

Along the Byway

Partners Share Vision for Great River Road

If you have not already noticed, nearly everyone in Iowa is talking about the Mississippi River. The Great River Road National Scenic Byway, just outside your door, provides residents and travelers convenient access to the stories of this marvelous river. In this issue, learn more about the characters that are coming together on a stage which graces ten counties along the Mississippi shoreline. They are working together to welcome and unite visitors and residents with a treasured national resource.

OVERHEARD ALONG THE BYWAY



The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission values its partnerships with the Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Mississippi River Trail, Grand Excursion 2004, and Eastern Iowa Tourism Association, among others. Together, we are carrying out a 50-year old vision for this landscape:

The Great River Road shall be improved in a superior manner and dedicated to recreational purposes as well as to move traffic..

*...From a Bureau of Public Roads
report to Congress, 1951*

SHOWING THE WAY

Craig Markley, Transportation Planner at the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) in Ames, is the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Association's technical consultant and accountant. Markley ably advises the commission about the issues of the road itself. Like signage.

Thanks to Craig and our partners at IDOT, beginning in the summer of 2003, Great River Road/National Scenic Byway signs will be posted along the 10-county route.

Look for this double icon coming to a wood or metal signpost outside your door.

Enclosed, within this newsletter, is a similar plastic self-adhesive slick for you to affix to your front door or rear window.

As a stakeholder along Iowa's Great River Road National Scenic Byway, you can help spread the news to old neighbors and new friends that we live and work on a very special ribbon of American roadway.



ON PAGE 4, MEET ELAINE BAXTER, NEW MRPC COMMISSIONER

COMMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER WELCOMED BY EDITOR AT:

MJSMITH@ALPINECOM.NET

State Library Of Iowa
State Documents Center
Miller Building
Des Moines, Iowa

GRAND EXCURSION, 2004



The Grand Excursion 2004 will celebrate the incredible transformation of the Upper Mississippi and its communities in a yearlong salute, and the events will be unfolding on the Great River Road National Scenic Byway next summer.

As America Celebrates the Mississippi River, Grand Excursion 2004 will be a collaboration of over 50 river cities and 23 regional organizations will showcase over \$3 billion of capital, economic and environmental improvements that have restored the magic and majesty of the Mississippi River.

We will capture the world's imagination with this 150th anniversary of the original event of 1854. The Grand Excursion will showcase these cities and the great things to see and do in this fabled river valley.

The 150th anniversary of the Grand Excursion will be celebrated with a series of events including the capstone event - the Grand Flotilla - and through these celebrations bring recognition and awareness to the world.

The Grand Excursion will be a time for you, as a stakeholder along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway to educate guests from around the globe about the Mississippi River and our relationship with this significant natural resource.

Get involved in your own community.


GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

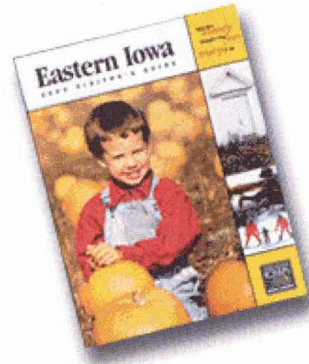
THE EASTERN IOWA TOURISM ASSOCIATION (EITA)

The Iowa MRPC is a member of the Eastern Iowa Tourism Association (EITA). Together we help visitors breathe in our beauty... like meandering rivers, rolling hills, towering limestone bluffs, patchwork country sides, grand architecture, simple Americana, fascinating caves, pristine natural prairies, Native American burial mounds, tall forests and quaint villages.

We take pride in helping tourists sample the fun...hot greyhound racing, memorable festivals, topnotch stage performances, unique shopping, year-round outdoor recreation, one-of-a-kind attractions, adventurous dining and romantic riverboat cruises.

Good times are always in season along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway in Eastern Iowa. Count on year-round fun with hundreds of first-rate events and attractions. Experience ethnic cultures, which add to the charm and diversity of Eastern Iowa giving a warm and welcome feeling to all who visit. Check into Eastern Iowa's numerous luxury hotels and cozy bed and breakfast inns for quality accommodations and Midwestern service like you'll find nowhere else.

For your copy of the Eastern Iowa Visitors Guide, contact the Eastern Iowa Tourism Association at: eita@easterniowatourism.org or call 1-800-891-3482.



"All those good-natured Midwesterners turn out to be the pretty bow atop a wonderful gift: the beautiful route along the mighty Mississippi."

Boston Globe writer Diane Daniel in a Sunday, Jan. 19, 2003 feature on The Great River Road.

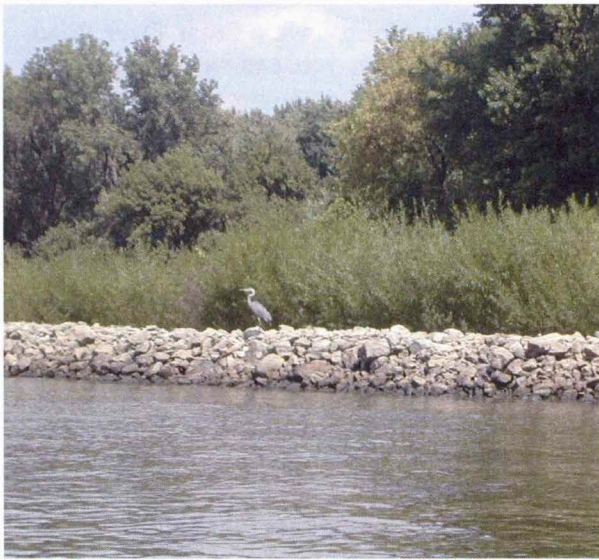
PROTECTING THE BYWAY

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) in partnership with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently prepared a visibility analysis of the Great River Road (July, 2002). Their goal was to identify highly visible sites deserving of land protection within the scenic corridor and take actions to protect the identified areas.

