

ANNUAL REPORT

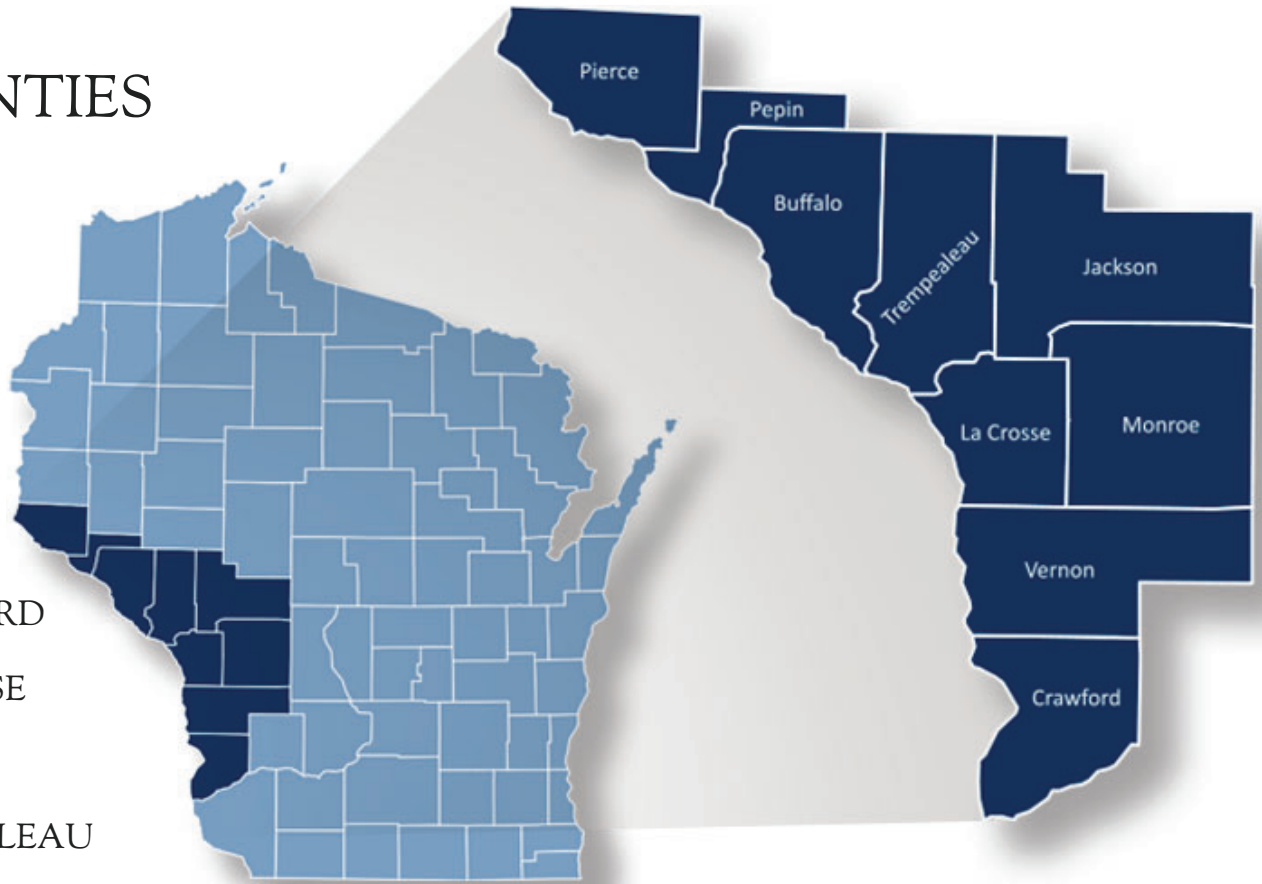
JUNE 1, 2024 - MAY 31, 2025

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION



9 COUNTIES

BUFFALO
CRAWFORD
JACKSON
LA CROSSE
MONROE
PEPIN
PIERCE
TREMPEALEAU
VERNON



329,391 total population



15,894 total businesses



174,996 total labor force

ABOUT US

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) provides planning and economic development services to improve the nine county region's environment, economy and quality of life.

