



Historic Flood Takes Hold

*Mississippi River Basin Impacted to Historic Levels
Mayors Push Innovative Solutions*



Above L to R: Mayor Rick Eberlin of Grafton, IL pilots a boat full of media during a press-tour of flooded areas of his city. Near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, St. Charles, MO floods to a point just shy of 1993 impacts inundating Frontier Park. Clarksville, MO uses temporary flood structures to save their downtown as the Mississippi moves up Main Street. **Top:** View southwest over the Missouri-Mississippi confluence at hwy 367.

Mayors Battle 200-Year Flood Just 8 Years After the Last One

The scene playing-out from La Crosse, WI to Vidalia, LA this spring was all too familiar to Mayors along the Mississippi River. Yet another history-making flood event. “We’re actually getting really good at this since we’ve had to do it so many times just in my tenure as Mayor,” explained Mayor Brant Walker of Alton, IL via a May MRCTI tele-press conference.

With the worst impacts stretching from Davenport, IA to central Louisiana, MRCTI cities hurried to keep-up with a disaster that was both slow-moving, yet incredibly destructive at the same time. “We’ve just been dealing with this particular flood for so long it is taking a toll unlike most in recent history,” calibrated MRCTI Co-Chair Mayor Frank Klipsch of Davenport, IA.

An historically wet winter across the Mississippi River Basin coupled with snow-melt and intense spring rains not just over the main stem Mississippi River, but the entire watershed, especially the western portions of the basin, have combined to cause a truly monumental event. The State of Iowa has received more precipitation in the last 12 months than in any 1-year period of 124 years of recorded data. “Regardless of whatever your flood solution is whether it be a levee, a flood-wall, or natural amenities such as a riverfront park, when you get as much rain as we have, you’re going to get wet,” explained Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA.

A five-foot snow pack over the northern tier of the Basin after extensive precipitation starting in late fall taxed all the absorption capacity of the Corridor setting-up this year’s massive flood event.

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2019 Flood Breaks Records Across the Basin

Though this flood has not exceeded 1993 levels yet, it has set new local records for Davenport, IA and Rock Island, IL. The flood has also continued for a long duration, beginning in early November 2018 which makes this event the longest continual event in recorded history for especially the lower River.

It's a different story for the Missouri and Arkansas Rivers which have seen new flood records reached for hundreds of lateral miles (see map next page).

Due to the extreme duration of this flood, Mayors are encountering new problems. "We are seeing new levels of seepage underneath my city that we have never experienced before. We've been dealing with high water now seven-and-a-half months," said Mayor Buz Craft of Vidalia, LA.

"This flood is truly an historic event. More water has passed under the Vicksburg bridge than the 2008 and 2011 floods combined," explained Jared Gartman, Chief of readiness and Contingency Operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division.

MRCTI Cities Better Equipped Now Than in 1993

"We seem to keep repeating this pattern of disaster followed by our proposals for mitigation with some progress then we get hit with another disaster, then we propose more solutions so on and so forth," said Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA as he explained the echo of disaster response followed by less systemic adoption of comprehensive solutions offered by Mayors.

Regardless of the sometimes-slow march forward, Mayors believe they are better equipped this round than they were in 1993 and 2011 as there are important differences. One, Mayors have MRCTI now to provide a platform of unprecedented coordination, information sharing, and cooperation among local, state, and federal levels of government with the private and philanthropic sectors. Secondly, Mayors say they have newly restored natural infrastructure assets such as the wetland near Dubuque, new tracts of protected floodplain in Iowa, a wetland near Grafton, a massive wetland and marsh across from Alton, and conservation areas near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Third, Mayors report they have begun to see the benefits of increased spending for disaster mitigation and planning.

In 1993, the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant program did not exist; and in recent years it has only been funded at \$22 million for the entire country. MRCTI Mayors, in partnership with the Mississippi River Caucus in the US House and Senate have successfully raised that program to \$246 million.

But, significant challenges remain that have contributed to the 2019 multi-billion dollar event including levees positioned next to the River and made illegally high in many places. Regardless, Mayors continue to call for the waterway to be managed as a single unified system. "What happens in one area directly impacts another along our River," asserted Mayor Brant Walker of Alton, IL.

Mayors Resist Levees and Flood Walls, Say Constricting the River Elevates Risk

'Thank God for Davenport's Riverfront Park. Without it, my city would be in more trouble.' - Mayor Rick Eberlin of Grafton, IL

What is nothing less than a total sea-change in local politics for the Mississippi River Valley, Mayors for the first time are successfully resisting the call for more levees and flood walls while combating historic flooding.

"I think what we're seeing here is people realizing that the conventional solutions are no longer enough, a new approach is needed because these disasters are coming more often and with more intensity than ever before," summarized Colin Wellenkamp, Executive Director of MRCTI.

