Facebook, garnering more than 15,000 combined impressions, nearly 600 reactions (likes, comments and shares) and more than 500 clicks to the site. (We posted a link to it twice in Q2).
- For our Facebook ads, content related to the Flavors of the Great River Road promotion and food in general performed very well, even in the brief time they were active in Q2 (Flavors of the Great River Road content didn't launch until June 14). All of the Flavors ads had click-through rates of 4.8% or above, which is more than five times higher than the tourism industry average.



INSTAGRAM

Instagram Followers



Instagram followers	New Instagram followers	Instagram posts
1,125	208	37

Top posts

- 5/9/2019 – Photo of bridge at sunset near Rice, MN. Caption: “Looking over the river in Minnesota. Photo credit: @kirk_lindberg”
 - 749 people reached, 112 engagements

- 4/30/2019 – Photo of riverboat on the Mississippi. Caption: “On the Mississippi in Alton, Illinois.”
 - 493 people reached, 78 engagements



greatriverroad • Follow
Minnesota

greatriverroad Looking over the river in Minnesota 🌅 📷: @kirk_lindberg
9w

greatriverroad #travelusa #travelwi #travelmn #travelminnesota #minnesotalife #minnesota #discoverminnesota #exploreminnesota #greatriverroad
9w Reply

cecilbaldwiniii Wow wow wow 🤩
9w 1 like Reply
View replies (1)

kirk_lindberg Thanks for the
92 likes
MAY 9

Add a comment... Post



greatriverroad • Follow

greatriverroad On the Mississippi in Alton, Illinois 🌅
10w

candlelightinn1 Wow, love this picture!!!
10w Reply

73 likes
APRIL 30

Add a comment... Post

- 6/20/2019 – Photo of Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee.
Caption: “Elvis’s famous pink Cadillac at Graceland.”
 - 567 people reached, 79 engagements



Advertising

Brand awareness

- Raised awareness of Great River Road Instagram account
- 72,543 impressions
- 38 people clicked on the ad
- 0.05 click-through rate
- 760 estimated ad recall lift (people)