SERVICES



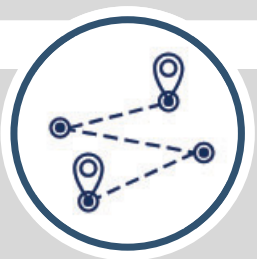
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Planning
Hazard Mitigation Planning
Land Use Planning
Outdoor Recreation Planning
Farmland Preservation Planning
Zoning Assistance
Housing Studies/Reports



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy (CEDS)
Revolving Loan Funds
Disaster Recovery Microloans
Grant Writing and Administration
Special Reports
Economic Development Plans
Technical Assistance



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Regional Transportation Planning
Safe Routes to School Planning
Corridor Planning
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility
Planning
Freight Planning
Transportation & Economic
Development



MAPPING AND DATA SERVICES

Custom Map Design
Interactive Maps and Applications
Lightcast Data Assistance
Location Based Data Services
Land Use Data

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS



Economic Development Projects

- City of Osseo Housing Study (completed)
- Revolving Loan Funds

Transportation Projects

- SMRT Bus
- City of Black River Falls Shared Ride Feasibility Study (completed)
- City of Black River Falls Bike Trail
- Safe Routes to School Grant – Village of West Salem (completed)
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission – Asset Mapping Project mrrpc.com/grr

Community Development Projects

Comprehensive Plans

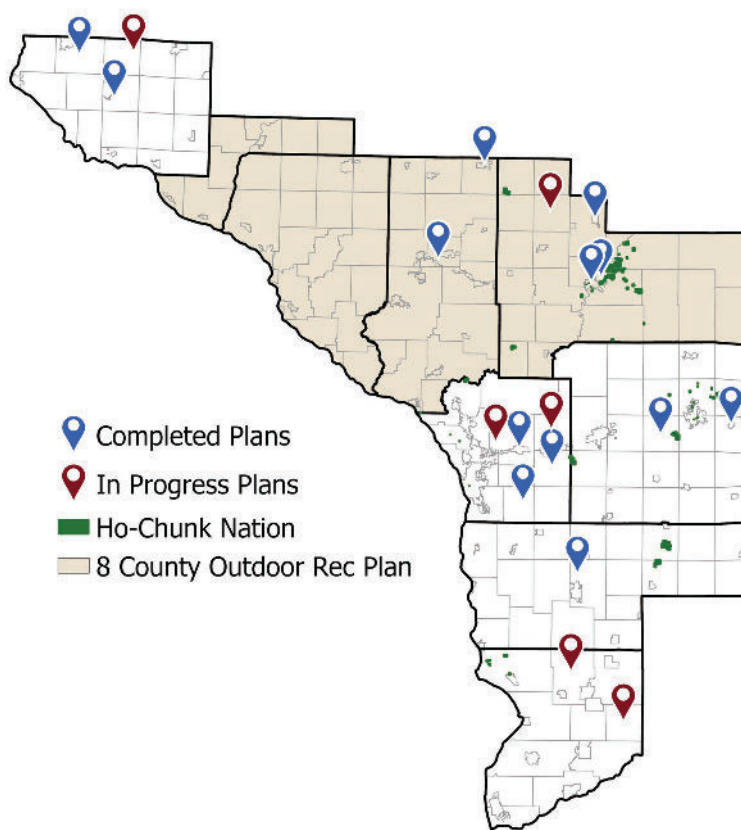
- Town of Bangor (completed)
- Jackson County (completed)
- Vernon County (completed)
- City of Black River Falls (completed)
- Village of Oakdale (completed)
- Town of Greenfield (completed)
- Town of River Falls (completed)
- Town of Martell
- Town of Burns
- Town of Scott
- Town of Garden Valley
- Town of Utica

Outdoor Recreation Plans

- La Crosse County
- City of Osseo (completed)
- Village of West Salem (completed)
- City of Black River Falls (completed)
- Village of Merrilan (completed)
- 8 County Outdoor Rec Plan

