



## 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER MARKETING REPORT

October-December, 2016

## MEETINGS

- November 2 – Marketing teleconference
- November 21 and December 12 – Susanne traveled to Iowa to meet with IA-MRPC
  - Between meetings, she contacted and collected bids to compare two different locations.
- Susanne prepared for December 9 Board Meeting
- Semi-Annual Meeting in Paducah, Kentucky
  - Negotiated hotel rates
  - Made information available mrpcmembers.com and sent newsletter
  - Continued to research and discuss meeting options with KY-MRPC

## E-NEWSLETTERS

### Subscribers – Tourism





\*December data not currently available

- Average open rate: 32% (industry average: 18%)
- Average click rate: 11% (industry average: 3%)

### MRPC Member e-newsletters

- 10/18 – Annual Meeting wrap up, NatGeo Site Launch, Marketing Success, Fall Photos, Cycling Events, Condolences, 2017 National Meetings

[View this email in your browser.](#)

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### 2016 MRPC Annual Meeting Wrap Up

We had a great Annual meeting in Natchez, Mississippi earlier this fall. The event was productive, informative and a lot of fun. Thank you to the entire Mississippi-MRPC for hosting such a fine event.

#### Special recognition

Congratulations to the following people and organizations who were recognized during the Annual Meeting:

- **Distinguished Service Award**  
Bob Miller (Wisconsin)  
Ann Ventress (Mississippi)
- **Pilot's State Award**  
Iowa-MRPC

More information from the Annual Meeting can be found [here](#).

The most recent committee meeting minutes are also online:

- [Culture & Heritage](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [EHA](#)

#### NatGeo Site Launch

The new National Geographic Mississippi River [Geotourism site](#) has launched. The site features an interactive map, information on our network of interpretive centers, trip itineraries and details about the MRPC. We worked with the NatGeo staff to bolster the Great River Road content, adding links back to [experiencemississippiriver.com](#), creating Great River Road itineraries, adding missing interpretive centers and branding posts with the Great River Road logo. Thank you to everyone who contributed content to this new venture. A series of regional roll-out events will help publicize the new site, with events planned in Illinois, Minnesota and Louisiana. See a schedule of events and contact information [here](#).

#### Marketing Success

Our efforts to market the Great River Road continue to find success. We just completed another successful Drive the Great River Road Month. This annual campaign continues to be an effective way to encourage fall travel on the byway. The subscribers on the Great River Road e-newsletter list now stands at more than 13,400 and is picking up an average of 54 new subscribers each month. The average open rate of our e-newsletters is 33 percent (industry average is 18 percent), and the average click rate is 11 percent (the industry average is 3 percent). The Great River Road continues to draw large numbers of Facebook fans – successful promotions and a Facebook page likes campaign helped draw 4,000 new fans from April-June. Nearly 25,000 now like our page.

#### Fall photos

Please share your fall photos from the Mississippi River. These photos are of tremendous value as we promote fall travel on the byway – scenic photos continue to be among our most popular and engaging social media posts. Photos that show beautiful fall colors and people enjoying different aspects of travel along the Mississippi are always of use, including people driving, shopping, dining and enjoying outdoor recreation. Please send your photos to [info@mrpcmembers.com](mailto:info@mrpcmembers.com).

#### Cycling events

We're still gathering information on bicycling events along the Great River Road. If you haven't submitted information from your state, please do so using [this link](#).

#### Condolences

##### Marty Beckman

Marty, a technical member of WI-MRPC for more than 40 years, passed away October 6. A retired Wisconsin Department of Transportation engineer, Marty was instrumental in the designation of the Wisconsin Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Marty was a dedicated and knowledgeable leader and he served as the unofficial historian of the MRPC. He was also the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award in 1986. He will be missed.

##### Joyce St. Columbia

Joyce, wife of Arkansas Chair Joe St. Columbia, passed away Sept. 22. Joyce attended many of our national meetings and her warm, sincere personality will be missed.

#### 2017 National Meetings

Planning is underway for the 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting in Spring, which will be held in Kentucky. Stay tuned for details, including dates and lodging information! Iowa will host the fall Annual Meeting.

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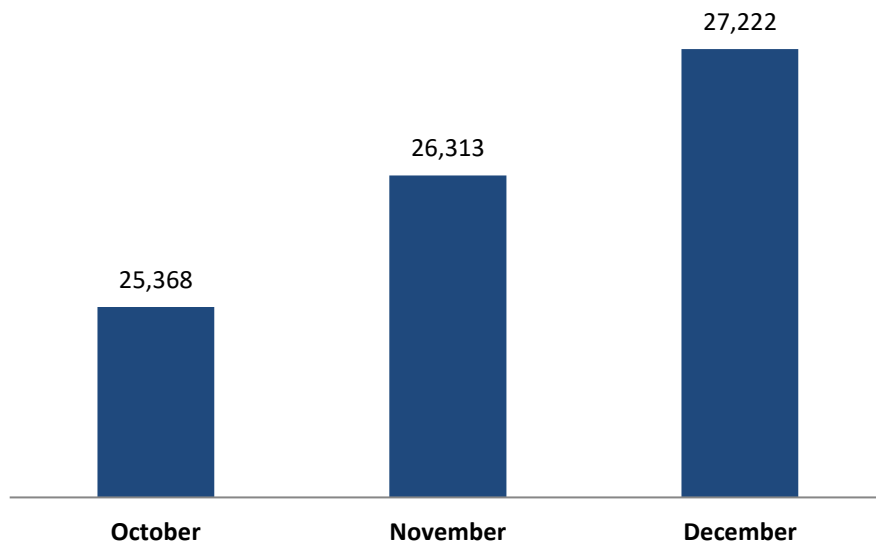
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- 11/22 – Semi-Annual Meeting announcement dates and hotel info, gift to MRPC Endowment Fund.
- 12/7 – Letter from Karl Samp year-end gifts

