



National Office Activity Report

2021 | Q1

January-March

MEETINGS

Semi-Annual Meeting Preparation

- Topics and Speakers – worked with leadership to assist in researching options, provided guidance/assistance and logistics
- Agenda – flow, timing, descriptions
- Promotion Schedule – Developed and executed
- Zoom graphics/assets– Developed background options consistent with the meeting design
- Distribution database – Collected and researched different lists based on stakeholders of the River
- Marketing Presentation – Researched, developed shell, intro slides
- Registration – Developed materials and provided updates
- Zoom – Researched options for utilization
- Meeting Communication – Provided communication to registered attendees and speakers
- Bios – Researched, collected, wrote and posted bios online
- Closing and Opening visuals, Powerpoints, surveys
- Speaker Meetings – Met with speakers to walk through agenda
- Survey – Developed, executed and summarized results
- Recordings – Collected, reviewed, edited, posted and communicated location
- Screenshot Collection – Took screenshots for future marketing use
- During Meetings – Facilitated Q&A
- Set up Semi-Annual Meeting Website to host meeting contents.

E-newsletters

3/19 e-newsletter

- Subject line: Save the date for our All-American Road celebration April 14
- Sent to: Annual Meeting contact list

- Open rate: 33.8%
- Click rate: 0.3%

3/25 e-newsletter

- Subject line: Register Now: The All-American Advantages of the Great River Road
- Sent to: Annual Meeting contact list
- Open rate: 36.5%
- Click rate: 12.3%

3/31 e-newsletter

- Subject line: Reminder: Register for the MRPC All-American Road celebration April 14!
- Includes info on sessions and links to speaker bios
- Sent to: Annual Meeting contact list
- Open rate: 32 %
- Click rate: 5.8%
-

Zoom and Conference Call Meetings

- 1/ 8 - Collaboration Committee
- 1/ 13 - Met with Anne
- 1/ 21 - Marketing Committee
- 1/ 29 - Met with Anne
- 2/ 2 - Transportation Committee
- 2/ 2 - Planning meeting with John and Pat
- 2/ 5 - Planning meeting with Sabrina and Nani
- 2/8 - Met with MRCTI
- 2/11 - Marketing Committee
- 2/12 - Board meeting
- 2/18 - Board training
- 2/22 - Met with Anne
- 3/ 8 - Semi-Annual planning meeting
- 3/ 9 - Marketing AAR Meeting
- 3/11 - Marketing Committee
- 3/12 - Collaboration Committee

EXPERIENCMISSISSIPPIRIVER.COM WEBSITE

Analytics

www.experiencmississippiriver.com/		
Total Pageviews	113,586	
Total Unique Pageviews	87,855	
Total Sessions	52,196	
Unique Users	43,931	
New Users	88.5%	
Returning Users	11.5%	
Pages Viewed Per Session	2.2	
Time Spent Per Page Visited	0:57	
Avg. Session Duration	2:04	
Top 10 Most Visited Pages	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	17,141	2:04
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/	9,739	1:42
homepage	9,519	1:15
/interactive-tools/fun-facts/	4,911	4:15
/river-attractions/	4,467	2:29
/interactive-tools/webcams/	3,265	1:28
/itineraries/	3,256	0:59
/app/	3,178	3:21
/history-comes-alive-on-the-great-river-road/	2,123	1:49
/interactive-tools/maps/	1,814	2:02
Top 10 Referring Sites	Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
facebook.com	3,093	1:12
thediscoverer.com	317	1:24
kiddle.co	132	1:04
wjon.com	111	2:02

mailchimp.com	99	1:52
us5.campaign-archive.com (e-newsletters)	93	6:27
msn.com	88	0:57
pinterest.com	76	2:28
doitourselfrv.com	55	6:59
greatriverroad-illinois.org	37	2:38
Top 10 Metro Areas	Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	4,365	2:15
Chicago IL	3,654	2:01
St. Louis MO	1,927	1:41
Milwaukee WI	1,688	2:19
Madison WI	1,598	2:56
Atlanta GA	1,060	1:58
Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Iowa City & Dubuque IA	1,000	1:51
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	951	1:35
Des Moines-Ames IA	832	1:60
Green Bay-Appleton WI	771	3:03
Top 5 Channels	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Organic Search	59.3%	2:12
Direct	30.6%	1:60
Social	6.2%	1:13
Referral	3.9%	2:04
Email	0%	0:20
User Demographics		
Age	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
55-64	22.3%	2:27
65+	22.1%	2:41
25-34	16.4%	2:17
45-54	15.7%	1:56
35-44	13.7%	1:48
18-24	9.9%	2:01
Gender	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Male	50.1%	2:07