Hazard Mitigation Plans

- Trempealeau County (completed)
- Monroe County (completed)
- Pierce County (completed)
- Ho-Chunk Nation (completed)
- La Crosse County



PLANS and GRANTS

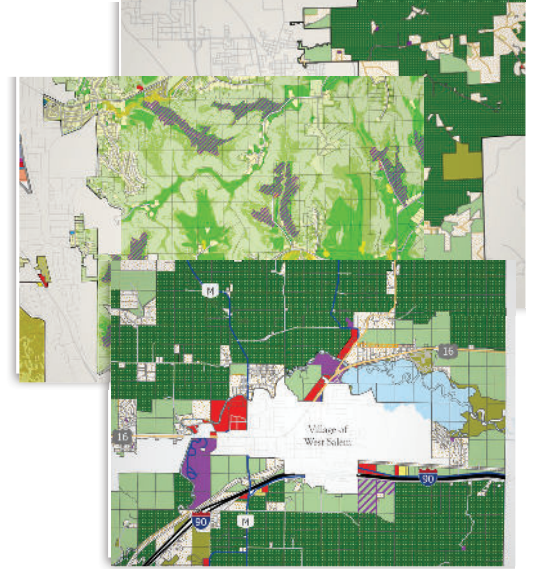
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS



Contact: Jon Bingol - Executive Director
Jon@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396

Comprehensive Plans are created and updated to provide overall strategies to guide a community's physical, social, and economic development. The Comprehensive Planning process for each municipality includes updating statistical data, creating new maps, conducting new community surveys, and hosting open houses to gain public input. The goal of the MRRPC is to create engaging plans which capture the character of the community, turn data into useful information, and can be used to guide future development and community success. These comprehensive plans are due for updates every ten years. Communities with updated plans may be eligible for state and federal grants.

During the past year the MRRPC has assisted communities and completed comprehensive plans for Vernon and Jackson Counties, the Town of Bangor, City of Black River Falls, Village of Oakdale, Town of Greenfield, and the Town of River Falls. Currently the MRRPC is assisting the following communities: the Town of Utica, the Town of Garden Valley, the Town of Burns, the Town of Scott, the Town of Martell, and the City of Arcadia in completing their comprehensive plans.



MULTI-HAZARDS MITIGATION PLANS (HMP)



Contact: Jack Zabrowski - Senior Planner
Jack@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. The process begins with state, tribal and local governments identifying natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in their area. After identifying these risks, they develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from similar events. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction. A hazard mitigation plan can help communities become more sustainable and disaster-resilient by focusing efforts on the hazards, disaster-prone areas and identifying appropriate mitigation actions. Effective mitigation planning and efforts can reduce the cost of disaster damage, speed reconstruction and potentially avoid repeated damage.

The MRRPC has assisted Monroe, Pierce, and Trempealeau Counties and the Ho Chunk Nation in completing their hazard mitigation plan updates. Currently the MRRPC is beginning the process of assisting La Crosse County in updating their Hazard Mitigation Plan. Hazard Mitigation Plans need to be updated every 5 years.



OUTDOOR PLANNING

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANS

Outdoor Recreation Plans are an expression of the community’s goals and objectives for current and future needs of their recreational facilities. Recreation planning is intended as a way to plan for the maintenance and improvement of recreational and open space resources by outlining a strategy to manage existing resources and to develop new resources to meet future needs and demands. Outdoor recreation plays a large role in tourism for our region and economic development. During this past year Outdoor Recreation Plans were completed for the Villages of Ellsworth and Merrillan, and the City of Black River Falls. Currently the MRRPC is completing an Outdoor Recreation Plan for La Crosse County. When a plan is completed followed by the community’s adoption, the projects listed in the plan become eligible for various state and federal funding opportunities through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The MRRPC and the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) joined forces with the Rural Partners Network to apply for and then received the USDA Opportunity Grant for Wisconsin to produce an eight-county outdoor recreation plan (four counties from each planning commission). These are the four counties, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties, participating in the MRRPC Region. The collective team has done extensive research and community engagement to identify prospective places, events, and amenities that can become destination locations, and opportunities for business development tied to these areas. The goal is to expand tourism related adventures and enhance the quality of life for residents. The plan will be designed to use as a marketing tool to spur economic development for outdoor recreation activities in the eight counties.

