



PILCH & BARNET

MARKETING REPORT

2023 | Q4 October - December

GOAL

The Mississippi River Parkway Commission’s marketing goals in Q4 2023 included:

- Promote travel along the Great River Road
- Highlight the Great River Road Network of Interpretive Centers
- Maintain current visitors and encourage repeat visits along the Great River Road
- Drive traffic to the experiencemississippiriver.com website
- Promote fall & winter events along the Great River Road

STRATEGY

Tactics used to accomplish these goals were implemented across the Mississippi River Parkway Commission’s marketing channels, including e-newsletters, the Great River Road website, social media (Facebook and Instagram), a promotion, and more.

TACTICS

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At A Glance

Website

- The homepage was the most visited page (10,657 pageviews)
- Top geographic market was Chicago (18.37% of all traffic), top age demographic was 65+ (25% of reported site users)
- Organic Search accounted for 57.21% of all website users and was the highest channel of acquisition traffic (20,111 users)

E-Newsletters

- The e-newsletters continued to top industry averages in open rates and click rate
- We also added more than 1,000 new subscribers to our mailing list

Social Media

- Strong growth and engagement on Facebook and Instagram thanks to a strong advertising campaign

- Fall color, scenery, historical photos, and information about river attractions continue to be among most popular topics for posts

Fulfillment

- Fulfilled 2,122 map orders

Additional

- 2024 Q1 content calendar created
- Created winter content and uploaded photos for the National Scenic Byway Foundation to use on their social media platforms and website posts
- Researched the National Scenic Byways Grant and began compiling application information
- Following the closure of the Great River Road Photo Contest promotion and selection of the winners, we culled and tagged all of the photo submissions and added to the MRPC photo library

TACTIC: Website

Website Analytics Takeaways

Notable Stats

Top Pages

The/the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/ page was the most visited specific page of interest (not contest or homepage) with 7,685 views and accounted for 10.88% of all website views

The /interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/ page was the second most visited specific page of interest with 5,843 views and accounted for 8.27% of all website views

Acquisition

Organic Search accounted for 57.21% of all website users and was the highest channel of acquisition traffic (20,111 users)

- This means that the majority of users found the website through search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc, by searching for keywords that related to the content on the website.

Google was the #1 overall source of organic traffic and accounted for 59.92% of all site user acquisitions. (18,130 Users)

Facebook was the #1 overall source of referring traffic and accounted for 14.05% of all site user acquisitions. (4,814 Users)

Metro Areas

Chicago was the #1 metro area/city of visitors to the website and accounted for 18.37% of all website users. (3,117 Users)

- The most visited page of interest from this metro area was the /the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/. (557 views)

User Demographics:

The top reported age group of users was 65+ (25% of reported site users | 29,682 users with no age reported).

- Boomers ages 58-67 born between 1955 - 1964 are more likely to travel than any other of today's age groups.
 - Average 27 travel days per year
 - \$44,370 Average income
 - Usually have a budget set aside for travel, book longer stays, prefer active relaxation activities (golf, hiking, massages, wine tours, etc.), Bucket listers, more likely to stay at a repeat accommodation

Device Usage:

55.3% of reported users viewed the site on mobile devices (industry standard for mobile devices is 53.74%)

This Year vs Last Year Stats:

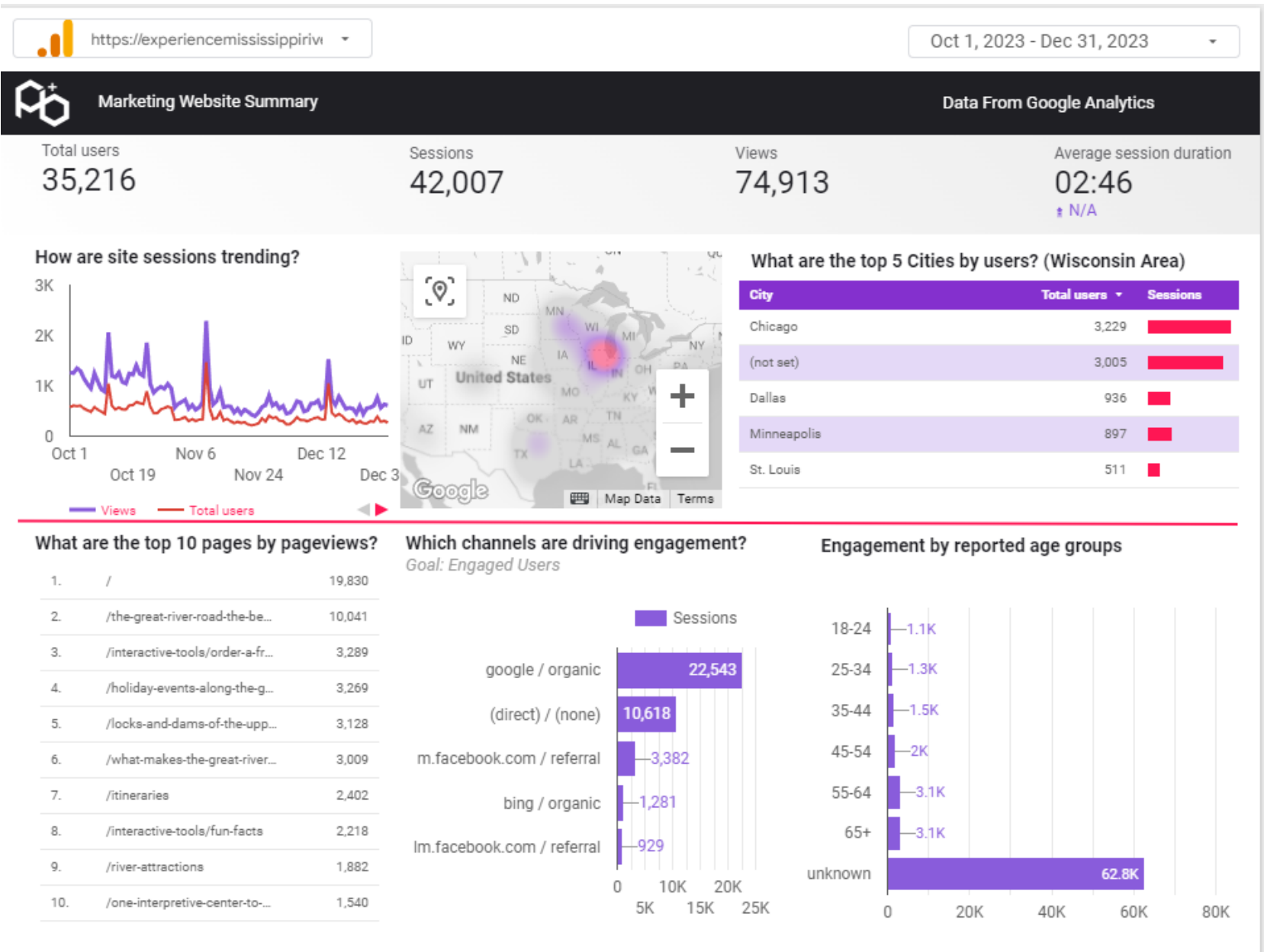
This year's stats for Q4 (Data not available for Q4 2022 due to analytics error during that time period)

- 33,617 Users this year
- 70,649 View this year
- 39,675 Sessions this year

The top 5 pages this quarter and year

- Homepage 10,657
- /the-great-river-road-the-best-drive-in-america/ 6,451
- /interactive-tools/order-a-free-great-river-road-10-state-map/ 5,843
- /river-attractions/ 2,964
- /holiday-events-along-the-great-river-road 2,948

Website Analytics Stats



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
 - Scanned the site for malware
- Analytics monitored weekly

Website Updates

- Reviewed and approved event submissions
- Researched and added webcam link
- Added files to member site

TACTIC: E-Newsletters

Takeaways

The Great River Road travel e-newsletter performed well in Q4, adding more than 1,200 new subscribers and exceeding industry averages in open rate and click rate. The most popular e-newsletter in terms of opens and clicks was the special October edition, which encouraged subscribers to vote in our Drive the Great River Road photo contest.

