



Mississippi River Parkway Commission

701 East Washington Avenue, Suite 202
Madison, WI 53703



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Marketing Committee Conference Call

January 27, 2020 | 10 AM-11 AM

Attendees: MN/Pilot Pro Tem, WI, IL, MO, IA, MS, AR, LA, KY, National Office (NO)

Meeting started at 10:02am.

NOTES

- I. National Office provides update on 2019 marketing items:** NO will send out 4th quarter report with year-end wrap up. NO encouraged questions be directed to committee in case others have similar ones when reviewing report.

- II. Relay of Voices Status Update & Discussion:** Pilot Pro Tem shared conversation with Victoria Bradford regarding Relay of Voices (ROV) performance. Bradford understands contracted items were omitted and offered new deliverables. Bradford acknowledged MRPC met its obligations. Bradford's PR firm can report event's media value, however MRPC related stories were not included but she can post them in future. Committee felt reluctant to make new arrangements for content. Pilot Pro Tem noted varying degrees of involvement between states and Bradford and asked each Committee Member to express their experience. MN had good event coverage when it kicked off but admitted ROV has MN connections. WI said they visited with leadership but had limited interest or participation resulting in little media coverage. IA also did not see much media coverage. IL had no media and was disappointed it was just two participants and not a team. IL planned an event, but ROV didn't connect with people. IL was displeased after a year of planning, what was delivered was not what was promised. MO was not involved and unsure what was done in state. KY paid for all activities out of pocket due to low interest and received no media or participation. AR had three commissioners work with Bradford in West Memphis but also didn't receive media attention or talk/discussion on social media. MS was overall disappointed with experience. MS found no return on investment and was frustrated they didn't seem interested in experiencing the community. MS felt it was organizers taking a trip and having others pay for it. LA explained Bradford met with LA state officials and they decided not to provide financial contribution or planning resources, so LA wasn't involved. Baton Rouge had some media attention since it was the end of trip but no one from Tourism attended final event or appeared to be invited. AR expressed uncertainty on state expectations. LA

Mission Statement: Preserving, promoting and enhancing the Mississippi River Parkway for communities and travelers

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said event was not our project and they had their own budget and plan. It wasn't our responsibility to organize it for them. LA said it was supposed to be bigger than it was, and it didn't happen as presented. KY said it felt like a honeymoon and echoed poor engage and lack of performances as promised. Pilot Pro Tem asked if we are obligated to pay if they didn't deliver contracted items or if we add for new content. IL concerned fighting the contract will take more time than what we will receive back. LA said contract was void when it went from relay to two people. WI recommended half of remaining balance due to low confidence and poor performance. Motion by WI to pay \$1,125 of remaining balance due to failure to deliver contracted materials. MN seconded. Motion carried. Pilot Pro Tem to share Committee's decision at February Board Meeting.

III. 2020 Marketing Plan

- Approved 2020 budget: NO shared Board approved items presented by Marketing Committee for 2020. Two promotions will continue: spring's Flavor promo from last year and Drive the GRR month in September. A branding campaign to promote music along the GRR was approved too. NO will communicate with states plan and instructions for participation.
- *River Travel Magazine*: Pilot Pro Tem relayed a conversation with *River Travel Magazine* regarding VLOGs (three-minute videos) they are creating on music. Pilot Pro Tem recommended they speak with Shelley Ritter at the Delta Blues Museum. She said *River Travel Magazine* is interested in working with us. WI worked with *River Travel Magazine* founders and noted they were at La Crosse Annual Meeting and sponsored the welcome reception. AR shared they contacted AR about King Biscuit Blues Fest. Pilot Pro Tem recommended Committee join their email newsletter. WI offered *River Travel Magazine* as option to promote GRR while applying for All American Road status to show culture, history and connection. KY said furthering our reach is great, but we should do our own marketing since we have great results while our partnerships like ROV and Nat Geo. Website project struggle. LA asked about a 10-state GRR travel guide. Pilot Pro Tem noted challenges of time and money on 10-states on joint projects. KY agreed a 10-state option would be valuable instead of giving money to groups like ROV. WI offered NO as resource to put together a guide based on experience and GRR knowledge. Committee requests NO create a guide proposal and add to marketing committee agenda.



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IV. Mississippi River Country - Update

- MRPC Pilot attended December 2019 MRC board meeting in Natchez, MS and gave an MRPC overview. NO reviewed differences between MRPC and MRC. MRC interested in maintaining communication between two groups and MRC Chair attending MRPC semi-annual Board meeting.
- Canada market added: NO reviewed decision to add Canada as an international market and shared it may offer opportunities for MRPC.
- American Queen discussion: NO discussed conversations MRC about American Queen and how they could overlap with MRPC's interest in approaching them for sponsorship. AR explained there have been some issues with Shore Excursions regarding securing deals so both organizations should be in conversations with communities currently involved with American Queen and Shore Excursions.

V. State Reports on Marketing Projects: tabled

VI. Toolkit/mrpcmembers.com reminder made by NO

VII. Set next meeting date: A Doodle poll will be used to determine the next date.

VIII. Other business: NO opened conversation on All American Road applications. AR and WI shared they have passed a resolution to apply. AR asked about a PowerPoint presentation regarding intrinsic valued with media examples. LA said form will be online, and they request not to include many attachments. MN asked about national nomination form and including references from articles showing eight features. LA said to keep applications simple. A follow-up conversation regarding the application is being set and all states will be invited to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 11:17am.