PILCH & BARNET MARKETING REPORT

2019 | Q4

October - December

MEETINGS

2019 Annual Meeting

Registration

- Collected payments
- Sent invoices/receipts

Wrap-up E-newsletter

- Sent to members October 22
- Topics: recap speakers, special recognition, technical committee minutes, Don Frerichs, call for photos, upcoming calls and national meetings, Great River Road in Martha Stewart Living, Great River Road in the news

Miscellaneous

- Posted committee meeting minutes online
- Wrote thank you notes to speakers
- Paid meeting-related bills

2020 Semi-Annual Meeting

Online registration form

- Created online registration with new meeting options and fields
- Tested and revised

Web updates

- Embed online form to mrpcmembers.com/meeting

Registration e-newsletter

- Sent to members December 20
- Topics: 2020 Semi-Annual Meeting information, registration and hotel, Great River Road states to prepare applications for All-American Road status, social media update | we want your Great River Road photos, The Great River Road in the media, save the date for the 2020 Annual Meeting, MRC sales mission to Japan

Conference Calls

- 10/9 -- Call with Winona Radio
- 10/28 -- MRPC Transportation Conference Call
- 10/31 -- Teleconference LA-MRPC with Sharon
- 11/4 -- Call with Winona Radio
- 11/19 -- MRPC Endowment Teleconference
- 12/2 -- Call with Winona Radio
- 12/13 -- MRPC BOD Teleconference

PR/PUBLICITY

October

- Monthly radio interview with Winona radio station (Natural History of the Great River Road)
- Radio talking points converted into blog post for experiencemississippiriver.com

November

- Monthly radio interview with Winona radio station (Holiday shopping along the Great River Road)
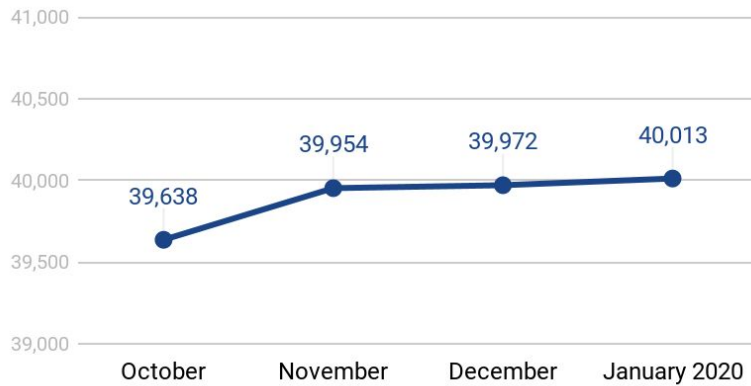- Radio talking points converted into blog post for experiencemississippiriver.com

December

- Monthly radio interview with Winona radio station (Holiday fun along the Great River Road)
- Radio talking points converted into blog post for experiencemississippiriver.com

Media pick-ups

- The Best Places to See Fall Foliage in the United States, Martha Stewart Living, 11/11/19: https://www.marthastewart.com/2123839/best-destinations-fall-foliage-united-states (slide 6)
- Mississippi River communities promote tourism, commerce; Duluth News Tribune, 11/9/19: https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/business/tourism/4760445-Mississippi-River-communities-promote-tourism-commerce
- 25 Best Places to Visit in 2020, Forbes, 12/19/19 (includes New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis): https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2019/12/19/best-places-travel-us-2020/#4a96a9924898

FACEBOOK

Facebook Fans

Facebook fans	New Facebook fans	Facebook updates
40,013	375	53

Demographics/Engaged fans

- 53% men (19% ages 45-54, 16% 55-64, 11% 35-44), 46% women (16% 55-64, 12% 45-54)
- Top geomarkets: Alton, IL, Dubuque, IA, Chicago, IL, Davenport, IA, St. Louis, MO, Cedar Rapids, IA, Minneapolis, MN

