

# **Mississippi River Parkway Commission Meeting**

Mississippi River State Park

Marianna, Arkansas

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

## **Commissioners Present**

Joe St. Columbia, Chairman  
Carole Bulloch, Vice Chair  
Bobby Kennedy, Secretary-Treasurer  
Bob Ware  
Pat Audirsch  
Phyllis Stinson  
Steven Son  
Terri Austin McCullough  
Weston Lewey  
Melanie Baden

## **Guest**

Kristina Root Carranza – Marianna  
Willard McCullough – Eudora Chico Co  
Kim Williams - Arkansas Dept of Parks and Tourism – Marianna  
Erik Holbrooks - Arkansas Dept of Parks and Tourism – Little Rock  
Elizabeth Easley – Marianna  
Julie Hart – Arkansas Hwy & Transportation Dept.  
Jeff Ingram – Arkansas Hwy & Transportation Dept.

## **Call to Order**

Chairman Joe St. Columbia called the meeting to order at 10:43 a.m. on Tuesday, October 29, 2013, and welcomed and introduced of guests.

## **Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

Carole Bulloch moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on May 28, 2013 in West Memphis, Arkansas. Terry Austin McCullough seconded. Motion carried.

Joe St. Columbia asked everyone to attend the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the Helena Welcome Center on November 19, 2013. Lunch will be provided by Chairman St. Columbia after the opening. The next MRPC Meeting will take place at 1:00 p.m. at the Edwardian Inn following the grand opening.

## **Overview of the National MRPC Meeting in St. Louis**

Joe St. Columbia reported that he attended the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great River Road in St. Louis, Missouri. He stated that it was a wonderful meeting; however, there was no Arkansas quorum. Bob Ware showed off a picture of the group at the St. Louis Arch. Joe St. Columbia stated that Arkansas is highly recognized in the work that the state has done along the Great River Road. Terry Austin McCullough commented that Arkansas has continuity with the Great River Road, while other states do not. McCullough went on to say that Arkansas is one of the few states that funds the Great River Road Commission and other states do not.

Kim Williams reported that she attended the marketing meeting in Marla Crider's absence. Williams commented that the new marketing campaign will bring international guests to the Great River Road. Carol Bulloch asked when this campaign will begin. Williams said that it should begin at some point in 2014. Joe St. Columbia stated that he was most impressed with the National Geographic presentation at the meeting.

## **MRPC: Standard Meeting Days/Times (Discussion)**

Chairman St. Columbia asked that the Commissioners discuss the upcoming schedule for 2014. Kim Williams suggested the Commission meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> week of each month/quarter. St. Columbia reminded everyone that the Commission must hold, at minimum, four meetings per calendar year. A discussion broke out among the Commissioners and everyone decided that Mondays would be the best day of the week. Finally, it was decided the second week of the month would also work. The following dates were tentatively set by the Commission: February 10, May 12, August 11, and November 10. The final vote will take place at the Commission meeting in Helena on November 19, 2013.

## **MRPC: Landing Page/Arkansas.com**

Kim Williams showed everyone the new landing page for the Great River Road on the Arkansas.com website. The landing page can be accessed via [www.arkansas.com/grr](http://www.arkansas.com/grr). Ms. Williams shared that the website will be on-going and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great River Road will take place from September 2013 – September 2014. Williams showed off the Great River Road sticker and passed it around for all to view. Williams said the sticker can be used as a promotional item and could be used for many different events.

## **MRPC: Arkansas Lapel Pins**

Terri Austin McCullough stated that her husband has passed out many of the Great River Road lapel pins. She said how popular they are with many people. Carole Bulloch agreed on their popularity and commented on how many she has passed out over the years. Joe St. Columbia passed around three different Great River Road lapel pins that other states have produced. He would like to see "Arkansas" listed on the bottom of the pins like Minnesota has on theirs. St. Columbia would like to see these pins bid out for a new larger logo with "Arkansas" printed on the bottom. Terri Austin McCullough reminded the commission to run everything by Marla Crider. Joe St. Columbia asked Kim Williams to contact Marla Crider about providing new

magnet name badges for everyone on the Commission, as well. There will be a follow-up at the November Meeting.

### **Technical Reports**

#### **Arkansas Highway and Transportation Dept.**

Julia Hart introduced and welcomed Jeff Ingram to the Highway Department. Jeff Ingram will be the new contact person for the Commissioners.

#### **2013 MRPC-Arkansas Annual Report**

The 2012 Annual Report was presented at the national meeting in St. Louis by Joe St. Columbia. MRPC-Arkansas Commissioners will be presented with a copy at the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Miscellaneous**

Kim Williams spoke in Ruth Hawkins absence. Kim Williams read that Iowa still needed to decide on signage, one or double-sided. Once Iowa votes in November, Arkansas can make its decision on signage. Joe St. Columbia stated that Canada to the Gulf will receive all new signage.

Joe St. Columbia stated that there were 75,000 – 80,000 attendees for the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena and he believes it was one of the best festivals in the past 20 years.

Joe St. Columbia showed off a book by the title, “Searching for Marquette,” by Ruth D. Nelson. In the book, Nelson tells of the rich heritage of Helena and life along the Delta. St. Columbia has asked Nelson to attend the next national MRPC meeting.

Delta Resort and Spa hopes to open sometime in November. A soft opening was scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Kim Williams reported to the Commissioners that the next Governor’s Conference on Tourism will be March 9-11, 2013. It will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Rogers. Williams reminded everyone that registration for the Commissioners is paid by the state and mileage will be reimbursed. This will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Governor’s Conference.

All TR1’s were singed and returned to Erik Holbrooks.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Joe St. Columbia, Chairman

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Marla Crider, Director