

Tyler Dunegan
P.O. Box 234
Osceola, AR 72370

April 3, 2023

Culture & Heritage Committee
Dr. John O. Anfinson, Chairman
Pat Audirsch, Co-Chair

Dear Commissioners,

It is my honor to recommend the Blytheville Air Force Base Exhibition and the National Cold War Center in Blytheville, Arkansas, to be added as an interpretative center of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the Great River Road. While the National Cold War Center does not exactly sit on the Great River Road, it is located just a few miles away, on the former Eaker Air Force Base.

The National Cold War Center will be recognized as a major tourist attraction in Arkansas and the United States that will provide an immersive and authoritative experience in informing, interpreting, and honoring the legacy of the Cold War. It is proven that the then Blytheville Army Airfield was located in Blytheville, Arkansas because of the Mississippi River – the high quality of soil from previous river flooding and the ease of construction thanks to the proximity of the Mississippi River which allowed for easy shipping of construction supplies and equipment. Pilots flying in the airfield and later Blytheville Air Force Base also used the great river for navigation.

This project has already gained national attention and it began with a telephone call from a representative of the National Parks Service back in 2017. The Arkansas Congressional Delegation of Congressmen Rick Crawford, French Hill, Bruce Westerman, and Steve Womack along with Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton introduced legislation to name the Blytheville/Eaker Air Force Base the “National Cold War Center” in the 117th Congress.

I have no doubt the National Cold War Center will be an asset to the network of interpretative centers of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the Great River Road partly due to a feasibility study showing that within two to three years of completion that the National Cold War Center could expect to draw from 50,000 annual visitors up to 150,000 visitors since it will be the only alert facility in the world that people will be able to tour and visit.

I would hate to think that we would miss the boat on having a nationally recognized exhibit as an Great River Road Interpretive Center therefore it is my honor to recommend the National Cold War Center as that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Dunegan', written in a cursive style.

Tyler Dunegan
MRPC Commissioner