Contact: Ken Harwood - Planner
Ken@mrrpc.com - (608) 785-9396



Tourism Impact In MRRPC Counties			
County	Total Economic Impact		
	Millions		% Change
	2023	2024	
Wisconsin	\$25,003	\$25,819	3.3%
Buffalo County	\$29	\$29	1.9%
Crawford County	\$73	\$73	0.3%
Jackson County	\$66	\$66	-0.4%
La Crosse County	\$502	\$519	3.4%
Monroe County	\$165	\$165	-0.1%
Pepin County	\$15	\$16	4.2%
Pierce County	\$63	\$65	2.6%
Trempealeau County	\$70	\$69	-1.4%
Vernon County	\$73	\$77	4.7%
	\$1,057	\$1,079	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and GIS SERVICES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The MRRPC region is an Economic Development District (EDD) designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA). As an EDD, the MRRPC takes an active role in economic development to assist our counties, local units of government, and regional, county, and local Economic Development Organizations.

As an EDD, in April 2022 the MRRPC created a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to promote and implement economic development plans and activities in the Region. This strategy is updated every five years with input from our economic development partners and member counties.

The MRRPC continues to partner with the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC), the Western WI Workforce Development Board, The Upper Mississippi River Manufacturing Alliance (TUMMA), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-La Crosse, WWBIC, the Northern Grain Belt Ports, WEDC, 7 Rivers Alliance, Prosperity Southwest, Momentum West, Driftless Development Inc., UW-Extension, WHEDA, the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, the county economic development committees (Vernon, Monroe, Jackson, La Crosse, Pierce) and many other businesses and organizations to promote job growth and development in the Region.

WEDC partnered with the MRRPC again through their Small Business Development Grant program. MRRPC will be conducting a region-wide business plan contest with a pitch event and will be utilizing grant dollars and Revolving Loan Funds to assist small businesses with 24 or less full time equivalent employees gain access to capital with gap financing.

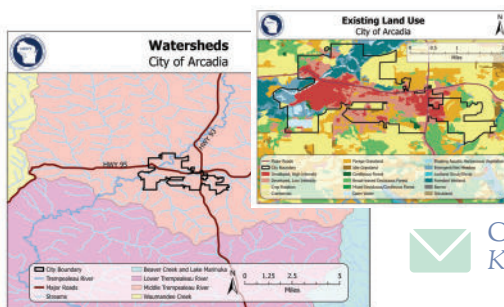


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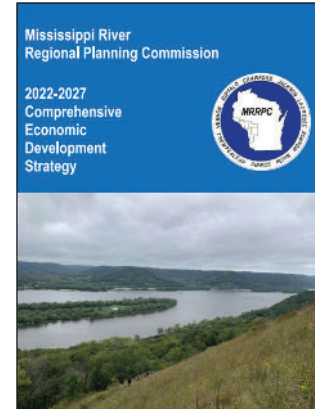
GIS Mapping and Community Impact

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) play a vital role in the work of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, serving as a powerful tool for visualizing data, identifying trends, and supporting decision-making across our region. From land use and housing to transportation and environmental planning, GIS maps make complex information easier to understand and communicate to communities, stakeholders, and local governments. These maps not only support more informed and equitable planning decisions but also help communities see the real-world implications of policies and investments. By making planning more accessible and transparent, GIS mapping fosters community engagement and trust.

MRRPC is proud to support the next generation of planners and GIS professionals through hands-on internship opportunities. Interns gain valuable experience by contributing to real-world mapping projects that inform local planning initiatives and comprehensive plans. These opportunities build skills in spatial analysis, design, and data management while giving students and recent graduates a chance to make an impact on their communities. Supporting internships also strengthens our region's future workforce by fostering local talent and encouraging young professionals to stay and grow professionally in western Wisconsin.