E-Newsletter Stats

Subscribers

49,973

Average Open Rate

38.1%

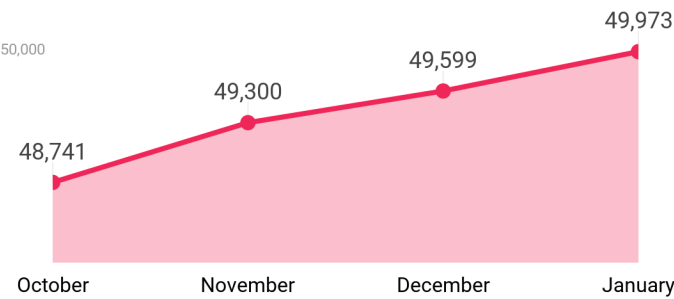
industry average: 20.2%

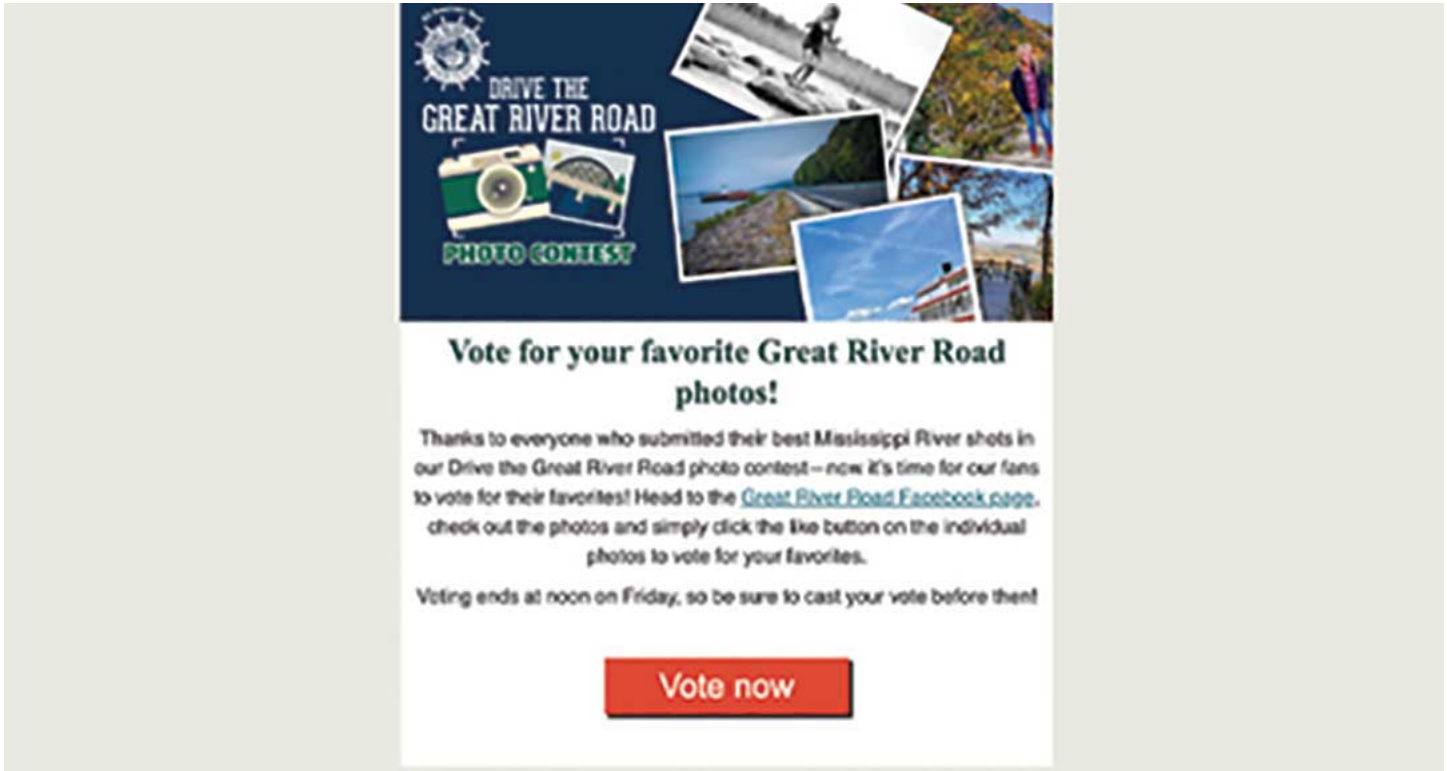
Average Click Rate

3.33%

industry average: 2.2%

Subscriber Growth





Recipients

50,093

Opened

19,526

Clicked

1,833

E-newsletters Stats

External Tourism E-newsletter			
Article/Subject	Open Rate	Click Rate	URL
Vote for your favorite pics from our Drive the Great River Road photo contest! (10/3)	39.3%	3.7%	View newsletter
See why the Great River Road is an All-American Road (10/12)	38.5%	3.1%	View newsletter
Holiday events along the Great River Road (11/9)	38.2%	3.4%	View newsletter
Unique shops along the Great River Road (12/14)	36.4%	3.1%	View newsletter
Internal E-newsletter to Members			
Article/Subject	Open Rate	Click Rate	URL
MRPC Q4 Update (12/1)	56.3%	5.9%	View newsletter

TACTIC: Social Media

Takeaways

The Great River Road's Facebook and Instagram accounts performed well in Q4, increasing fan numbers and fan engagement, thanks to social media advertising and the organic reach of our posts.

