



**National Office**

# **Activity Report**

**2022 | Q3 July-September**

# EXPERIENCMISSISSIPPIRIVER.COM WEBSITE

## Most visited Pages:

- The homepage was the #1 visited page this quarter
- The contest pages were the #2 and #3 pages and accounted for 13.3% of all website pageviews (23,539 pageviews)
- The “The Great River Road: The Best Drive in America” page was the most visited page of interest other than the homepage & contest pages with 10,742 views
  - The majority of traffic to this page came from Google Search. 7,121 pageviews (66.29% of all page traffic)
- 3 of the top 10 pages were attraction related
  - Locks & Dams of the Upper Mississippi River (article); River Attractions (Interpretive Centers, Locks & Dams, Scenic Overlooks); Unique roadside attractions along the northern Great River Road (article)

## Referring Sites:

- Google Search was the #1 referring site and accounted for 34.04% of all site acquisitions. (27,788 Users)
- Facebook was the #1 referring social media site and accounted for 21.47% of all site acquisitions. (15,396 Users)
- 4 of the top 10 referring sites were from PR/ article-based sites. (rvtravel.com, thediscoverer.com, onlyinyourstate.com, marthastewart.com)
  - This means that other sites are finding the website information useful and are sending their users to the website for that info

## Top 10 Metro Areas:

- Chicago was the #1 metro area of visitors to the website and accounted for 12.24% of all website users. The most visited page from the Chicago metro area was the Locks & Dams of the Upper Mississippi River article.
- Minneapolis-St. Paul MN was the #2 metro area of visitors to the website and accounted for 8.73% of all website users. The most visited page from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area was the Locks & Dams of the Upper Mississippi River article.

## Top 5 Channels:

- Organic search accounted for 38.2% of all web traffic, meaning that the majority of users are actively looking for or found content related to experience Mississippi via web search engines.
- Direct traffic accounted for 23.67% of all web traffic (19,106 users)
  - This is extremely high for direct traffic. The majority of users are usually referred

to a site through search, social media and emails. This means a lot of web traffic is coming from links on other websites, ads, and users that type the URL into the browser themselves

### **User Demographics:**

- The top age group of users was 55-64. (22.10% of users)
  - High for this age group overall but probably right for the content

### **Device Usage:**

- 59.3% of users viewed the site on mobile devices (industry standard is 53.74%)

### **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
- SEO/analytics monitored weekly
- Flipped website content to Fall on 9/1

### **Web Updates**

- Updated the Interpretive Center information based on the new map

### **Blog Posts**

- 6/28 - Find summer fun along the Great River Road
- 8/5 - Unique roadside attractions along the northern Great River Road
- 8/25 - Unique attractions along the southern Great River Road

## Analytics

www.experiencemississippiriver.com/		
Total Pageviews	176,895	
Total Unique Pageviews	148,610	
Total Sessions	98,798	
Unique Users	71,720	
New Users	79.60%	
Returning Users	20.4%	
Pages Viewed Per Session	1.8	
Time Spent Per Page Visited	0:46	
Avg. Session Duration	1:22	
Top 10 Most Visited Pages		
	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
homepage	16,593	1:09
/contest/drive-the-great-river-road-all-american-road-sweepstakes/	12,775	1:20
/thank-you-for-entering/	10,764	0:52
/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/	10,742	1:34
/interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/	8,660	2:01
/itineraries/	7,655	1:15
/locks-and-dams-of-the-upper-mississippi/	6,641	3:32
/river-attractions/	6,379	2:29
/app/	4,725	3:50
/unique-roadside-attractions-along-the-northern-great-river-road/	2,885	2:50
Top 10 Referring Sites		
	Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
facebook.com	19,186	0:26
(sweepstakes) pandbads.wufoo.com	10,677	0:39
rvtravel.com	3,333	2:19
contestgirl.com	702	0:43
thediscoverer.com	379	1:47
tn.gov	274	1:21
freeprizesonline.com	240	0:16
onlyinyourstate.com	239	1:31
marthastewart.com	181	1:11
mrpcmembers.com	168	2:60