Contact: Kia Kling- Planner
Kia@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396



TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

All of the plans developed by the MRRPC have a transportation planning element. Transportation addresses our rural and urban roads, multimodal issues, public transportation, senior and disabled transit, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian trails, safe routes to schools, grant and funding programs, bridges and culverts, and several other issues and programs.

This year the MRRPC drafted the City of Black River Falls Shared Ride Taxi Feasibility Study and continues to collaborate with the Regional MPO of the La Crosse Area and the state DOT to keep our communities informed and safe.

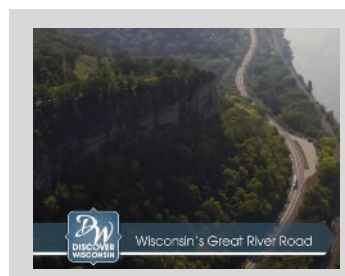
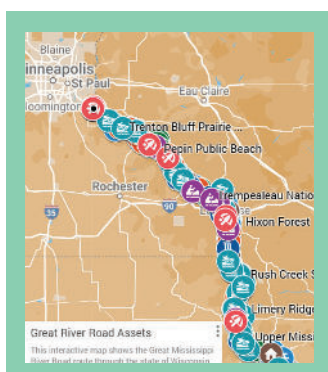


GREAT RIVER ROAD



Working with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, the MRRPC has developed a monthly newsletter to promote activities and events along the Great River Road. The MRRPC also continues to maintain the asset inventory map of things to do and see along the route.

MRRPC has also joined the Marketing Committee for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. In this role the MRRPC will assist with the development of a new website, the Great River Road Guide, video, and social media to promote this National Scenic Byway worldwide.



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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

The shortage of affordable workforce housing in Wisconsin poses many challenges for our region. Since 2017, home prices in Wisconsin have risen much faster than income, making buying a home more challenging especially for service, retail, and entry level workers. Seniors are also looking for retirement and aging in place options. A 2023 report from Forward Analytics, the research arm of the Wisconsin Counties Association, found the state needs to build at least 140,000 housing units by 2030 to keep pace with current demand, and 227,000 units if it wants to grow its working-age population.

The MRRPC has started to address these housing issues. This year the MRRPC developed a housing study for the city of Osseo and has begun to include more robust housing elements in comprehensive plans by looking at real-time MLS data and using Placer.ai, a location analytical tool, to help better understand consumer behavior, market trends, and competitive dynamics in any community in the region.

The MRRPC are also following housing trends and successful programs in other communities around the state with the hope of replicating these programs in our counties. A diverse housing portfolio including smaller and more affordable homes will help the region grow as well as meet the needs of our existing population. The MRRPC also works with WHEDA to inform the counties about available housing programs.

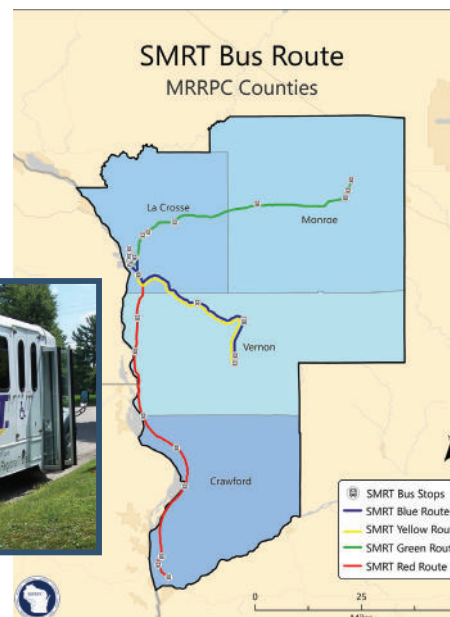


SMRT BUS

The SMRT Bus system is a dynamic, integrated, and coordinated fixed route bus system that provides access to jobs, recreation, shopping, and other opportunities for residents within the region. In 2024 there were 17,353 riders. MRRPC continues to seek ways to improve and sustain this system. To access the SMRT Bus schedule and other information go to RideSmrt.com.