Top Posts

- 10/8/19 – "Have you ever seen a sign like this? Follow the Pilot's Wheel signs and explore the Great River Road as it traces the course of the Mississippi River for 3,000 beautiful miles through 10 states" w/photo of AR GRR sign and link to experiencemississippiriver.com
    - Drove traffic to experiencemississippiriver.com
    - 15,328 people reached, 462 reactions, 723 post clicks
    - 8,735 people reached organically; 6,865 reached via paid advertising
- 10/16/19 - "Read what Mississippi River Explorer Dean Klinkenberg has to say about traveling the Great River Road" w/link to blog on experiencemississippiriver.com
    - Drove traffic to experiencemississippiriver.com
    - 10,323 people reached, 789 reactions, 228 post clicks
    - 3,840 people reached organically; 6,952 reached via paid advertising

3

- 10/14/19 – "What's your favorite scenic spot along the Great River Road? Let us know by commenting on this post by noon CST Friday and you could win some stylish Great River Road gear" w/photo of Pikes Peak State Park
  - 7,971 people reached, 277 reactions, 373 post clicks
  - 4,578 people reached organically; 3,466 reached via paid advertising
- 12/9/19 – "'Dreamiest road trips'? We'd have to agree that the Great River Road belongs on this list" w/link to Daily Standard story ("20 of the dreamiest road trips in America")
  - Drove traffic to standard.co.uk
  - 7,496 people reached, 249 reactions, 521 post clicks
  - 7,496 people reached organically
- 10/7/19 - "Want to show off your Great River Road pride? Tell us who you would take on your next road trip by noon CT on Friday, and we'll pick one winner to receive a Great River Road hat, jacket or shirt"
  - 7,213 people reached, 201 engagements, 273 post clicks
  - 4,082 people reached organically; 3,197 reached via paid advertising

Facebook Advertising

Page likes

Year-round campaign (stats from Q4)

- 20,008 impressions
- 482 clicks
- 2.41% click-through rate
- Added 117 fans

Post engagement - general posts

Year-round campaign (stats from Q4)

- 21,347 impressions
- 1,689 clicks
- 7.91% click-through rate
- Received 3,208 engagements

Post engagement - app downloads

Ran 9/23-10/31, encouraged downloads of Drive the Great River Road app (lifetime stats)

- 80,552 impressions
- 11,520 clicks
- 14.3% click-through rate
- Received 11,048 engagements

Clicks to website - app downloads

Ran 9/23-10/31, encouraged downloads of Drive the Great River Road app (lifetime stats)

- 23,089 impressions
- 584 clicks
- 2.53% click-through rate

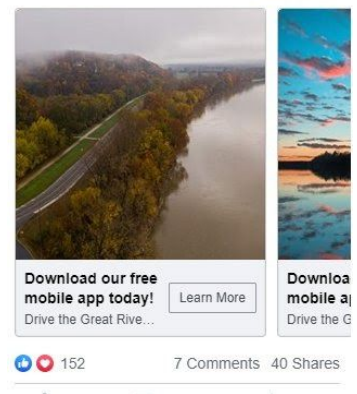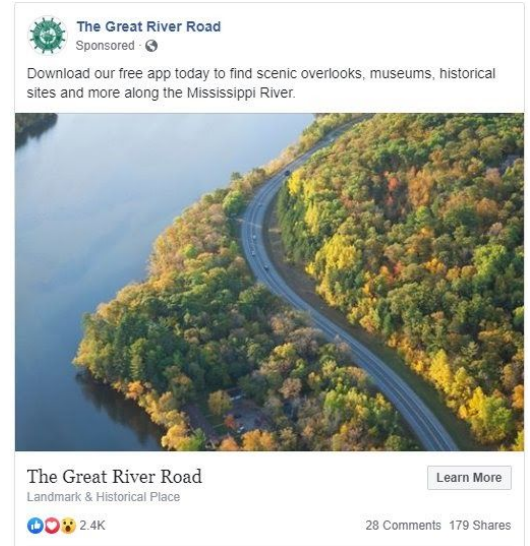## Post engagement - Pilot's Wheel

Ran 10/7-11/8, encouraged engagement with posts about GRR Pilot's wheel signs

- 55,868 impressions
- 1,238 clicks
- 2.22% click-through rate
- Received 591 engagements

Post engagement - Pilot's Wheel giveaways

Weekly giveaways in October encouraging engagement with various posts

- 38,217 impressions
- 826 clicks
- 2.16% click-through rate
- Received 314 post engagements

The Great River Road
Sponsored ·

Download our free app today to find scenic overlooks, museums, historical sites and more along the Mississippi River.