<b>Top 10 Metro Areas</b>		
	Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Chicago IL	11,500	1:25
Minneapolis-St. Paul MN	8,244	1:15
Milwaukee WI	5,500	1:09
St. Louis MO	3,525	0:58
La Crosse-Eau Claire WI	2,196	0:48
Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Iowa City & Dubuque IA	2,085	0:56
Madison WI	2,032	1:33
Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	2,031	1:41
New York, NY	2,025	1:25
Des Moines-Ames IA	1,683	1:10
<b>Top 5 Channels</b>		
	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Organic Search	38%	1:53
Direct	23.8%	1:28
Social	19.6%	0:27
Referral	18.6%	1:09
<b>User Demographics</b>		
	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Age		
55-64	23.2%	1:19
65+	20.5%	1:21
45-54	19.1%	1:12
35-44	18%	1:14
25-34	12.1%	1:36
18-24	7%	1:29
Gender		
Female	55.8%	1:15
Male	44.2%	1:28
<b>Device Usage</b>		
	% Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Mobile + Tablet	68.3%	1:16
Desktop	31.7%	1:48

# MRPCMEMBERS.COM WEBSITE

## Web Maintenance

- Updated plugins
- Updated WordPress version
- Fixed broken links
- Added security to improve email deliverability
- Created backups and restore points monthly

## Web Updates

- Updated/added meetings
- Added documents
- Added photos to the Annual Meeting Gallery
- Created a survey for the annual meeting

***(Website updates and maintenance on both sites, experiencemississippiriver.com and mrpcmembers, average 10 hours per month.)***

# TOURISM E-NEWSLETTERS *(Each monthly newsletters averages 5 hours)*

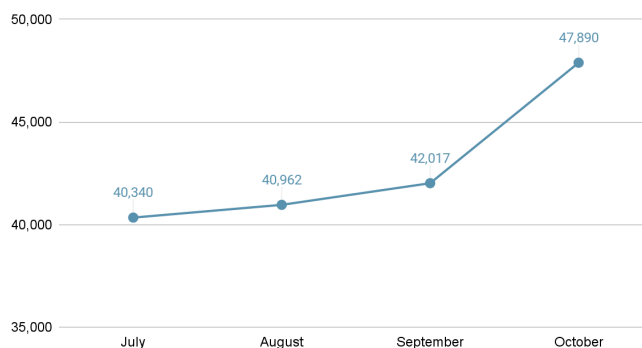
## Takeaways

The MRPC e-newsletter performed well in Q3, with each edition easily surpassing the industry averages for open rate and click rate. (In fact, the open rates for Q3's newsletters were close to or more than double the industry average open rate.) While all the newsletters performed well, the September edition (which announced the launch of the Drive the Great River Road Month Sweepstakes) was the highest-performing newsletter with a 41% open rate and a click rate of nearly 9%. The Drive the Great River Road Month Sweepstakes also helped boost our number of subscribers, which topped 47,000 people by the end of Q3.

## Results

- Average open rate: 40.0% (industry average: 20.4%)
- Average click rate: 5.8% (industry average: 2.2%)

E-newsletter Subscribers



## 7/18 E-Newsletter



- Subject line: Where to find summer fun on the Great River Road
- Wrote article: Find summer fun along the Great River Road
- Also promoted: Experience the flavors of the Great River Road
- Open rate: 38.5%
- Click rate: 3.4%

### **8/16 E-Newsletter**

- Subject line: Unique roadside attractions along the Great River Road
- Wrote article: Unique roadside attractions along the Great River Road
- Also promoted: Discover our network of Interpretive Centers
- Open rate: 40.5%
- Click rate: 5.3%

### **9/12 E-Newsletter**

- Subject line: Win \$500 for next Great River Road trip!
- Wrote article: Unique attractions along the southern Great River Road
- Open rate: 41.0%
- Click rate: 8.7%

# PILOT E-NEWSLETTERS

## 7/21 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: MRPC July Newsletter
- Promoted: It's July/It's Summer/Get Outside | Welcome new Mississippi Commission appointees | Memphis Extra: Share your road's All-American story | New meeting agenda schedule | Memphis sneak peek - The case for Technical Committee collaboration | MRPC NSB grant application special thanks | Spotlight on Interpretive Centers | Upcoming Meetings
- Open rate: 32.7%
- Click rate: 5.5%

## 8/17 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: MRPC August Newsletter
- Promoted: August is Clean Water Month | 10-state Great River Road promotional maps are in | Special guests to join MRPC in Memphis | Memphis River Parks Partnership to speak at Thursday awards event | The case for committee collaboration | Spotlight on Interpretive Centers | Upcoming Meetings
- Open rate: 39.7%
- Click rate: 3.7%

