



Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Alliance

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Tourism Information

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Administrative Information

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Alliance Board 2017

Chair **Nicole Elzenga**
Renville County Museum

Vice Chair **Sarah Warmka**
New Ulm Chamber

Secretary **Terri Dinesen**
Lac qui Parle State Park

Mary Gillespie
Granite Falls Chamber

Samantha Odegard
Upper Sioux Community THPO

Cheyenne St. John
Lower Sioux Community THPO

Anne Johnson
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism

Katie Adelman
Visit Mankato

Ron Bolduan
Photographer - New Ulm

Jessica Potter
Blue Earth County Historical Society

Lisa Halveka
Explore MN Tourism

Briana Mumme
Redwood County EDA

Ben Leonard
Minnesota Historical Society

Christina Andres
Sleepy Eye Chamber

Joseph Evans
River Valley Arts

Kristi Fernholz
UMVRDC Staff & Byway Coordinator

Dear Partners, Members and Discovery Sites,

Being chairperson for this organization is an honor. This 287-mile National Scenic Byway stretching along the beautiful Minnesota River includes -over 100 discovery sites and things 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 2017.

MRVMSB completed a Heritage Partnership grant through Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program to work towards adding Dakota content to our website. Grants have been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008.

MRVMSB received a generous grant from Explore Minnesota Tourism to promote the videos produced in 2016 on our Social Media via FACEBOOK and sites hosted by MRVMSB. Find and share them on social media or at <http://www.mnrivervalley.com>.

The MRVMSB visitor guide was distributed throughout Minnesota and is going to be redesigned for 2018. Byway continues to grow in memberships, one of the ways the Byway is funded. We're committed to increasing our presence and communication with byway members and partners through email and social media.

The Byway continues to be active in conferences. Kristi attended the Explore Minnesota Tourism state conference in February 2017. Alliance members Terri Dinesen, Mary Gillespie, and Kristi Fernholz attended the byway conference in November in Duluth.

I'd like to especially thank the Byway's 32 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 2017. I'm looking forward to next year!

Sincerely,

Nicole Elzenga, 2017 Byway Chairperson