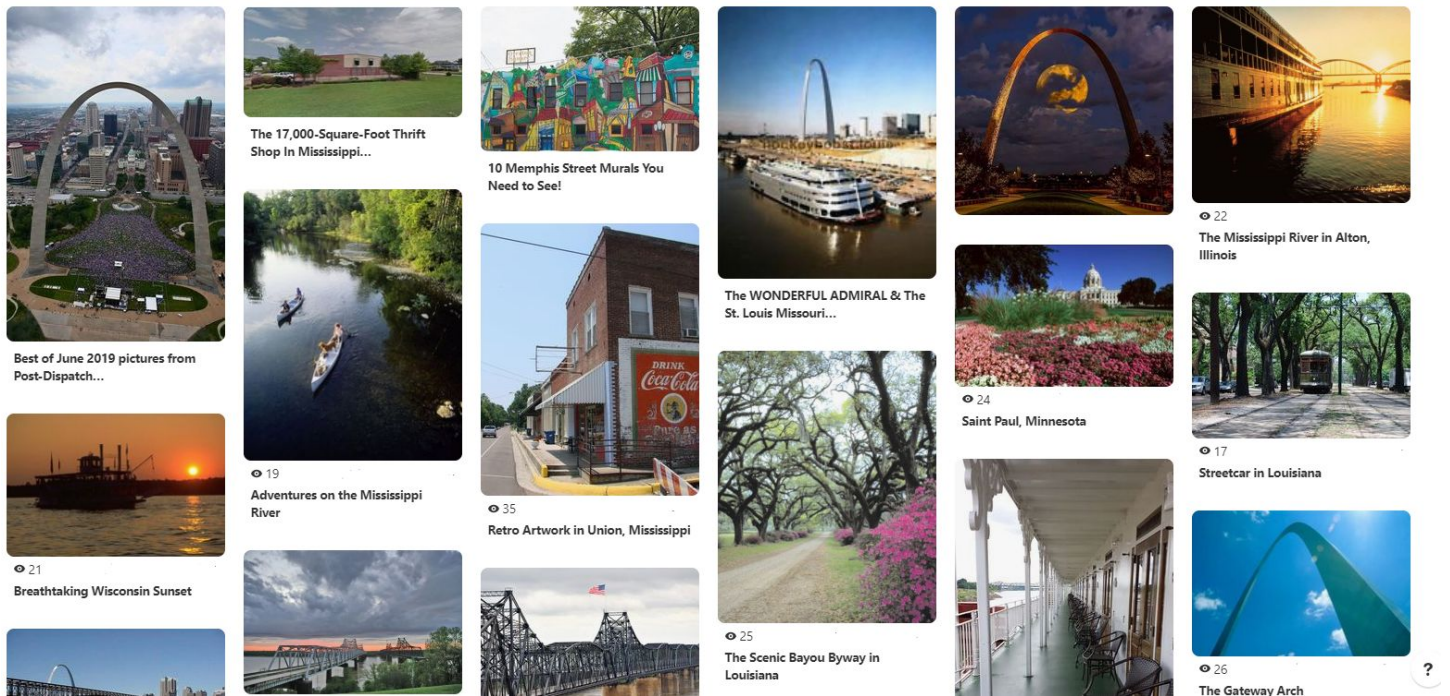


Takeaways

- Photos of scenery along the Mississippi River continue to perform best on the Great River Road account.
- Finding user-generated content (fan photos) is a good way to expand our library of images on the account; in fact, a fan photo was our most popular post of the quarter.

PINTEREST

- Summary: Created and shared pins to promote travel on the Great River Road. Promoted assets including scenery, food, shopping, attractions, etc.



PR/PUBLICITY

Month

- Media mentions for the Great River Road in Q2 included
 - [10 of the best road trips you need to take this summer](#), USA Today 10Best
 - [10 Day Trips from New Orleans](#), tripstodiscover.com
 - [Great River Road – From Minneapolis to New Orleans](#), gopetfriendly.com
 - [The lower Mississippi's meandering miles](#), 1mississippi.org
 - [Best Historic Small Towns](#), USA Today 10Best (Natchez and Vicksburg were finalists in fan voting)

WEBSITE POSTS

Researched and wrote blog articles that appeared on experiencemississippiriver.com homepage

- April: See what's happening on the Great River Road (4/26)
- May: See the spring migration along the river (5/7); Notes from an epic adventure (5/21)
- June: Celebrate June Dairy Month along the Great River Road (6/12); The best barbecue on the Great River Road (6/17); Breweries, wineries & distilleries on the Great River Road (6/24); Five sweet treats you shouldn't miss on the Great River Road (6/26)

Celebrate June Dairy Month along the Great River Road

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

Summer is here, June is National Dairy Month, let's talk about the (very) serious subject of cheese and ice cream.

Photo via The Pearl Ice Cream Parlor Facebook

For an old-timey ice cream experience, hit up [The Pearl Ice Cream Parlor](#) in La Crosse, Wisconsin. This charming stop is a "Best of La Crosse County" winner for both its ice cream and old fashioned candy. Located in the historic downtown of this beautiful river town, the store looks almost like a museum, beautifully preserved. They make their ice cream in house (nearly two dozen flavors from real Wisconsin cream) along with fresh baked waffle cones. The Pearl is located a couple of short blocks from the Mississippi River so you can take your ice cream and stroll down by the water on a warm afternoon.

Photo via Nelson Cheese Factory Facebook

Feeling cheesy? Head to the [Nelson Cheese Factory](#) in Nelson, Wisconsin. Not only do they sell real Wisconsin cheese, but varieties from all over the world, so it's a great place to pick up a rare or hard-to-find cheese for the connoisseur in your life. They also sell to-die-for garlic, cheese curds and homemade ice cream (we recommend rum cherry!). While you're in the area, make a stop at the National Eagle Center across the river in Wabasha, Minnesota to watch our national bird!

Photo via Red Wine Confectionery Facebook

Another worthy stop in Minnesota is the [Red Wine Confectionery](#) in Red Wing. They have tons of rotating flavors of ice cream (try the hand-dipped waffle cones!) and happen to make some of the best root beer floats you've ever tried. Not related to dairy, but still delicious, are their homemade candies, including salt water taffy, chocolate-covered fruit and nuts and gourmet truffles. Take your treats across the street to LaGrange Park and sit by the fountain, or walk a quick block to take in views of the Mighty Mississippi.

Photo by TripAdvisor.com user DawnH007

Last on our list is the [Hastings Co-On Creamery](#) in Hastings, Minnesota. Known as the "shake place," you can get an unbelievable milkshake for an equally unbelievable price here. They've been in business for more than 100 years, so they know their dairy! They're also famous for their soft serve ice cream, fresh milk and cheese curds. It's a great place to stop after a hike or a bike ride!