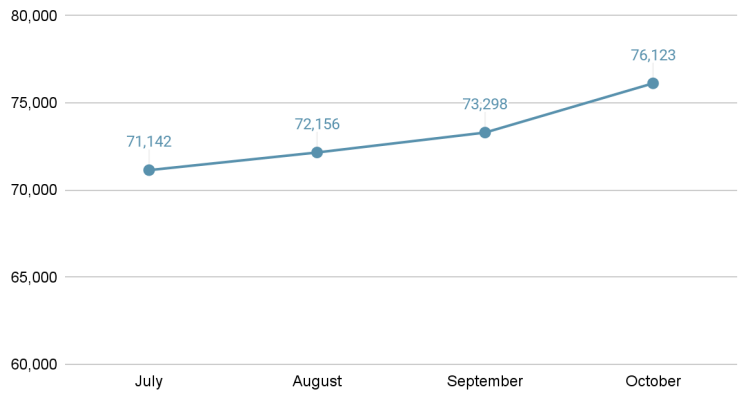


# FACEBOOK

## Takeaways

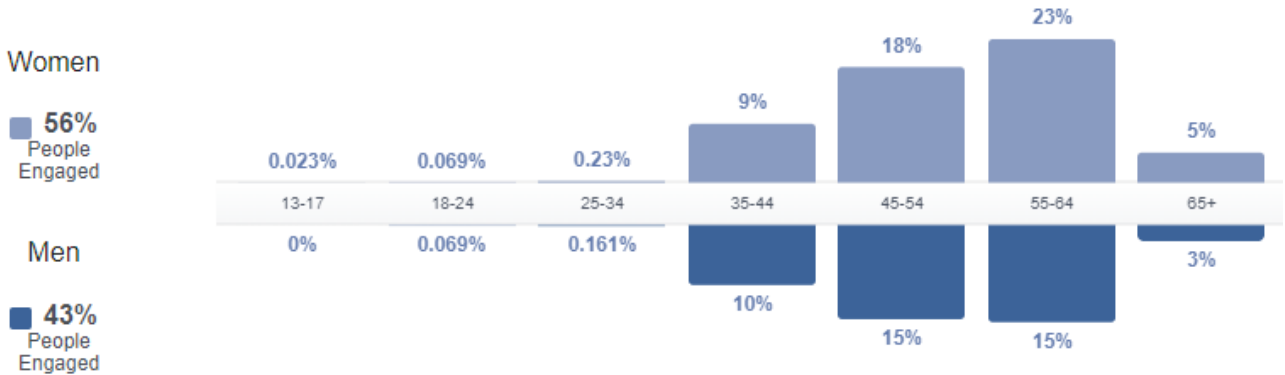
The Great River Road Facebook page continued to perform well in Q3, adding nearly 5,000 fans and receiving significant engagement on its posts (even those that were not promoted with Facebook advertising). The largest percentage of fans added came in September with the Drive the Great River Road Month Sweepstakes. Popular post topics included fall color, information on attractions (locks & dams, Interpretive Centers, etc.), and articles about Great River Road travel.

Facebook Fan Growth



## Demographics/Engaged Fans

The number of People Talking About the Page by user age and gender. This number is an estimate.



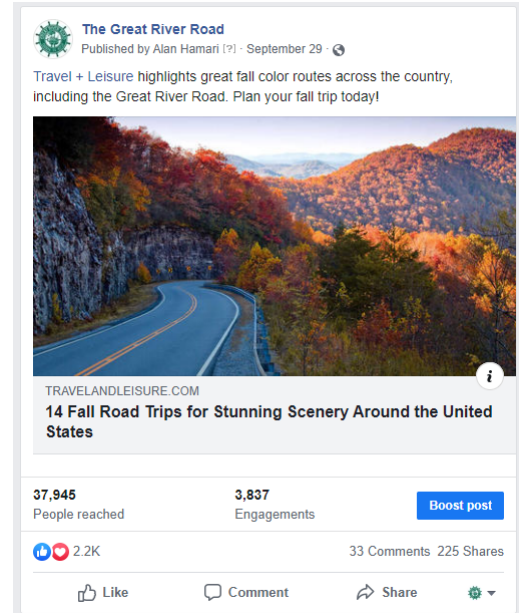
- Top cities: Chicago, Memphis, Louisville, Quincy IL, Des Moines IA