Female	49.9%	2:20
Device Usage	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Mobile + Tablet	53.6%	2:16
Desktop	46.4%	2:30

Web Maintenance

- Monthly website checks
 - Tested and updated links as necessary
 - Checked copy and photos, ensured content was current
 - Monthly Mailchimp check to ensure lists are performing/functioning correctly
 - Renewing Instagram Tokens: Refreshing long-lived tokens before expiration, ensuring granted feed app permissions
- Flipped website content to Spring on March 16, 2021
- Updated Wordpress core files and plugins
- Created website backup/restore points

Updates

- FAQ page copy updated
- GRR Map form copy updated

Blog Posts

- January: American history awaits on the Great River Road (1/20); History comes alive on the Great River Road (1/29)
- February: Great River Road receives All-American Road designation (2/16)
- March: Discover ancient cultures and engaging history on the Great River Road (3/17)

Takeaways

The website performed well this quarter, with overall page views up slightly (about 1 percent) over last year. There are some clear indications that people are ready to travel the route – views to the map ordering page were up about 37 percent over the first quarter of last year and it's currently the most-popular page on the site. Homepage traffic increased by about 38 percent, but a large share of that appears to be a shift of traffic away from the "best drive in America" page as an initial landing page for many users. Views on the "fun facts" about the Great River Road also increased about 33 percent, relative

to the same timeframe in 2020.

Organic search traffic increased about 33 percent this quarter relative to Q1 2020, another good sign that people are planning a robust return to travel this year. In terms of audience, the United Kingdom, Canada and China were the top international markets reached by the site. Domestically, states along the route produced the largest number of site users (Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa were the top states for site users this quarter). Populous states like Texas, California and Florida also were among the top 10 states for site visits.

MRPCMEMPERS.COM WEBSITE

Web maintenance

- Updated plugins
- Updated WordPress version
- Fixed broken links
- Added security to improve email deliverability
- Updated site with documents and content related to the upcoming meetings
- Updated Transportation Page
- Update contact info and rosters for members

Updates

- Update Mailchimp contacts
- Add meetings and associated files to the website
- Added minutes/reports
- Add newsletter section to members homepage that links to monthly newsletter
- Updated files/table and copy on Transportation page and archive
- Started setting up development site
- Add links to AAR survey on homepage
- Update mx records to switch email over to Google

Site Redesign

- Inventory current site (Directory, Materials, Committees, Meetings, etc)
- Organizational plan for a new site; Content Flowchart and Site map
- Pilot approved design of the new website

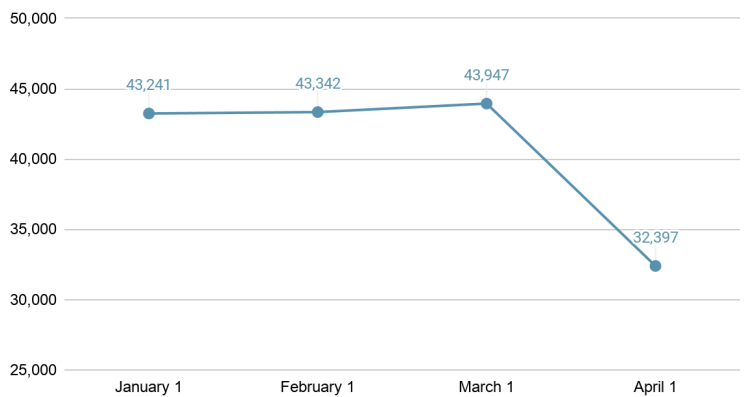
- Coding process starts on redesign

TOURISM E-NEWSLETTERS

Results

- Average open rate: 25.6% (industry average: 17%)
- Average click rate: 5.6% (industry average: 2.2%)
- In April, e-newsletter was cleaned of subscribers who had joined before March 2020 and had not opened any of the last 10 newsletters