The Great River Road
Landmark & Historical Place

Learn More

2.4K   28 Comments 179 Shares

The Great River Road
Sponsored ·

Find scenic overlooks, museums, historical sites & more along the National Scenic Byway that follows ...See More

Download our free mobile app today!
Drive the Great Rive...   Learn More

Download mobile ap
Drive the G

152   7 Comments 40 Shares

The Great River Road
Sponsored ·

Have you ever seen a sign like this? Follow the Pilot's Wheel signs and explore the Great River ...See More

WEST 44   SOUTH 85

300   23 Comments 45 Shares

The Great River Road
Sponsored ·

What's your favorite scenic spot along the Great River Road? Let us know by commenting on this post by noon CST Friday and you could win some stylish Great River Road gear!

(Photo: Pikes Peak State Park in Iowa)

161   79 Comments 14 Shares

Takeaways

Looking at our most popular posts, our fans continue to be interested in travelogues and media mentions of the Great River Road, as posts about a Daily Standard article and a blog from Mississippi River author Dean Klinkenberg performed very well (though one post was boosted with advertising dollars). It was also nice to see good performance by the posts that were part of our Pilot's Wheel campaign.

Facebook ads were particularly successful in Q4, as all our ads topped a click-through rate of 2% (about twice as high as the average CTR for tourism and travel). Taking a closer look, our general post engagement ads (which included a variety of posts throughout the quarter) reached a CTR of nearly 8%, and our engagement ads linking to the Drive the Great River Road app topped an impressive CTR 14%. (To that last point, since we've seen that people are interested in the app, we should look at ways to improve their app experience with updates, etc.)

INSTAGRAM

Instagram Followers
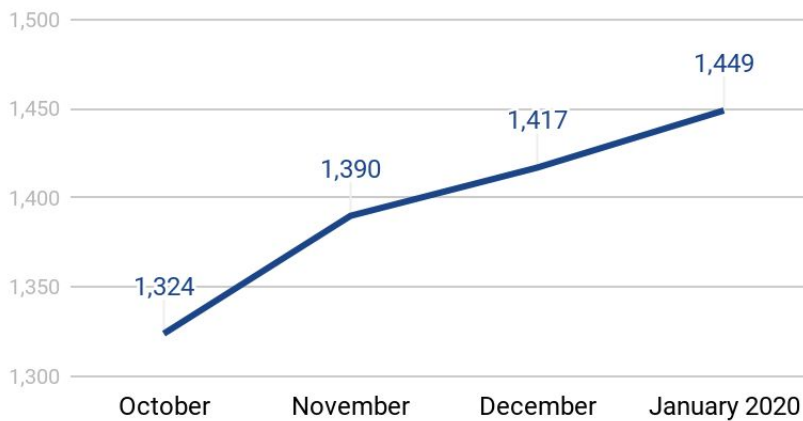
Instagram followers	New Instagram followers	Instagram updates
1,449	125	24

Demographics/Engaged fans

- Top locations: Alton, Godfrey, La Crosse
- Top age ranges: 35-44 (30%), 25-34 (20%)
- Top gender: Women (65%)

Instagram Top Posts

- 11/16/2019.– Caption: Where bustling city life meets stunning outdoor scenery, Eau Claire is a must-visit stop on your next road trip.
  - 757 people reached, 89 engagements

- 12/3/2019– Caption: Our favorite kind of winter blues 💙
  - 795 people reached, 100 engagements

- 11/22/2019– Caption: There's so much to discover in the Gateway City ♣
  - 760 people reached, 47 engagements

Liked by **thewisconsinista** and **85 others**
greatriverroad Where bustling city life meets stunning outdoor scenery, Eau Claire is a must-visit stop on your next road trip.