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Facebook Fan Growth



### October

Facebook fans		New Facebook fans		Facebook updates	
25,368		1,034		5	
Pinterest followers	New Pinterest followers	Pinterest pins	Pinterest repins	Pinterest boards	
559	1	923	48	15	

### Facebook Top Posts

- 10/24 (“With Halloween just a week away, it seems like the perfect time to talk about the haunted history along the Great River Road!” w/link to article):
  - 6,921 people reached, 131 reactions, 8 comments, 43 shares, 258 post clicks
- 10/14 (“Photo Friday: Have you ever traveled to the top of the Gateway Arch?”):
  - 4,017 people reached, 95 reactions, 19 comments, 4 shares, 193 post clicks

## November

Facebook fans		New Facebook fans		Facebook updates	
26,313		945		6	
Pinterest followers	New Pinterest followers	Pinterest pins	Pinterest repins	Pinterest boards	
564	5	942	46	15	

### Facebook Top Posts

- 11/4 (“A beautiful story about the headwaters of the mighty Mississippi” w/link to USA Today article)
  - 25,562 people reached, 811 reactions, 101 comments, 229 shares, 1,598 post clicks
- 11/19 (“There’s a lot to learn about the Mississippi River and the Great River Road...” w/link to blog on [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com))
  - 16,558 people reached, 515 reactions, 18 comments, 142 shares, 793 post clicks

## December

Facebook fans		New Facebook fans		Facebook updates	
27,222		909		17	
Pinterest followers	New Pinterest followers	Pinterest pins	Pinterest repins	Pinterest boards	
564	0	955	57	15	

### Facebook Top Posts

- 12/15 (“Throwback Thursday: The Delta Queen churns up the Mississippi River near Alma, Wis.” w/photo)
  - 14,318 people reached, 757 reactions, 32 comments, 93 shares, 658 post clicks
- 12/1 (“Photo Friday: Holiday lights along the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wis.” w/photo)
  - 8,224 people reached, 342 reactions, 9 comments, 38 shares, 227 post clicks

## Facebook Advertising

### General Page Likes Ad

- Impressions: 145,195
- Clicks: 3,183
- Click-through rate: 2.63%
- Fans added: 2,940

## Facebook Audience

- Fan profile
  - Fans of page: 70% women (52% are ages 45-65+), 30% men (21% are ages 45+)
  - Engaged fans (those who are liking, commenting and sharing our material): 60% women (51% are 45+), 39% men (32% are 45+)
  - Top engaged cities (in order): Davenport, IA; Cedar Rapids, IA; Dubuque, IA; La Crosse, WI; Springfield, IL

## Takeaways

- The fourth quarter saw a good variety in terms of what topics made for the most popular posts. While photos of the river and attractions along the Great River Road continue to be popular, we also saw good engagement on blog posts (written by us) and external articles written about the Great River Road.
- Our Facebook ad campaign was enormously successful in 2016, adding nearly 13,000 fans to our page, which had 27,000+ fans at the end of the year. Moving forward into 2017, we might want to look at other types of Facebook ads (video, page post engagement, etc.) now that we have a more substantial fan base.

## WEB MAINTENANCE

www.experiencemississippiriver.com/			
2016-10-01 to 2016-12-31			
Total sessions		37576	
Unique visitors (users)		31908	
New users	↗	83%	
Returning users	↘	17%	
Pages viewed per session		2.2	
Time spent per page visited		0.9 minutes	
Avg session duration		2 minutes	
Top 10 most visited pages			
Page		Pageviews sessions	Avg time on page (minutes)
homepage		12588	1.3
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/		8337	1.5
/river-attractions/		7473	2.6
/interactive-tools/fun-facts/		5190	4.3
/interactive-tools/			
order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/		4412	2
/itineraries/		2648	1.1
/states/iowa/		2095	1.9
/states/minnesota/		1974	2.1
/states/wisconsin/		1954	1.9
/states/illinois/		1843	2
Top 10 Referring Sites			
Page		Pageviews sessions	Avg time on page (minutes)
m.facebook.com		1257	0.7
drivethegreatriverroad.com		659	1.3
facebook.com		495	1.5
secure.pilchbarnet.com		233	3.8
usatoday.com		190	3.5
complimentarycrap.com		116	1.3
arlanascorner.com		109	1
traveldubuque.com		102	1.2
justfreestuff.com		100	1.5
l.facebook.com		84	1.1