E-newsletter Subscriber Growth



1/29 e-newsletter

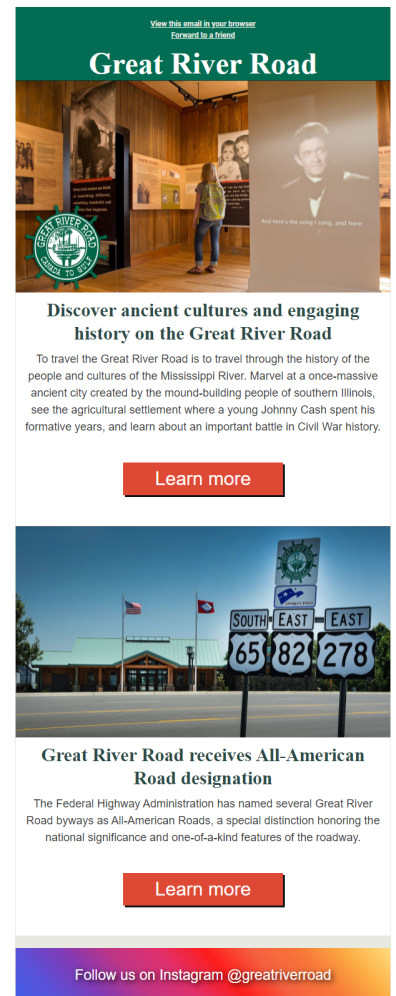
- Subject line: American history awaits on the Great River Road
- Wrote article: American history awaits on the Great River Road (AAR history attractions)
- Also promoted: Order a free 10-state Great River Road map
- Open rate: 24.1%
- Click rate: 6.8%

2/10 e-newsletter

- Subject line: History comes alive on the Great River Road
- Wrote article: History comes alive on the Great River Road (AAR history attractions)
- Also promoted: Get a free 10-state Great River Road map
- Open rate: 24.4%
- Click rate: 5.7%

3/29 e-newsletter

- Subject line: Discover ancient cultures and engaging history
- Wrote article: Discover ancient cultures and engaging history (AAR history attractions)



- Also promoted: Great River Road receives All-American Road designation (blog)
- Open rate: 29.0%
- Click rate: 3.8%

PILOT E-NEWSLETTERS

1/20 e-newsletter

- Subject line: January MRPC newsletter
- Topics: All-American Road application; Interpretive Center offerings; MPRC Committees; meeting schedule
- Open rate: 25.6%
- Click rate: 4.7%

2/17 e-newsletter

- Subject line: February MRPC newsletter
- Topics: All-American Road designation/toolkit; MRPC Transportation Committee; new Interpretive Center in TN; Articles of interest; meeting schedule
- Open rate: 32.7%
- Click rate: 7.3%

3/17 e-newsletter

- Subject line: March MRPC newsletter
- Topics: Annual meeting save the date/session descriptions; general MRPC housekeeping notes; meeting schedule
- Open rate: 28.7%
- Click rate: 3.2%

FACEBOOK

Overview

- Facebook fans: 58,277
- New Facebook fans: 3,083
- Facebook updates: 32

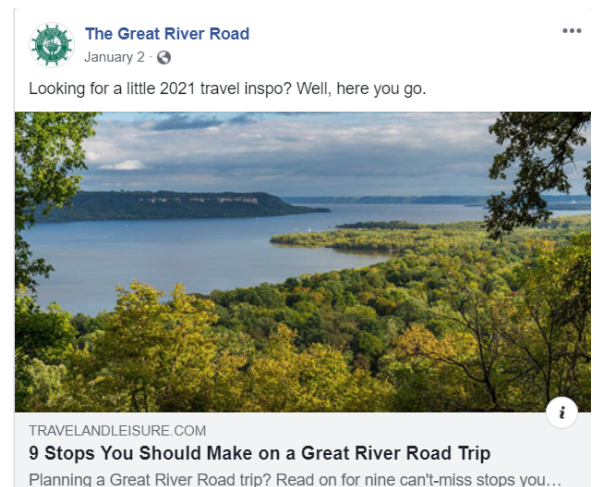
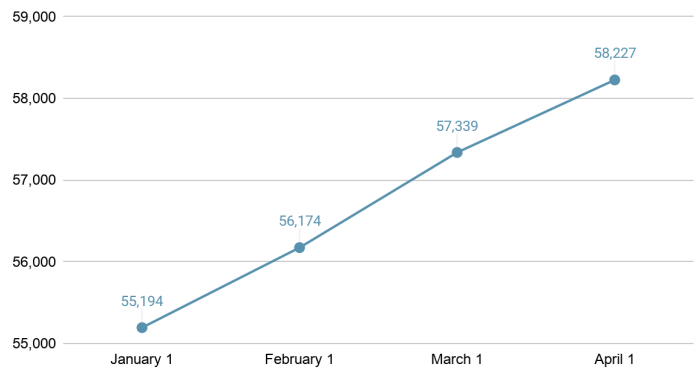
Demographics/Engaged fans