Liked by **thewisconsinista** and **45 others**
greatriverroad There's so much to discover in the Gateway City 🌥

Liked by **thewisconsinista** and **96 others**
greatriverroad Our favorite kind of winter blues 💙

Instagram Advertising

Post engagement

Year-round campaign (stats from Q4)
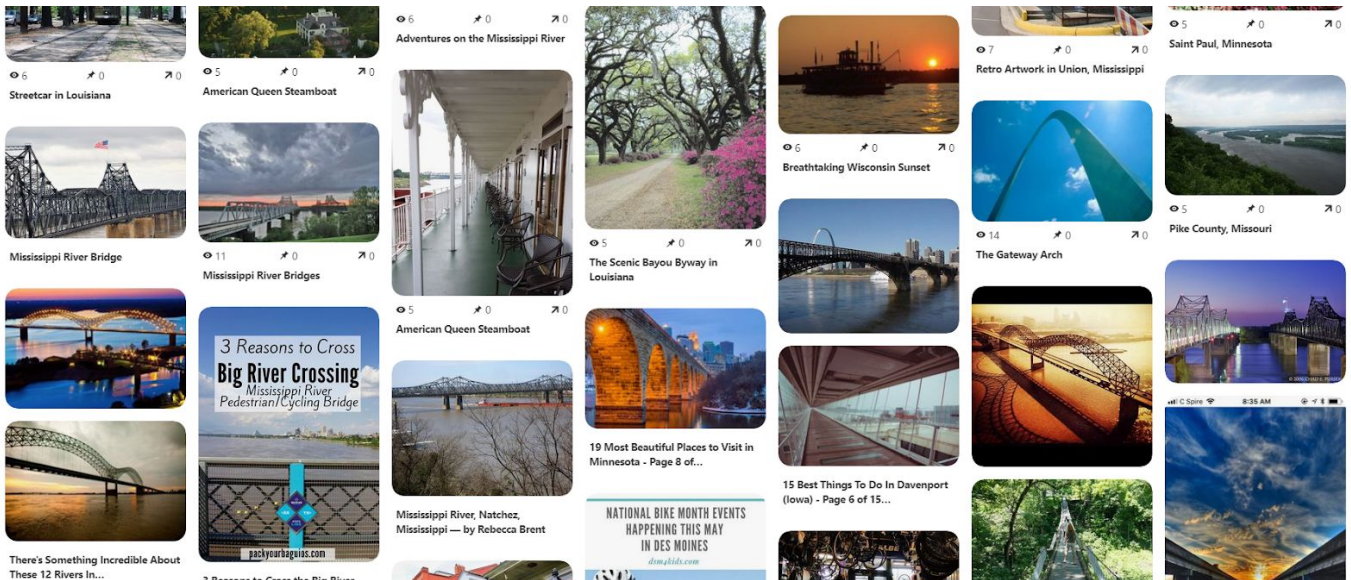
- 14,953 impressions
- 35 clicks
- 0.23% click-through rate
- Received 2,264 post engagements

PINTEREST

Throughout Quarter 4, we populated Great River Road Pinterest boards with various travel tips, places to visit along the Scenic Byway, links to blog articles and much more.
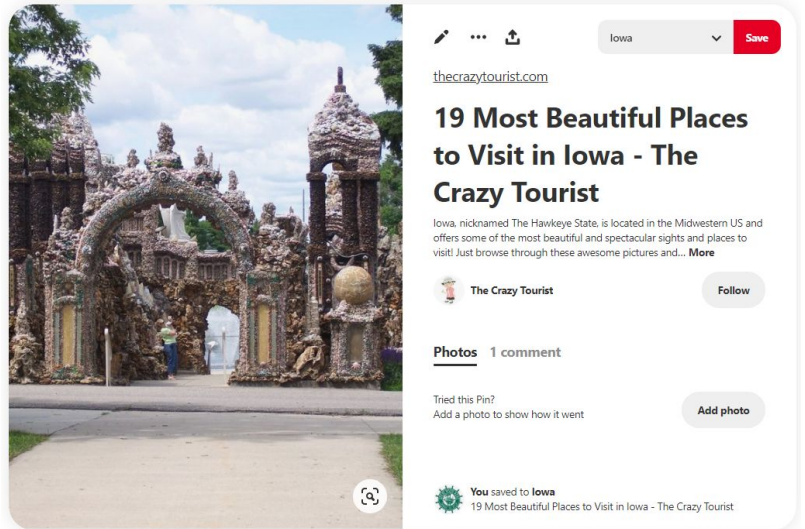
Results

