



**Pilot's Report**  
**Dec. 11, 2020**

**The Year Gone By:** 2020 is about to go into the rear-view mirror. There's no debating it was exceptional. But exceptional times call for exceptional actions and MRPC answered the call:

- Eight states submitted applications for All-American Road status in the National Scenic Byways Program, despite a pandemic and a short time-line
- MRPC's Annual Meeting went virtual, attracting between 85 and 125 participants in each of six segments, and involved notable speakers from a congresswoman to a nationally recognized transportation expert.

**The Year Ahead:** Several highly potential developments are expected:

- A 10-state promotion of All American Road status
- Funding of the National Scenic Byways program
- Greater use of Zoom and other virtual platforms for greater interaction within MRPC and with other Mississippi River organizations and for fundraising
- Greater demand for Great River Road information as travelers seek safe and increased travel before and after a vaccine

MRPC Committees: Committee chairs have been part of the planning process for the year and have expressed an interest in collaborating on a regular basis throughout the year. This will not only strengthen the committees, it will increase the integration of MRPC's work on behalf of the Great River Road. I encourage state chairs to get more commissioners involved.

Finances: I will work to diversify and increase our sources of revenue. Fundraising will be a priority and will include government grants, sponsorships and an effort to activate two states currently without commissions. If you would like to help, I'd love to hear from you.

Communication: I will try to report regularly to all states and hope states will keep their rosters up to date for this purpose. In addition, there will be increased communication with Interpretive Centers and between committee chairs.

Linkage with Others: I will continue to stay in touch with the Mississippi River Caucus of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. Some of these legislators serve on state MRPCs. Others know nothing about the Great River Road, even though it runs through their districts. This organization offers new avenues for state connections and issues. We will continue to work with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative also to leverage our resources.

Board Leadership Training: If the MRPC board agrees, we will engage the Institute for Conservation Leadership to orient our board members and the national office staff to opportunities for more effective leadership in an era of virtual meetings and complex organizational issues. I hope this will take place in the first quarter of 2021.