ORDER THE MAP TODAY!

HAVE YOU TRAVELED THE WHOLE GREAT RIVER ROAD? SHARE YOUR STORY!

Plan your Route
Start by picking a state

RELAY OF VOICES
A relay connecting the voices of the Mississippi River
Meet more than 400 water environmentalists along the way
http://www.relayofvoices.com
@relayofvoices

Drive the GREAT RIVER ROAD APP
DOWNLOAD NOW!

SHOP THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

Sign up for the e-newsletter
Email Address
Subscribe

PROMOTION

There's perhaps no better way to get to know a destination than through their food. This summer, we're highlighting the culinary heritage of the states along the Great River Road, as well as highlighting visitor-recommended restaurants, dining options, traditional cuisines, the best places for local ingredients, agritourism options (wineries, farmers' markets, etc.) and more along the route.

The *Flavors of the Great River Road* promotion, which includes a sweepstakes, weekly Instagram giveaways, updated website content and social media posts/advertising runs from June 12 to August 7, 2019.

We reviewed every online agritourism asset and deleted any that looked out of business online. We continued to communicate with states about updating and adding new agritourism assets using the form we created.

Additionally, we redesigned the web pages promoting the flavors of the Great River Road using submission content collected from last year's promotion.

A full promotion recap will be included in the Q3 marketing report.



WEBSITE

www.experiencemississippiriver.com/		
2019-04-01 to 2019-06-30		
Total Pageviews	132,535	
Total Unique Pageviews	102,078	
Total sessions	60,121	
Unique users	48,198	
New users	86.3%	
Returning users	13.7%	
Pages viewed per session	2.2	
Time spent per page visited	0:56	
Avg. session duration	2:03	
Top 10 most visited pages		
	pageviews	avg. time on page
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/	17,023	1:28
/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	9,265	2:05
/interactive-tools/webcams/	8,365	1:25
homepage	7,959	1:13
/river-attractions/	7,527	2:23
/interactive-tools/fun-facts/	4,947	3:24
/itineraries/	4,373	1:09
/app/	3,497	3:52
/activities-recreation/auto-motorcycle-tours/road-conditions/	3,273	2:10
/states/minnesota/	3,056	1:55
Top 10 Referring Sites		
	sessions	avg. session duration
facebook.com	2,420	0:58
pandbads.wufoo.com (contest)	1,274	1:05
drivethegreatriverroad.com	402	1:40
doityourselfrv.com	155	2:56
thrillist.com	104	1:14
blog.directgeneral.com	98	2:41
pinterest.com	80	0:30
wigrr.com	67	2:59

blog.directgeneral.com	98	2:41
ottsworld.com	60	1:45
Top 10 Metro Areas		
	sessions	avg. session duration
Chicago IL	6,708	1:34
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	4,939	2:07
St. Louis MO	2,201	1:25
Milwaukee WI	1,556	2:35
Madison WI	1,487	2:02
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	1,429	1:29
Atlanta GA	1,164	2:06
New York, NY	1,079	1:58
New Orleans LA	1,049	1:44
La Crosse-Eau Claire WI	1,032	1:52
Top Channels		
	% sessions	avg. session duration
Organic Search	65.7%	2:14
Direct	16.8%	1:49
Referral	6.8%	1:46
Social	4.4%	1:01
User demographics		
age	% sessions	avg. session duration
55-64	24.5%	2:18
65+	21.4%	2:40
45-54	17.8%	2:10
25-34	16.2%	1:59
35-44	15.5%	2:07
18-24	4.7%	1:33
gender	% sessions	avg. session duration
male	51.8%	2:10
female	48.2%	2:18
Device usage		
	% sessions	avg. session duration

Mobile + Tablet	56.5%	2:03
Desktop	43.5%	2:25

Takeaways

The “Best Drive in America” page continued to be the top entry point for the site; the page has specific content about the road that draws a large volume of organic content. There also continues to be strong interest in the 10-state map. The map order form page also receives substantial organic traffic and the June 4 “Notes from an Epic Adventure” e-newsletter also boosted traffic on that page. We updated the site’s webcams page and promoted webcams with an April 26 blog post. The webcams page is now the third-highest page on the site. The page is a collection of links to help visitors find real-time video streams of the route and it’s obviously popular. We plan to add more links to the page and revisit it in future blog posts.