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THE MRRPC STAFF

WELCOME KIA KLING



Kia Kling is the newest addition to the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission team. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy with an emphasis in Planning from the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay. Before joining MRRPC, Kia worked with the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, where she gained valuable experience in regional and community planning. Originally from this area, Kia is excited to return and give back to the communities that shaped her. In her role, she supports the development and implementation of community planning and economic development initiatives, with a focus on creating lasting, positive impacts across the region.

MRRPC STAFF

JON BINGOL
Executive Director

Jon joined the commission in November 2022. In addition to his management duties as the Executive Director, Jon is involved with supporting the region as an Economic Development District, Revolving Loan Fund Manager, and promoting Economic Development in the region.

JACK ZABROWSKI
Senior Planner

Jack joined the commission in January of 2024 as a Senior Planner. His primary duties involve assisting with hazard mitigation plans, developing planning documents, and providing planning support within the region.

KEN HARWOOD
Planner

Ken joined the commission in February of 2023 as a Transportation Planner. His primary duties involve assisting with regional transportation programs, developing planning documents, and providing transportation support within the region.

SARAH OFTE
Senior Office Manager

Sarah joined the commission in May of 2016. Her duties involve office management, revolving loan fund and financial management and assisting in the day-to-day management of the Commission. She also provides project support as needed.

NEW OFFICE LOCATION

In September 2024, the MRRPC moved to its new office located at
811 Monitor Street, Suite 201
La Crosse, WI 54603

Please update your mailing list with our new address information.

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS



MRRPC ACTIVE LOANS 2024-2025

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS	FUND BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2025 <i>(Total Cash and Receivables, and Other Assets)</i>	AVAILABLE CASH BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2025 <i>(Net of Closed Loans not yet Funded and Committed Loans)</i>
Business Capital Fund	\$871,735	\$519,003
CMV Growth Development Fund	\$246,176	\$187,140
La Crosse County Business Fund	\$170,416	\$112,839
CARES Act RLF	\$1,079,502	\$392,153
TOTALS	\$2,367,829	\$1,211,135

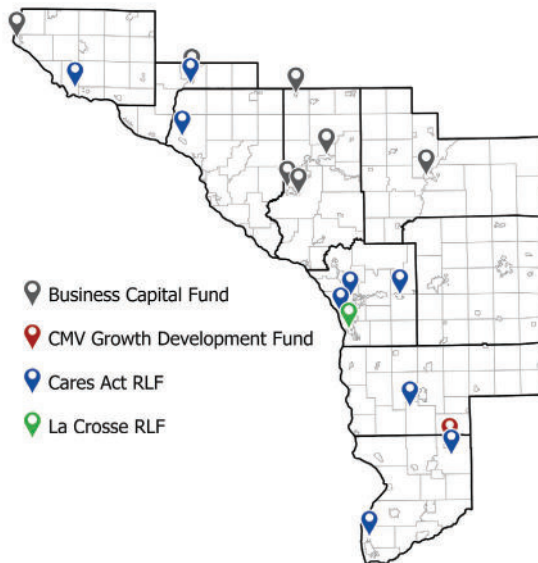
The MRRPC administers four revolving loan fund programs to assist businesses in the region.

- The Business Capital Fund serves Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Pepin and Pierce Counties.
- The CMV Growth Development Fund serves Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties.
- The La Crosse Economic Development Fund serves La Crosse County.
- The Cares Act Recovery Assistance Fund serves all nine counties of the MRRPC Region.

During the past year, two new loans were made from the Business Capital Fund to two different restaurants in Trempealeau County.

For more information about the MRRPC Revolving Loan funds go to our website mrrpc.com.

The MRRPC also assists Vernon County with the administration of their Revolving Loan Fund Program to assist businesses located in Vernon County.



Contact: Jon Bingol - Executive Director
jon@mrrpc.com - (608) 785-9396

COMMISSIONERS *and* STAFF

COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is made up of three commissioners from each member county that are appointed by the county board, or appointed by the Governor.

