

Minutes

**The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas
St. James Hotel
406 Main Street
Red Wing, Minnesota
September 26, 2009**

Commissioners Present

Garland Hayes
Bobby Kennedy
Phyllis Stinson
Carole Bulloch
Joe St. Columbia
Terri Austin McCullough

Commissioners Absent

Eva Hollowell
James Banks
Taralou Dunklin
Molly Houseworth Jackson

Technical Advisors/ Department Staff/Guests Present

Nancy Clark, Great River Road Division Director
Gip Robertson, Technical Advisor

Call to Order

Chairman Garland Hayes called the meeting to order, and thanked everyone for taking time from their busy schedules to participate in the meeting of the national Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Carole Bulloch moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Bobby Kennedy seconded and the motion carried.

Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department (AHTD)—Design Public Hearing

Nancy Clark announced that AHTD will conduct a Design Public Hearing to present and discuss the proposed plans for improvements to Highway 82 (Fairview-Mississippi River Bridge). This will be an “open house” hearing with no formal presentations. The public is invited to visit anytime during the scheduled hours from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on October 8, 2009 at the Lake Village Fire Station.

Welcome to Arkansas Project

Nancy Clark reported on the *Welcome to Arkansas* Program which is a result of several meetings held last summer with industry leaders across Arkansas, as part of the tourism research provided by Economics Research Associates and Longwoods International. The program's goals are to (1) better inform industry personnel regarding local and state attractions; (2) improve customer service; and (3) increase customers' satisfaction levels with their Arkansas vacations. By arming frontline personnel with helpful messages about their region and state, communities can encourage guests to spend more time and money in their areas. The incentive-based program can identify exemplary employees whose actions impact their businesses' bottom lines every day. The *Welcome to Arkansas* Program is just one more way to proactively address the current economic environment. In addition, the program offers an opportunity to identify and reward top employees, boost tax revenues through increased visitor activity, expand civic pride, and give your community's guests another reason to return. Ms. Clark presented a map of Arkansas showing the communities which have participated in the *Welcome to Arkansas* Program, and noted that the Delta needed more communities to join the program.

Arkansas Great River Road Geocaching Project

The Arkansas portion of the Great River Road geocaching project now includes 25 caches which have been found a total of 598 times, up from 553 in August. Cachers log each of their finds daily, and many make comments about the cache spot being a nice place to visit and they plan to return in the future.

Honorary Membership Nomination

Chairman Garland Hayes said he submitted former Commissioner Robin McClendon's name for honorary membership to the national Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC). He said the criteria for this membership according to Section 4.4 of the MRPC Bylaws is that the candidate must meet one or more of the following: (1) contributed substantial work toward the goals, programs, and objectives of the MRPC; (2) made substantial contribution to the promotion, development and use of the Great River Road; (3) initiated new economic development or enhancement of the Mississippi River for increased prosperity in the river corridor; (4) worked to carry out the purpose of the MRPC in an exemplary way.

Resolution Presented to Former Commissioner Anna Grizzle

Chairman Hayes presented a newspaper article covering the presentation he made of the resolution the Arkansas Commission approved for Anna Grizzle for her dedicated service and leadership during her tenure as vice-chairman of the commission.

Miscellaneous

Nancy Clark reported that the California firm, The Film Garden filmed local produce growers at Whitton Farms in October. She said she also attended the celebration feast prepared by Chef Lisa Godsey of Godsey's Grill in Jonesboro, with wine served from Chateau Aux Arc Winery near Altus. A banquet table for over 100 people was dressed with white table cloths and decorations from Whitton Farms flower gardens—it was an impressive site. Dena Woerner, Communications Manager for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism also attended and took photographs which she posted on Whrlll.com giving the event terrific coverage. gardens. The film will be shown on the Public Broadcasting System in the spring of next year.

Chairman Garland Hayes reminded Commissioners to return their TR1s to Nancy Clark for processing.

A discussion ensued as to the next meeting date, and it was decided that a meeting would be held in Helena-West Helena on Monday, November 2, 2009, at the Moore-Hornor House beginning at 10:30 a.m. Following the meeting Commissioner Joe St. Columbia will host a luncheon and serve his famous "Pasquale's Tamales." The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Garland Hayes, Chairman
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Nancy Clark, Director
Great River Road Division