Ongoing web checks & maintenance

- Monthly website checks
 - Tested and updated links as necessary
 - Checked copy and photos, ensured content was current
- Flipped social media and website content to summer on May 20
- SEO/analytics check
- Interpretive Centers
 - Updated on River Attractions page and Interpretive Centers page
 - Added pins in Google maps on website
- Added more Great River Road website button with links on mrpcmembers.com

FOLLOW THE PILOT'S WHEEL CAMPAIGN

Keychains/postcards

- Admin
 - Continued to collect requests from Interpretive Centers to refill postcards
 - Continued to collect email sign ups and entered email addresses into email subscriber list

Over 100 emails added to email list in Q2

MOBILE APP

iOS

- # of downloads in Q2: 1,060
- # of downloads to date: 14,703

Android

- # of downloads in Q2: 608
- # of downloads to date: 7,350

Total (combined)

- # of downloads in Q2: 1,668
- # of downloads: 22,053

RELAY OF VOICES

- Fielded many communications with questions and follow up on project
- Communicated back and forth with Victoria
- Completed contract and first half payment

ADMIN/MISCELLANEOUS

Financial

- Collected, filed and organized cash and check donations, meeting registration and dues
- Monthly check reconciliation
- Paid related expenses
- Reviewed fund statements and include in reconciliations

Bookkeeping

- Invoiced states for 2019 dues
- Created info packet for funding source in Illinois
- Monthly reconciliation and financial reports

Fulfillments

- 2,273 requests in 2nd quarter
 - Includes online requests, phone requests
- Mailing materials: print envelopes and letters
- Corresponded to emails, followed up on phone calls/voice messages, research

I Drove the Great River Road Certificate

- Sent 16 certificates to those who drove the entire Great River Road and shared their story

Interpretive Center Themed Rack Cards

- Worked with Ruth Hawkins to produce 11 themed cards. Posted drafts and communicated with states to collect feedback. Sorted printed cards once they were delivered. Due to boxes breaking open during shipping to the national office, cards were damaged and unorganized. National office created a form and communicated ordering procedures with interpretive centers and then fulfilled those requests.

Partnerships

- Communicated with Dean Klinkenberg, author of books about the Great River Road and suggested a mutual opportunity to give his books away on our social media while promoting his books. Look for activity on those promotions in 3rd quarter.
- Discussed other proposed partnership questions with states and leadership as they arose.

Talking Points

- Provided talking points to leadership for communication with states.

CMP

- Met multiple times by teleconference with task force to discuss and create work plans.

MRC CA SALES MISSION

- Held at Miyako Hybrid Hotel in Torrance, CA, on May 16
- MRC/partner attendees included Arkansas, Illinois, Illinois Great River Road, Great Rivers & Routes (IL), Louisiana, Minnesota, Mall of America, Mississippi, Tennessee, Memphis, Wisconsin
- Updated mission directory to include “New in 2019” attractions/events for partner destinations, created new profile sheets for Great Rivers & Routes, Memphis
- Met with representatives from several U.S.-based tour operators in morning
- Hosted Agent Kai monthly luncheon featuring presentation and one-on-one meetings between tour operators and MRC partners
- Created signage and table tents for hotel
- Designed and ordered MRC tote bags, assembled gift bags for attendees

MRC IPW MEETING

- Held in Anaheim, CA, on June 1 (in conjunction with IPW)
- Invited stakeholders from MRC states to attend educational session
- Created digital invite to send to states, online registration form, updated PowerPoint presentation, stakeholder handouts and other seminar materials
- Naco from Connect Worldwide presented a seminar on travel marketing to Japanese audience
- Prior to stakeholder meeting, MRC Board met to approve 2019-20 (FY20) budget

MRC NEH GRANT

- MRC applied for National Endowment for the Humanities grant - Digital Projects for the Public (deadline was June 12, 2019)
- Proposal was for a video-forward website focusing on MRC states and marketing themes (Music, Culinary, Culture, Heritage, The River, Landscapes)
- Created website mockups, design document, application narrative, sample video
- Contacted and assembled list of humanities advisers who will contribute scholarly input to the project
- Contacted state partners and other organizations to compile letters of support and CVs for people involved in the project
- Grant recipients announced January 2020, work on grant would start March 2020