- 35,391 impressions
- 1,513 engagements
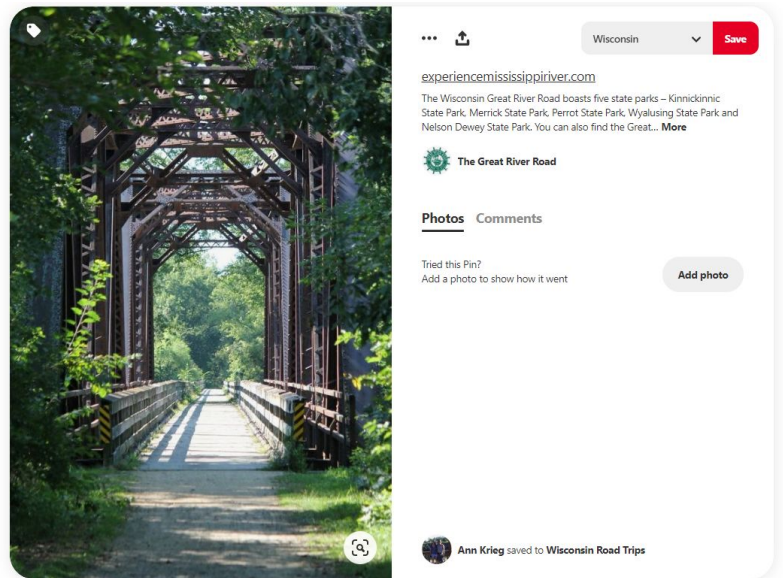- 211 link clicks
- 182 saves

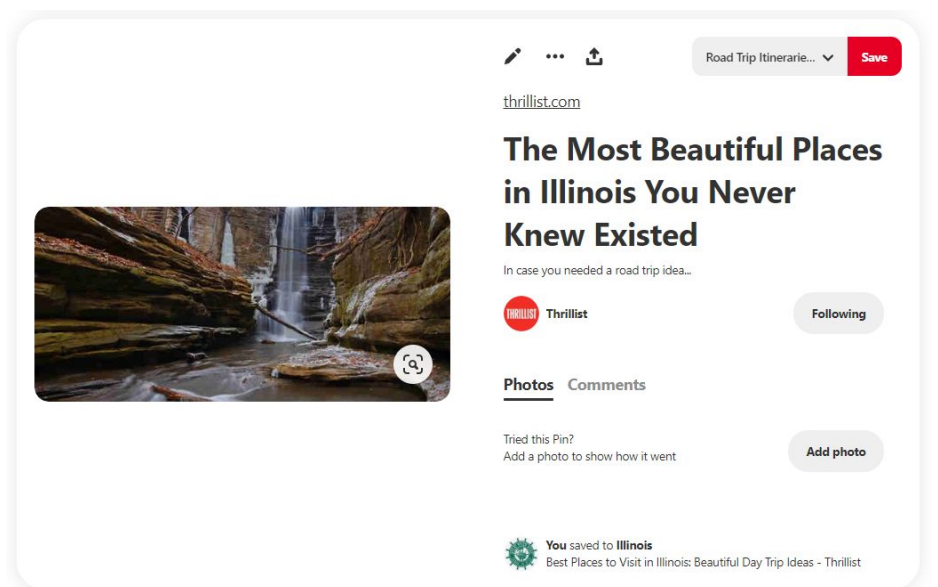## Pinterest Top Posts

- Created on 7/19/2019
  - 2,905 impressions

- Created on 4/26/2018
  - 2,200 impressions

- Created on 7/19/2019
  - 1,193 impressions

PROMOTION

Throughout October, we held weekly giveaways as part of our overall Pilot's Wheel awareness campaign.

This campaign consisted of blog posts and social media posts, as well as Facebook giveaways that encouraged fans and non-fans to interact with the page via a series of prompts (who's your ideal Great River Road trip travel partner, what's your favorite scenic spot on the Great River Road, etc.). We then selected a winner at random and sent them a Great River Road item of their choice from the Great River Road Land's End store on the experiencemississippiriver.com site.