Buffalo County

Mary Anne McMillan Urell
Del Twidt
John Schlesselman

Crawford County

Craig Anderson
Gerald Krachey
Bruce Strnad

Jackson County

Ron Carney
Brad Chown
Tom Cooper

La Crosse County

Vicki Burke
Leonardo Silva
Vacant

Monroe County

Dennis Treu
James Kuhn
Cedric Schnitzler

Pepin County

John Andrews
Chris Kees Winkler
Kim Seipel

Pierce County

Richard Purdy
William Schroeder
Neil Gulbranson

Trempealeau County

Patrick Sorge
George Brandt
Phillip Borreson

Vernon County

Charles Jacobson
Jo Ann Nickelatti
Nancy Jaekel

STAFF

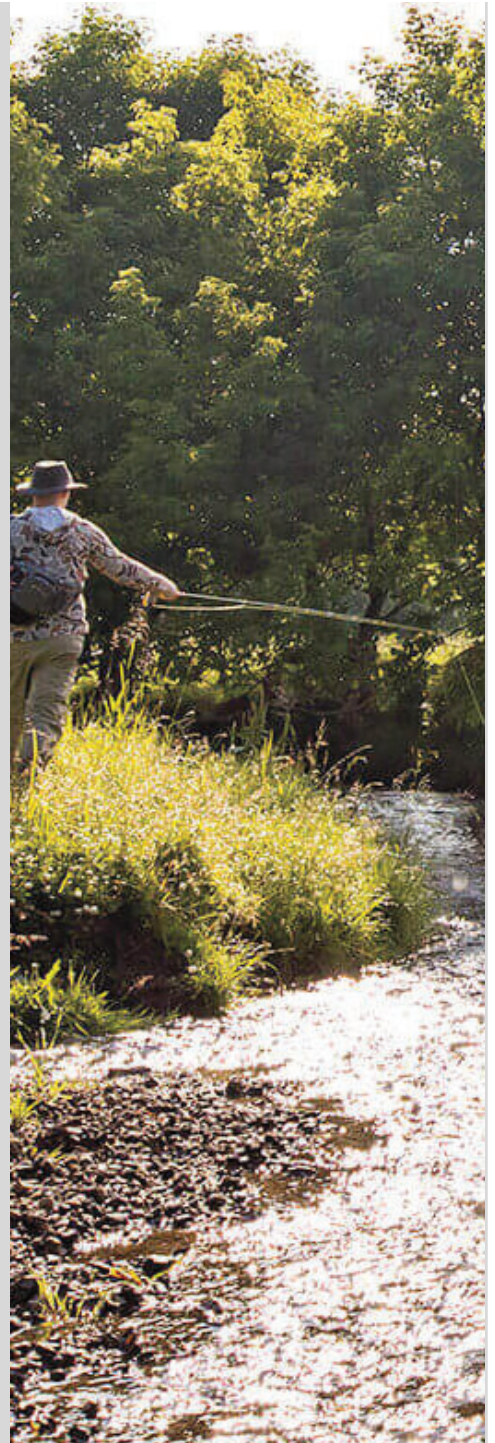
JON BINGOL
Executive Director
jon@mrrpc.com

SARAH OFTE
Senior Office Manager
sarah@mrrpc.com

JACK ZABROWSKI
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jack@mrrpc.com

KEN HARWOOD
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KIA KLING
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Providing planning and economic development services to improve the region's environment, economy and quality of life.

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
811 Monitor Street, Suite 201
La Crosse, WI 54603

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
LA CROSSE, WI
PERMIT NO. 588

CONTACT US

Address

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
811 Monitor Street, Suite 201
La Crosse, WI 54603

Phone

(608) 785 -9396

Fax

(608) 785 -9394

Email

plan@mrrpc.com

Website

MRRPC.com

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, The Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and most of all the County Boards of Supervisors of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon for their cooperation and involvement. The combined resources of these local, state, and federal government partners provide the funding that makes the activities of the MRRPC possible.

