

Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance

2016 Annual Report

It's an honor to share the Byway's great year with you. Stretching 287 miles and including nearly 100 discovery sites, the Minnesota Scenic Byway includes something for everyone – from scenic vistas and canoeing opportunities to museums and shopping in historic districts.

Kristi Fernholz, the MRVMSB Coordinator, worked hard this year leading several core byway projects. We're lucky to have her guidance and expertise. Together with other Alliance members, the MRVMSB had a very busy and productive 2016.

The new visitor guide was finished and will be available through 2017. Byway membership goals, benefits and levels were updated this year, including new thank-you window clings. We're committed to increasing our presence and communication with byway members and partners through email and social media.

The Byway created six videos showcasing Byway partners and recreation opportunities. So far our marketing rollout has been successful with over 65,000 views! Find and share them on social media or at <http://www.mnrivervalley.com>.

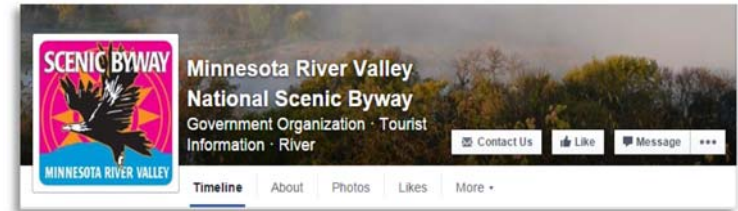
The MRVMSB received a Heritage Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program. Grants have been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. The grant provides for the byway to coordinate work with cultural experts to include Dakota language and cultural content on our website and in our discovery site descriptions. The project represents an exciting opportunity to include more perspectives in our marketing and interpretation of the Minnesota River Valley history. Work will be completed this summer.

The Byway continues to be active in conferences. Kristi attended the Explore Minnesota Tourism state conference in February 2016. Alliance members Terri Dinesen, Mary Gillespie, Sarah Warmka and Kristi Fernholz attended the byway conference in November in Willmar.

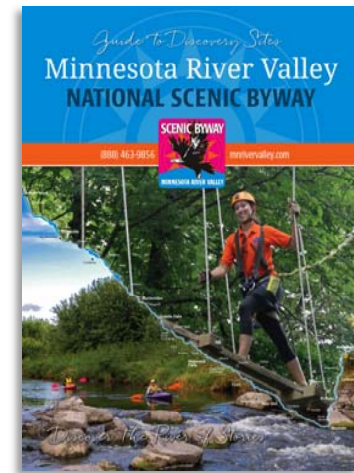
I'd like to especially thank the Byway's 47 members. Your support and passion keep us going, and benefit all who live and work along the Minnesota River. And if you are not yet a member, I invite you to join us! We appreciate everyone who stopped at a destination site, supported a local business, camped at a park or paddled the Minnesota River in 2016. I'm looking forward to next year!



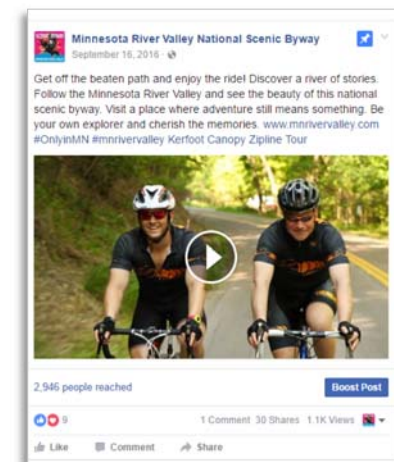
Ben Leonard
2016 Byway Chairperson
Manager of Community Outreach & Partnerships at the Minnesota Historical Society



Like our Facebook page to hear about what is going on along the byway. We currently have 970 followers.



New Visitors Guide



One of our 6 new videos



www.mnrivervalley.com

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway's mission is "To cooperatively enhance the Minnesota River Valley as a travel destination and raise awareness of its nationally important stories in order to provide economic benefits and preserve the intrinsic qualities of the byway."

The Minnesota River Valley is a 287-mile-long byway from Browns Valley to Belle Plaine. The Byway Corridor includes 10 miles on both sides of the Minnesota River.

We would like to invite you and your organization to consider a financial contribution to help with marketing and projects along the byway. Please consider giving what you can to help us reach our goals.

Some of our goals in 2017 are:

- Maintain and update the Byway website
- Promote New Byway Videos
- Distribute Byway Visitors Guide
- Work on new Interpretive Panels
- And much more!

The MN River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance is the guiding board for the byway. We welcome any individual or organizations to join our alliance meetings that we can build our understanding of supporting interests and initiatives that make our valley a great place to live, work and play. If you or someone you know are interested in becoming an active member on the Alliance, please contact us, and we would be happy to add them to our distribution list.

-The Byway Alliance



2016 Byway Alliance

Chair Ben Leonard
MN Historical Society

Vice Chair Nicole Elzenga
Renville County Museum

Secretary Terri Dinesen
Lac qui Parle State Park

Anne Johnson
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism

Ron Bolduan
Photographer - New Ulm

Mary Gillespie
Granite Falls Chamber

Ann Vote
Minnesota Valley Learning Center

Katie Adelman
Visit Mankato

Jessica Potter
Blue Earth County Historical Society

Lisa Halveka
Explore MN Tourism

Waziyatawin
Upper Sioux Community THPO

Cheyenne St John
Lower Sioux Community THPO

Sarah Warmka
New Ulm Chamber

John White
Byway resident - Ortonville

Alyssa Auten
Nicollet County Historical Society

Kristi Fernholz
UMVRDC Staff & Byway Coordinator

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