## Facebook referrals: 1556

### Top 10 Facebook Referrers

Source	Page	Sessions
m.facebook.com / referral	/great-river-road-fun-facts/	361
m.facebook.com / referral	homepage	231
m.facebook.com / referral	/3-antebellum-homes-to-see/	199
m.facebook.com / referral	/interactive-tools/	199
m.facebook.com / referral	order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	154
m.facebook.com / referral	/haunts-great-river-road/	143
facebook.com / referral	/great-river-road-fun-facts/	85
facebook.com / referral	/interactive-tools/	66
facebook.com / referral	order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	61
facebook.com / referral	/3-antebellum-homes-to-see/	57
facebook.com / referral	homepage	
facebook.com / referral	/haunts-great-river-road/	

## Mobile Usage (percent)

52.32%

## Top 10 Metro Areas

Metro	Users
Chicago IL	2851
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	2530
St. Louis MO	1300
Madison WI	835
New York NY	811
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	742
Milwaukee WI	659
Atlanta GA	649
Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Iowa City & Dubuque IA	634
New Orleans LA	587

## Ongoing web checks & maintenance

- Monthly website checks
  - Tested and updated links as necessary
  - Checked copy and photos, ensured content was current
  - Removed expired packages

## Mobile Stats:

More than half of the site's traffic came from tablets and mobile devices and the sessions went up by 26.36% this year. This increase makes sense, as more people use tablets/mobile devices to navigate the web each year.

## Takeaways

Sessions on the site are up by 9% overall, which helped bump up users by 8% and pageviews by nearly 5%.

Organic search results were responsible for 70% of the site's traffic. A few of the popular search keywords were:

- Mississippi River
- Great River Road
- Mississippi River Facts
- Great River Road
- The Great River Road map

Facebook was the top referrer this quarter, bringing 1,857 users to the site. That is a 155% increase from last year's Facebook referrals. The majority of these referrals came from mobile devices.

## MRPCmembers.com

- Wrote Stay Updated posts to keep group informed
- Updated resources page for group to have access to all public document
  - Minutes, agendas, etc.

## MOBILE APP

### Drive the Great River Road app

- Total number of downloads as of 12/31/16
  - 3,152 Apple
  - 1,954 Android
  - 5,106 total downloads
- The app continues to have a solid growth in downloads. This quarter, there were a 25% growth:
  - 504 more Apple downloads
  - 302 more Android downloads





## FULFILLMENT

### Map requests

- Over 1,114 requests for Great River Road Travel Map (online form, email and phone inquiries)

## LANDS END

### Great River Road online store

- The orders completed by Pilch & Barnet were for the Great River Road Birding Bonanza Giveaway and Bike the Great River Road Sweepstakes. Both promotion prize packages included a men's/women's Great River Road jacket.

BUSINESS OUTFITTERS BY LANDS' END									Statement Date: 02/06/17			
INVOICED 01/01/2016 - 01/24/2017									\$177.45	\$39.80	\$15.23	\$232.48
Cal Yr	SEGMENT	CUST#	CUST NAME	CONTACT NAME	ORD DT	ORD#	INV DT	INV#	SUBTOTAL	S & H	TAX	TOTAL
2016	PLCHB	6852084	Loey Minske	Minske, Loey	3-May-16	S614477 3	12-May-16	SIN3835 285	\$77.00	\$9.95	\$6.08	\$93.03
2016	PLCHB	6765500	Pilch & Barnet	PILCH, LYN	15-Jul-16	S635021 0	20-Jul-16	SIN4030 906	\$38.49	\$9.95	\$3.03	\$51.47
2016	PLCHB	6765500	Pilch & Barnet	PILCH, LYN	21-Aug-16	S643480 1	29-Aug-16	SIN4127 563	\$38.49	\$9.95	\$4.48	\$52.92
2016	PLCHB	6895198	Madigan Winery LLC	MADIGAN, BRIAN	9-Sep-16	S648375 4	16-Sep-16	SIN4177 946	\$23.47	\$9.95	\$1.64	\$35.06

## FAM TOURS

### October 2016

- Dates: October 20-27, 2016
- States: Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky
- Participants:
  - Ms. MICHIKO ONO, imedia
  - Mr. KO NOTOMI, The Sankei Shimbun
  - Mr. YUJI MATSUNAGA, Yahoo News/Huffington Post Japan
  - Ms. MAKIKO YAMAMOTO, Adventure King
  - Ms. CHIE USUI, translator/escort, Connect Worldwide
  - Mr. ALAN HAMARI, driver/escort, Mississippi River Country
- Theme: outdoor recreation
- Destinations visited:
  - Missouri
    - St. Charles
    - Kimmswick
    - Bonne Terre
    - Belleview
    - Lesterville
    - Arcadia
    - Pilot Knob
    - Eminence
  - Arkansas
    - Mountain View
    - Lakeview
  - Kentucky
    - Gilbertsville
    - Calvert City
    - Cadiz
    - Hopkinsville
    - Pembroke
    - Erlanger