Facebook Giveaways

- Date: October 2019 (posts were done on 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 and 10/28 and ran for a week each)
- 26,736 people reached (12,424 via paid advertising)
- 792 engagements, 1,009 post clicks
- Total new followers added in 10/7-10/31: 250
- Promotion engagements: #

Facebook Advertising

Post engagement - Pilot's Wheel giveaways

Weekly giveaways in October encouraging engagement with various posts

- 38,217 impressions
- 826 clicks
- 2.16% click-through rate
- Received 314 post engagements

WEBSITE

www.experiencemississippiriver.com		
Total Pageviews	76,663	
Total Unique Pageviews	59,218	
Total sessions	35,796	
Unique users	29,986	
New users	87.9%	
Returning users	12.1%	
Pages viewed per session	2.1	
Time spent per page visited	0:54	
Avg. session duration	1:56	
Most visited pages	pageviews	avg. time on page
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/	9,599	1:30
homepage	5,917	1:42
/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	5,448	1:56
/interactive-tools/fun-facts/	5,281	3:30
/river-attractions/	3,998	2:23
/interactive-tools/webcams/	2,860	1:31
/app/	2,467	3:31
/itineraries/	2,238	1:15
/states/minnesota/	1,561	1:48
/interactive-tools/maps/	1,546	1:47
Top Referring SiteS	sessions	avg. session duration
facebook.com	3,153	0:51
kiddle.co	349	2:41
thediscoverer.com	199	2:03
pandbads.wufoo.com	89	1:53
rhodesfourthgrade.blogspot.com	63	1:48
r.search.aol.com	57	1:18
styleblueprint.com	50	3:30
pinterest.com	41	0:09
greatriverroad-illinois.org	34	2:56

Top Metro Areas	sessions	avg. session duration
Chicago IL	3,603	1:26
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	2,652	1:52
St. Louis MO	1,334	1:37
Los Angeles CA	847	1:37
New York, NY	782	1:30
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	750	1:48
Madison WI	730	1:54
Milwaukee WI	727	2:03
Atlanta GA	641	2:12
New Orleans LA	602	1:41

Top Channels	% sessions	avg. session duration
Organic Search	66%	2:04
Direct	18.8%	1:40
Social	9.2%	0:52
Referral	5.9%	2:52

User demographics		
age	% sessions	avg. session duration
55-64	23.5%	2:01
65+	22.1%	2:10
25-34	17%	1:31
45-54	16.7%	1:54
35-44	14.4%	1:49
18-24	6.3%	1:37
gender	% sessions	avg. session duration
female	51%	1:54
male	49%	1:50

Device usage	% sessions	avg. session duration
Mobile + Tablet	53.6%	2:04
Desktop	46.4%	2:09

Blog posts

- October
    - Relay of Voices update: 2 states to go!
    - Explore the northern Great River Road's natural history this fall (10/8)
    - Follow the Pilot's Wheel along the Great River Road (10/28)
- November
    - Holiday shopping along the northern Great River Road (11/1)
    - Five reasons to be thankful about the Great River Road (11/18)
    - Relay of Voices update: The final stretch (11/27)
    - Holiday fun along the Great River Road (11/29)

Web 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 spring on March 22
- SEO/analytics monitored weekly

Takeaways

Overall, the website performed well in the final quarter of 2019. Organic search traffic declined relative to 2018, perhaps due to a series of early winter storms in northern states on the route that may have affected interest in driving trips. Overall page views declined about 14 percent relative to Q4 2018. The audience continues to shift to mobile devices; currently about 47 percent of users access the site on desktop computers. About 51 percent of site visitors are female; the biggest age demographic to visit the site was people aged 55-64. Interest in the webcams page of the site continues to increase; views to the page were up 116 percent over 2018.

ADMIN/MISCELLANEOUS

Financial/Bookkeeping

- Followed up with states on annual dues and invoices
- 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
- Completed financial reports for December board meetings
- Requested endowment payout funds from the Community Foundation of Dubuque and provided donation summary
- Developed 2020 budget

Fulfillments

- 1,373 requests this quarter
  - Includes online requests and phone requests
- Mailing materials: print envelopes and letters
- Corresponded to emails, followed up on phone calls/voice messages, research
- Mailed a legislative packet to Brenda Harris, MO Byway Coordinator

Administrative

- Polled transportation committee members and communicated meeting date and time
- Collected overlook photos and information (IA & MN)
- Mailed transportation chair, Francis Schelfhout, letter of support

All-American Road (AAR)

- Researched and calculated Relay of Voices activity/metrics
- Participated in numerous communication exchanges regarding AAR
- Sent application process suggestions on 12/17/19
- Forwarded official FHWA nominations announcement on 12/24/19