## Overview

- Facebook fans: 76,123
- New Facebook fans: 42
- Facebook updates: 4,981

## Top Posts

- 9/29
  - “Travel + Leisure highlights great fall color routes across the country, including the Great River Road. Plan your fall trip today” w/link to [travelandleisure.com](http://travelandleisure.com)
  - 37,945 people reached; 2,698 reactions, comments and shares; 1,139 post clicks
  - 6,885 people reached organically; 31,705 people via paid ad
- 9/27
  - “Learn why the Great River Road has earned the honor of being called one of the country’s All-American Roads” w/link to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 27,430 people reached; 2,185 reactions, comments and shares; 1,216 post clicks
  - 8,738 people reached organically; 18,912 people via paid ad
- 8/27
  - “See the unique sites of the southern Great River Road” w/link to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)
  - 36,164 people reached; 1,463 reactions, comments and shares; 896 post clicks
  - 8,692 people reached organically; 29,023 people via paid ad

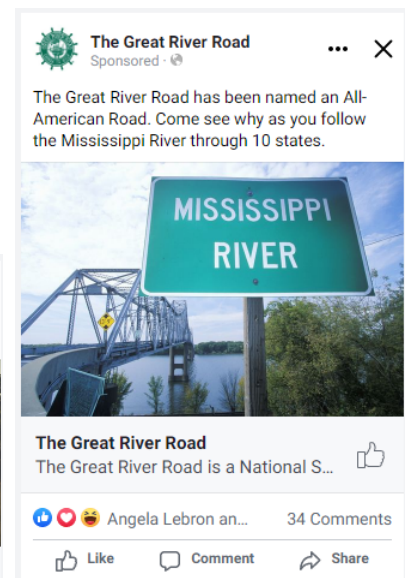
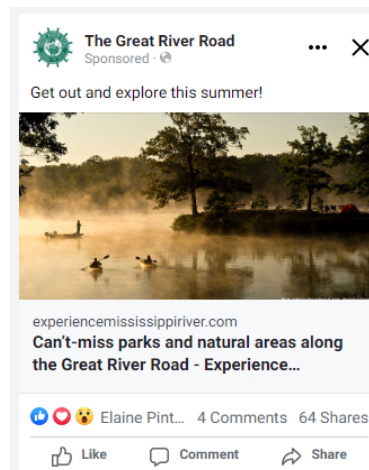


## Page Likes Ad

- Page likes ad; updated regularly throughout year
- 230,328 impressions
- 9,128 clicks
- 3.96% click-through rate
- Added 2,961 fans

## Post Engagement Ad

- Post engagement ad; updated regularly throughout year
- 208,009 impressions
- 8,908 clicks
- 4.28% click-through rate
- Received 7.910 post engagements



# INSTAGRAM

## Takeaways

The Great River Road Instagram account grew significantly in Q3, adding over 550 fans. We continued to promote All American Road assets which made up two of the top three topics for this quarter.

## Overview

- Instagram followers: 4,122
- New Instagram followers: 558
- Instagram updates: 12 posts
- Regularly reviewed and replied to user messages

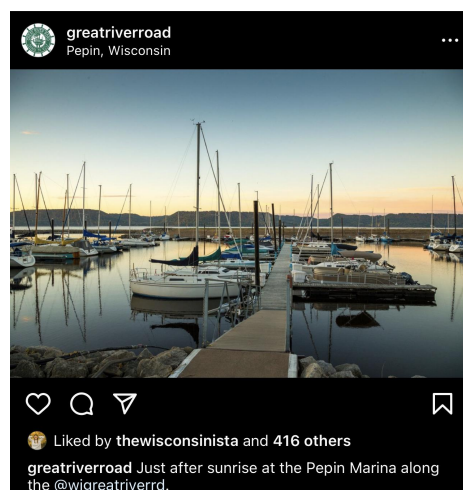
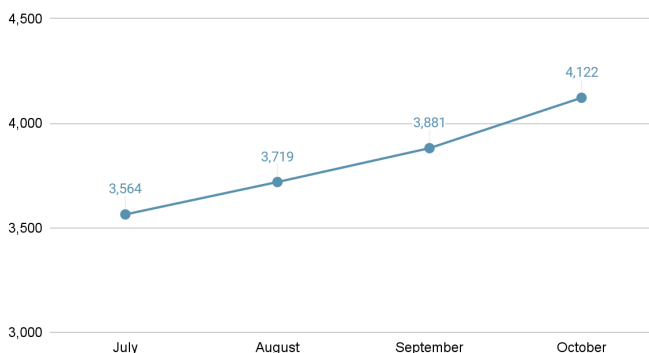
## Demographics/Engaged Fans