Facebook Takeaways

The Great River Road Facebook page added more than 3,000 fans in Q4, thanks to successful social media advertising. The most popular post of the quarter--boosted by advertising dollars--was a link to an article on the [experiencemississippiriver.com](https://www.experiencemississippiriver.com) site about why the Great River Road is an All-American Road. Fall color, Interpretive Center information, and links to media coverage of the Great River Road were among the most popular topics.

Instagram Takeaways

The Great River Road Instagram account continued to perform well in Q4, as we added more than 500 new fans. Popular topics included fall scenery, sunsets, and historical photos.

All Combined Social Media Ads Stats

Type of ad run	Amount spent	Result
Boost Facebook posts	Facebook: \$300.00	12,553 post engagements, 3,848 link clicks
Boost Instagram posts	Instagram: \$299.01	731 link clicks
Page likes	Facebook: \$299.87	2,992 page likes

Combined Ads People Reached

943,531

Combined Ads Paid Impressions

1,409,469

Combined Ads Engagements

31,054

Combined Ads Link Clicks

12,708

Facebook Overview

Facebook Stats

Facebook followers

87,660

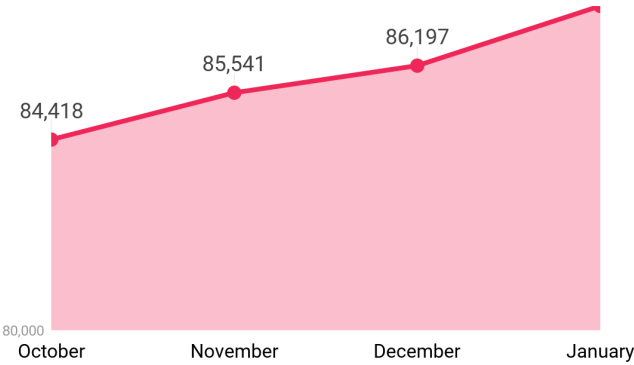
New Facebook followers

+3,342

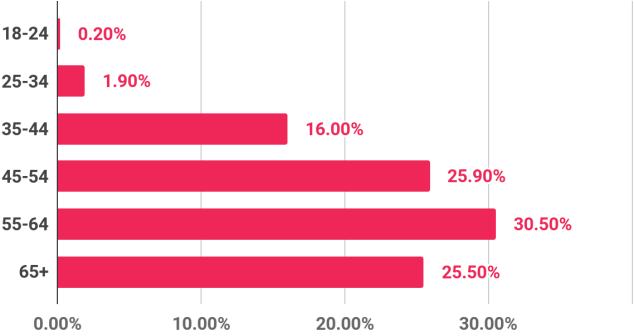
Facebook updates

45

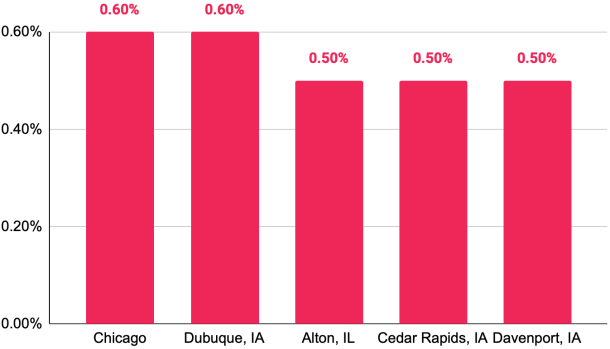
Follower Growth



Follower Demographics

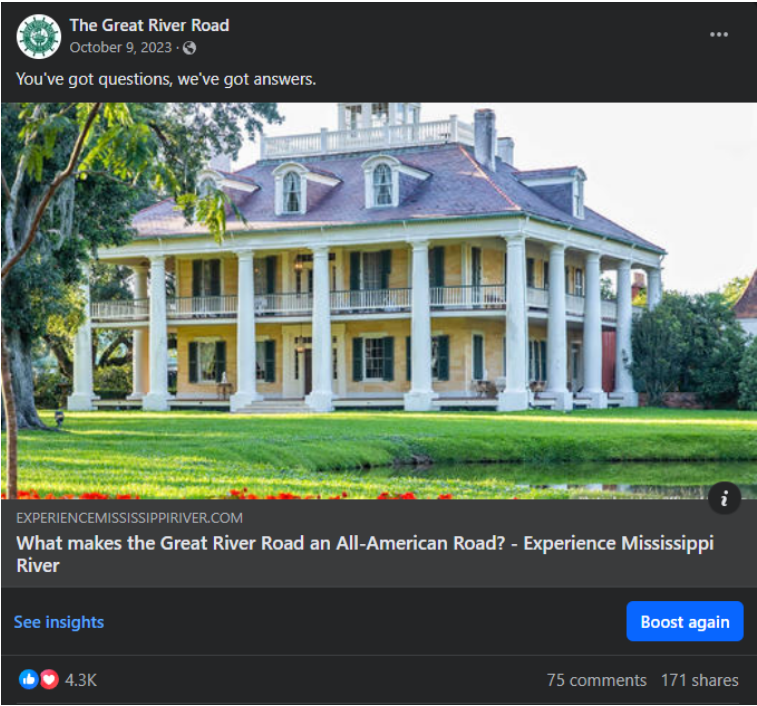


Top 5 Cities for Fans



Facebook Posts

Top Performing Post | Date: 10/9



People Reached

103,744

Organic Reach

8,994

Paid Reach

95,681

Post Reactions

4,558

Instagram Overview

Instagram Stats

Instagram followers

5,929

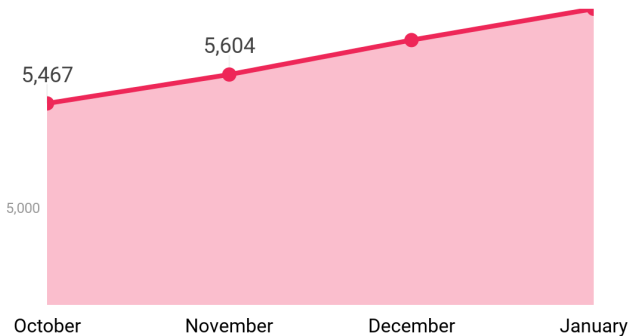
New Instagram followers

+462

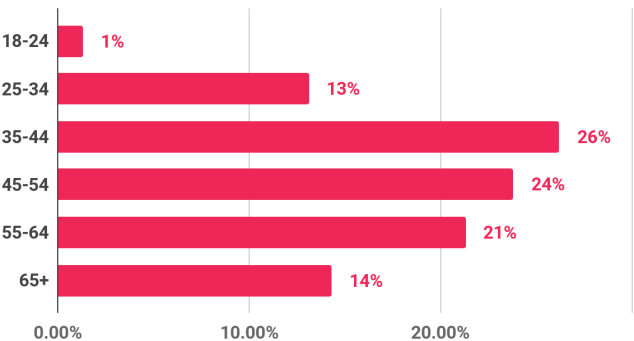
Instagram updates