- 52% women/47% men; 39% 55-64, 32% 45-54, 17% 35-44; 10% 65+

Facebook Top Posts

- 1/2/21
 - “Looking for a little 2021 travel inspo? Well, here you go” w/link Travel + Leisure article (“9 Stops You Should Make on a Great River Road Trip”)
 - 56,734 people reached; 3,933 reactions, comments & shares; 3,673 post clicks
 - 9,333 people reached organically; 48,959 people via paid ad
- 1/29/21
 - “Take a trip through history” w/link to blog on experiencemississippiriver.com
 - 6,594 people reached; 802 reactions, comments & shares; 176 post clicks
 - 2,827 people reached organically; 3,982 people via paid ad
- 2/17/21
 - “A big honor for The Great River Road!” w/link to All-American blog on experiencemississippiriver.com
 - 26,695 people reached; 2,581 reactions, comments, & shares; 622 post clicks
 - 5,597 people reached organically; 21,165 people via paid ad

Facebook Fan Growth



Facebook Advertising

Page likes

- Page likes ad; runs throughout year w/updates
- 229,172 impressions
- 7,797 clicks
- 3.40% click-through rate
- Added 3,162 fans

Post engagement

- Promotes engagement on Facebook posts; runs throughout year w/updates
- 199,270 impressions
- 12,273 clicks
- 6.16% click-through rate
- Received 11,407 post engagements

INSTAGRAM

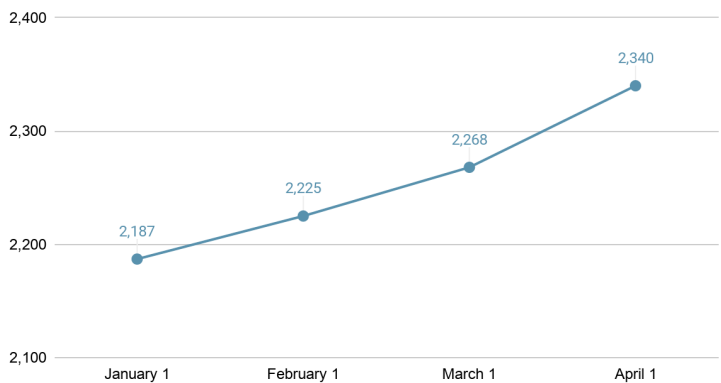
Overview

- Instagram followers: 2,340
- New Instagram followers: 153
- Instagram updates: 14 posts
- Replying to user messages

Demographics/Engaged fans

- Top age range: 35-44
- Top locations: Alton, Godfrey, Minneapolis, Chicago
- Top gender: Women (63%)