- Top age range: 35-44 (27%)
- Top locations: Godfrey, Minneapolis, Chicago, St. Louis, Alton
- Top gender: Women (62%)

## Top Posts

- 8/3
  - Caption: Just after sunrise at the Pepin Marina along the @wigreatriverrd.
  - 2,507 people reached, 417 likes, 2 comments, 3 shares, 3 saves
- 8/31
  - Caption: There are lots of great photo ops along the Great River Road but don't miss this one in Minnesota. Snap a pic with Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox in Bemidji, "the first city on the Mississippi." #GreatRiverRoad
  - 4,578 people reached, 590 likes, 2 comments, 5 shares, 9 saves

Instagram Follower Growth



- 9/27
  - Caption: Arkansas' Great River Road is rich in historical sites, like the Historic Dyess Colony & Johnny Cash Boyhood Home. This Interpretive Center tells visitors the story of the farmers who resettled here during the Great Depression, including the family of the famed country singer.
  - 13,831 people reached, 2,166 likes, 4 comments, 11 shares, 63 saves

### Post Engagement Ad

- Post engagement ad; updated regularly throughout year
- 39,922 impressions
- 96 clicks
- 0.24% click-through rate
- Received 4,165 post engagements

*(Social media hours for developing a content calendar, locating images, scheduling posts and creating ads averages 10 hours per month.)*

## DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD APP

### ios

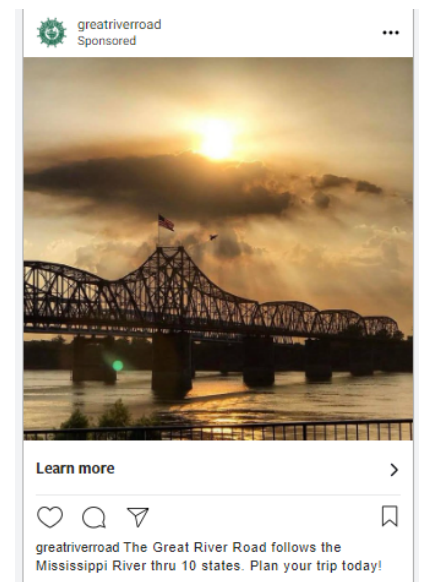
- # of downloads in Q3: 1,518
- # of downloads to date: 25,894

### Android

- # of downloads in Q3: 1,007
- # of downloads to date: 13,249

### Total (combined)

- # of downloads in Q3: 2,525
- # of downloads: 39,143



# DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD SWEEPSTAKES

## Takeaways

- Contest landing page pageviews during the time of the promotion: 12,689 pageviews
- The combined contest pages accounted for 23,425 pageviews during the time of the promotion and accounted for 27.53% of all website page views
- Page traffic stats from links included on the contest/thank you page
  - [Homepage](#) 6,093 pageviews
  - [Celebrate Drive the Great River Road Month](#) 1,001 pageviews
  - [Great River Road receives All-American Road designation](#) 334 pageviews
  - [Take a trip along the northern Great River Road](#) 401 pageviews
  - [What to see & do along the southern Great River Road](#) 241 pageviews
  - [Can't-miss parks and natural areas along the Great River Road](#) 184 pageviews

This giveaway benefitted from five Facebook posts which reached over 23,000 people organically, as well as Facebook advertising which garnered nearly 800,000 impressions, reached over 281,000 people and resulted in 14,452 link clicks to the contest page on the website. The most clicks came from the Minneapolis/St. Paul DMA, followed by the St. Louis and Cedar Rapids/Dubuque DMAs.

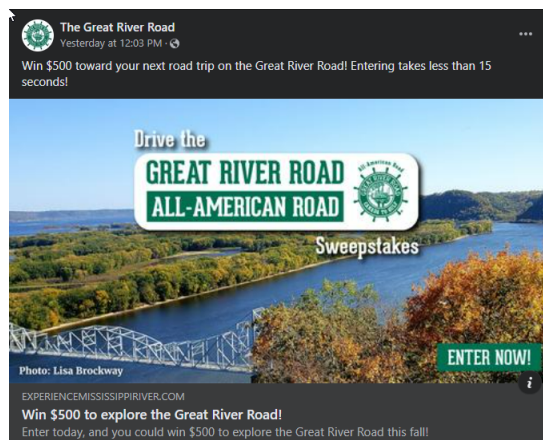
## Description

The 2022 Drive the Great River Road All-American Road Sweepstakes launched September 1 and tied into the ongoing promotion of September as Drive the Great River Road Month while generating attention toward the new All-American Road status.