Along the Great River Road, existing public lands and contiguous woodlands larger than 1,000 acres in size were selected. The large woodland areas are important habitat for Neotropical birds migrating along the river.

The project report includes a map of each of the 10 counties along the Mississippi River with a color-coded Visibility Analysis. To request a copy of the INHF map for zoning considerations, contact Lisa Hein at 515-288-1846.

The Iowa MRPC is proud to work with INHF and IDOT in protecting views like these for travelers along the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

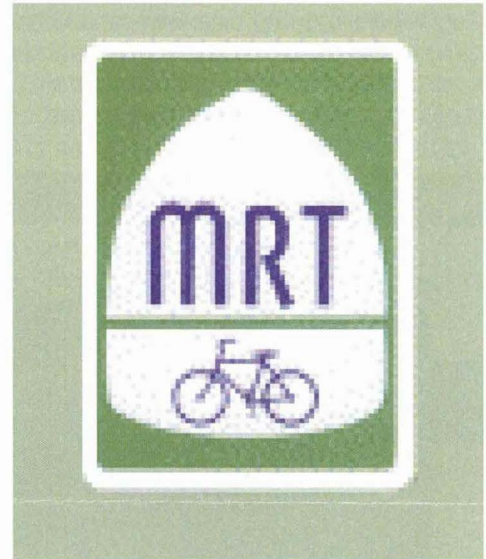


The Audubon Society's Map 7 of the Birds of the Upper Mississippi River notes the Great Blue Heron to be abundant during the spring, summer and fall seasons in Iowa. For questions about or copies of the Great River Birding Trail, contact Audubon at 651-290-1695 or email: dmcguiness@audubon.org.

MASTERPIECE IN THE MAKING

The Iowa MRPC also partners with the Mississippi River Trail, a National Millennium Trail on a 10-state cycling route.

When completed, it will travel over 2,000 continuous miles between the headwaters of the Mississippi at Lake Itasca, Minnesota and the Gulf of Mexico, winding its way through Iowa. Cycling route signs, featuring the "MRT" logo, identify the route along those segments completed.



The MRT is one of 16 National Millennium Trails. It traverses a diverse landscape of bottomland and upland forests, river bluffs and flood plains, expansive fields of corn and miles of river that in the spring and fall serve as the flyway for migratory birds.

According to a recent (March 2, 2003) *Des Moines Sunday Register* Editorial by Andie Dominick about the MRT, "Now its time for Iowa to get on board. An in-depth analysis of Iowa has determined a route for the path that will include both off-road trails and bike lanes on roadway shoulders. New construction will hook into existing trails including the Heritage Trail in Dubuque and the Riverway Trails in the Quad Cities. The importance of the MRT cannot be underestimated. The Mississippi River is a frequently forgotten gem of Iowa."

The MRT is a chance to attract millions of visitors on bikes to see America on the road outside your door. For more information about what your Mississippi River community can do to turn the wheels of the MRT, visit: <http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/mrt> or write to Pat Nunnally, MRT Executive Director, at pdn@umn.edu or call 651-698-4568.

State Library of Iowa
State Documents Center
Miller Building
Des Moines, Iowa

MEET ELAINE BAXTER

Joining the Iowa MRPC as the commissioner, (ambassador is a better word), for Des Moines County is Elaine Baxter of Burlington. Baxter is known to Iowans as our former Secretary of State, but she has always been in love with the Mississippi River.



About her involvement with the Great River Road National Scenic Byway, she said: "Night and day, during every season, I live with the beauty of the Mississippi River.

My major goal as a new member is to work to increase the tourism potential of my area of southeast Iowa. Our location on the Great River Road combined with our many historic homes and buildings, the beauty of the hills and valleys and the Mississippi River make Des Moines County an area that could be attractive to many more tourists. I am especially interested in working on a regional basis with surrounding counties and with our neighbors in Western Illinois to market our area."

BETTENDORF CITIZEN OF 2003

Patsy Ramacitti, chair of the Iowa MRPC, was named Bettendorf's Citizen of the Year for 2002.

In a surprise presentation, her friends and family gathered from far and near as she was honored by Bettendorf Mayor Ann Hutchinson.

If you do not know Patsy, she is a determined, outspoken, and passionate advocate for the Great River Road National Scenic Byway and the Mississippi River. In her many volunteer missions within the Quad Cities, State of Iowa and nation, Patsy holds citizens, consultants and staff alike to her high standards of hard work and accountability.

The ten-county Iowa MRPC takes pride in congratulating her and knowing she is likewise esteemed in her hometown.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS FUNDED BY THE
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION



Iowa Great River Road/National Scenic Byway
Iowa DOT - Office of Systems Planning
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DES MOINES, IA
PERMIT NO. 4747

State Library Of Iowa
State Documents Center
Miller Building
Des Moines, Iowa