13

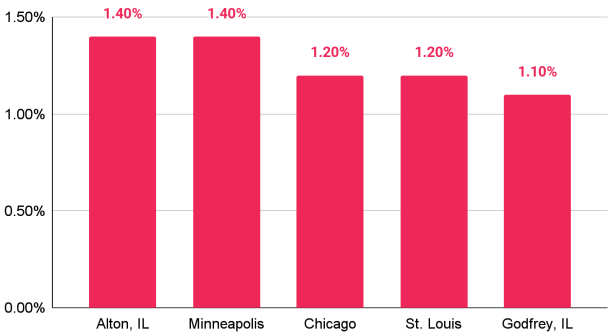
Follower Growth



Follower Demographics



Top 5 Cities for Followers



Instagram Posts

Top Performing Post | Date: 10/11



Accounts Reached

8,025

Engagements

241

TACTIC: Fulfillment

Fulfillment

1722

TACTIC: Meetings

- 11/21 Culture and Heritage committee meeting
- 12/4 Collaborative committee meeting
- 12/5 Marketing committee meeting
- 12/7 ERA committee meeting
- 12/8 Board of directors meeting
- 12/19 Meeting with attorney re: MRT trademark (with WI Chair Sherry Quamme and Transportation Chair Franics Schelfhout)

ADDITIONAL

Content Calendar

- Created 2024 Q1 content calendar detailing social media posts, e-news topics, ad budgets and goals.

Miscellaneous

- Transfer stripe & paypal funds to bank account
- Added collected photos to photo library
- Reconciled financials and prepared financial report
- Followed up with states regarding late/ outstanding payments for state dues, shipping expense for maps and meeting registration fees
- Prepared 2024 budget draft for board review
- Prepared committee minutes - distributed and posted online
- Created winter content and uploaded photos for the National Scenic Byway Foundation to use on their social media platforms and website posts
- Researched the National Scenic Byways Grant and began compiling application information
- Troubleshoot and update Zoom
- Following the closure of the Great River Road Photo Contest promotion and selection of the winners, we culled and tagged all of the photo submissions and added to the MRPC photo library
- Prepared and mailed letter of congratulations to Sultana Museum
- Mailed notes of thanks to meeting speakers
- Paid final meeting expenses
- Reviewed summary of meeting survey feedback
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