The campaign focused on traveling the Great River Road All-American Road in fall with a focus on those features that support the intrinsic qualities identified in the state's AAR nomination applications. These features are points of interest, sites and events.

Measurable goals included growing the e-newsletters subscriber base, website traffic, and Facebook audience.

The sweepstakes ran from September 1 to September 30, 2022.



## Objectives

- Continue the promotion of September as Drive the Great River Road Month
- Promote the features that support the intrinsic qualities identified in the AAR applications
- Promote the 10-state map
- Increase website traffic
- Gain 6,500 entries
  - Received 10,672 entries
- Increase Facebook fans by 750
  - Gained 2,895 fans
- Grow e-newsletter subscriber list by 1,000
  - Gained 5,744 subscribers

## Prize

\$500 Visa Gift Card

## How did you hear about the sweepstakes?

- Great River Road Facebook | 7,621
- Great River Road Instagram | 105
- Great River Road website | 766
- Great River Road e-newsletter | 1,636
- Other | 620

## The winner

- Judi Salonek, Montrose, MN 55363

## Entries by DMA

- Minneapolis, MN | 135
- Saint Paul, MN | 134
- Saint Louis, MO | 127
- Milwaukee, WI | 92
- Madison, WI | 82
- Dubuque, IA | 76
- Cedar Rapids, IA | 73
- Chicago, IL | 51
- Eau Claire, WI | 47
- Janesville, WI | 47
- Davenport, IA | 46

- Waterloo, IA | 42
- Wisconsin Rapids, WI | 42
- Alton, IL | 40
- San Juan, PR | 36
- Green Bay, WI | 35
- Onalaska, WI | 34
- Appleton, WI | 33
- Des Moines, IA | 33
- Waukesha, WI | 32

## ADMIN/MISCELLANEOUS

### Content Calendar

- Created Q4 content calendar detailing social media posts, e-news topics, ad budgets and goals.

### Financial/Bookkeeping

- Paid bills
- Monitored state dues and related paperwork, communicated with states
- Completed multiple forms to collect dues from Illinois
- Processed donation checks and Stripe collections
- Monthly reconciliation
- Prepared financial reports for the board

### Fulfillment *(An average of 30 hours per month is spent managing fulfillment.)*

- Fulfilled 3764 requests this quarter (9746 so far this year)
- Pulled requests from database, created address and shipping labels and mailed
- Prepped guides for fulfillment - made copies, stuffed envelopes, folded letters
- Answered phone calls, returned voicemails
- Corresponded to online inquiries

### Meetings - National Office

- 7/12 - NCEL
- 7/28 - Annual Meeting planning
- 8/9 - Annual Meeting planning
- 8/9 - Awards Committee
- 8/12 - Officer
- 8/22 - Annual Meeting planning
- 8/23 - NCEL
- 8/30 Annual Meeting planning
- 9/6 - Travel
- 9/7 - Facilitated full-day strategic planning session and board meeting
- 9/8 - Commission Meeting
- 9/9 - Commission and committee Meeting and Travel
- 9/16 - Officer

# ANNUAL MEETING

## Preparation - before, onsite and after *(Over 100 hours of prep, Plus 4 days of meetings & travel)*

- Prepared and printed agendas, handouts, packets, name tags, updated materials, slides
- Communicated with partnering NCEL group
- Ordered and prepared awards/recognition, supplies, coordinated shipping
- Processed registrations, invoices, receipts
- Followed up with individuals who did not register
- Coordination with hotel staff and Redbirds staff on meal and room logistics

## Meeting E-newsletters

### 7/13 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: Don't miss the August 8 deadline to reserve your hotel room and register for the meeting
- Sent to: Annual Meeting Contacts (601 recipients)
- Open rate: 37.7% - Click rate: 3.6%

### 7/27 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: Register for the 2022 Annual Meeting & book your lodging now!
- Sent to: Annual Meeting Contacts (594 recipients)
- Open rate: 39.7% - Click rate: 4.8%

### 8/4 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: Register & book now: Last chance for early bird & group room rates!
- Sent to: Annual Meeting Contacts (588 recipients)
- Open rate: 37.4% - Click rate: 3.5%

### 8/30 E-Newsletter

- Subject line: Special Pilot's newsletter
- Sent to: Annual Meeting Contacts (580 recipients)
- Open rate: 40.7% - Click rate: 1.8%