Instagram Follower Growth



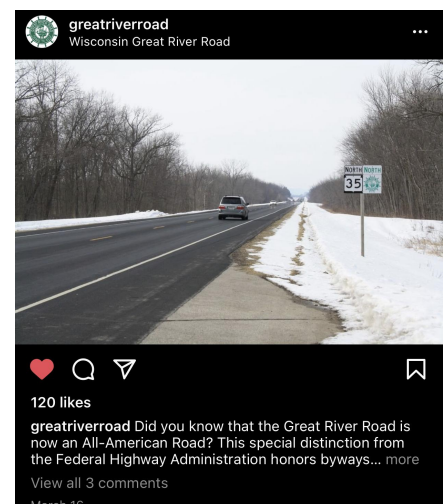
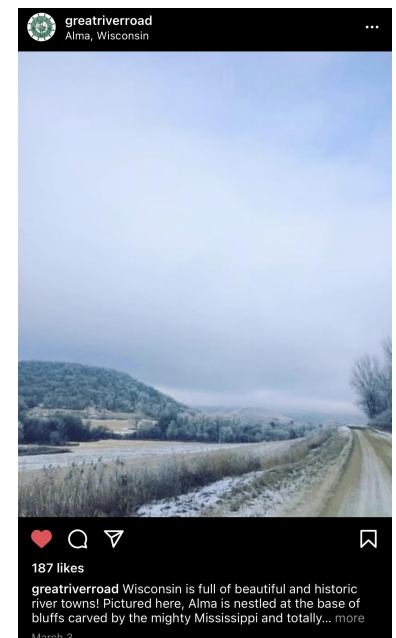
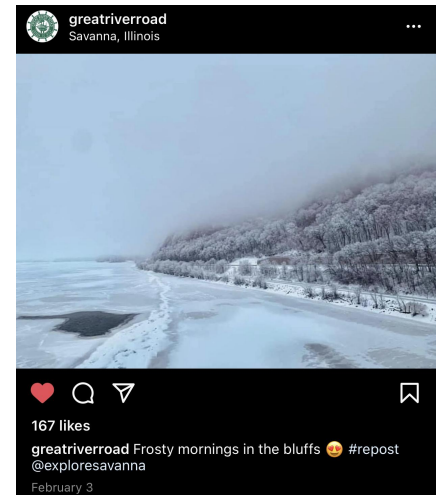
Instagram Top Posts

- 2/3
 - Caption: Frosty mornings in the bluffs
 - 896 people reached, 175 reactions
- 3/3
 - Caption: Wisconsin is full of beautiful and historic river towns! Pictured here, Alma is nestled at the base of bluffs carved by the mighty Mississippi and totally instagram-worthy.
 - 1,031 people reached, 205 reactions
- 3/16
 - Caption: Did you know that the Great River Road is now an All-American Road? This special distinction from the Federal Highway Administration honors byways that are of "special distinction" and have one-of-a-kind features not found anywhere else. Plan your Great River Road trip and see what the region has to offer! #GreatRiverRoad #AllAmericanRoad
 - 861 people reached, 131 reactions

Instagram Advertising

Post engagement

- Promotes engagement on Instagram posts; runs throughout year w/updates
- 65,232 impressions
- 305 people clicked on the ad
- 0.47% click-through rate
- Received 7,310 post engagements



ALL-AMERICAN ROAD

Look Creation

- Continued All-American Road designation logo discussion
- Presented to Committee with live updates to Logo
- Revisions of enhanced Pilot's Wheel logo presented to Marketing Committee & Approved
- Individual State All-American Road logos developed and added to online toolkit

Content Creation

- Created content plan for All-American Road campaign in 2021, including messaging in newsletters, social media, and website
- Created letters of support for states
- Gathering photos from state applications

PR

- USA Today article
 - Worked with writer for USA Today's "Go Escape: Midwest" magazine who wrote article about tourism along the Great River Road
 - Sent story ideas/things to see, worked with reporter to set up interviews
 - Publication set to print in April-May
- AAR Outreach
 - Wrote press release about All-American Road designation in February, distributed to media list in 10 Great River Road States

DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD APP

iOS

- # of downloads in Q1: 929
- # of downloads to date: 17,997

Android

- # of downloads in Q1: 624
- # of downloads to date: 8,424

Total (combined)

- # of downloads in Q1: 1,553
- # of downloads: 26,421

ADMIN/MISCELLANEOUS

Financial/Bookkeeping

- Paid bills, monitored state dues and related paperwork, processed donation checks

Fulfillments

- Fulfilled 4,763 requests this quarter
- Created address and shipping labels and mailed
- Prepped guides for fulfillments
- Ordered replacement supplies as needed

Phone, Email and Online Inquiries

- Answered phone calls, returned voicemails
- Corresponded to online inquiries

Miscellaneous

- Made multiple attempts to schedule IL meeting
-