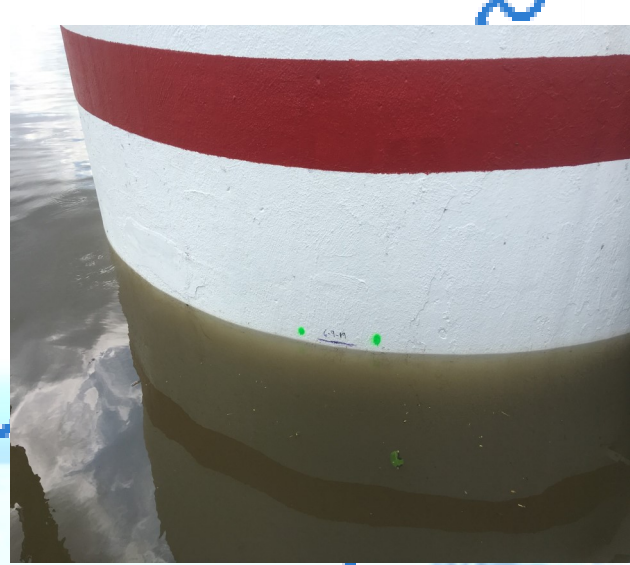
Furthermore, Mayors are cognoscente that further constriction of the waterway only endangers everyone. "We have nine miles of waterfront in Davenport. If we were to wall that water off and push it down-stream, we would devastate other communities," iterated Mayor Frank Klipsch of Davenport, IA.

"It's not like (the water is) going to go away. It's just going to go downstream and so we've got to figure out how we're going to keep all the cities protected along the way and certainly saving lives and businesses and economic development is a piece of that," emphasized Mayor Diana Broderson of Muscatine, IA while talking to Senator Corey Booker during his recent visit to Iowa.

Continued on page 6 under "Flooding."

- Moderate/Prolonged Flooding
- Major Flooding
- 200+ Day Flooding/Seepage

Background image: View looking west over hwy 67 Clark Bridge across the Mississippi River at Alton, IL revealing what appears to be an inland sea near the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.



Upper Left Corner: NASA image of the St. Louis region as captured by satellite, June 2019. **Left, top to bottom:** Looking out from city hall onto flood waters surrounding Clarksville, MO. The red line marks the 1993 flood level reached in Alton, IL. 2019 flooding rises just shy of the all-time high. Near record flooding inundates Kimmswick, MO spreading out right up to Mayor Phil Stang's front porch. NASA image of the Memphis region as captured by satellite, June 2019.

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Mayors Present Jobs, Investment, and Resilience Plan for the Mississippi River Corridor Worth \$7.85 Billion

Twenty mayors representing cities along the Mississippi River gathered for the seventh Capitol meeting of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) this March. In meetings with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and lawmakers charged with shepherding infrastructure legislation, the mayors unveiled their plan to reinforce the essential natural and built infrastructure of the Mississippi River Corridor.

The Mayors' strategy of twelve appropriation priorities and four infrastructure vehicle recommendations addresses the flooding many communities are experiencing now as well as worse impacts expected for the Lower Stem in the summer.

"The National Weather Service hydrologic outlook for our entire corridor predicts considerable risk for significant flooding into the summer. Southern Illinois registered their third-highest flood level and Vidalia, LA is just about to tie for its second-highest water level. We must act. We are in DC urging serious proposals to address the vulnerabilities we see on the ground," said Lionel Johnson, Mayor of St. Gabriel, LA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

In Midst of Flooding, Mississippi River Mayors Push Innovative Financing

The mayors recommend a \$7.8 billion infrastructure plan that supports eight major U.S. industry sectors, creates over 147,000 jobs, continues 1.5 million jobs, sustains our ecological assets to power our economy, mitigates for hundreds of millions of dollars in disaster impacts, and generates \$23.8 billion in economic activity.

"We're not going to solve our problems with grants. One of the largest infrastructure grant programs in the Federal budget is the BUILD Grant program. The entire award history of the BUILD program would not even meet one fourth of the investment needed to bring the nation's inland waterway system up to a state of good repair let alone all surface transportation needs of roads, rail, transit, and ports. So, we're going to have to get innovative about how we approach funding our infrastructure," explained Frank Klipsch, Mayor of Davenport, IA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

The Mayors' plan calls for the establishment of a Resilience Revolving Loan Fund to help communities address several hazards including droughts, intense heat, wild fires and significant storms. Mayors also endorse supporting WIFIA and TIFIA and new approaches like Environmental Impact Bonds.

"CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) brought several investors to meet with us regarding our significant infrastructure projects. It's partnerships like these that can create new funding streams to bring a vision to fruition," detailed Mayor Jacob Frey, Mayor of Minneapolis, MN.

"We're looking at catastrophic flooding in the Mississippi River Valley that approached 1993 flood levels into June. So, we need to take action now. Our Cities are working with each other, working with the Corps of Engineers, and FEMA to prepare. But, we want to stop these billion-dollar disasters. Over the last ten years ten or more disaster declarations have been designated in thirty states while six states have received twenty or more," cautioned Rick Eberlin, Mayor of Grafton, IL.

See the entire MRCTI Federal Policy Platform at www.mrcti.org

Pictured: 1) Senator Kennedy (LA) is welcomed by Mayor Lionel Johnson of St. Gabriel, LA before speaking. 2) Mayor Tim Kabat of La Crosse, WI presents the Chairs' recognition to Rep. Ron Kind (WI) for his service as Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Caucus in the U.S. House. 3) Mayor Jo Anne Smiley of Clarksville, MO presents the Chairs' recognition to Senator Roy Blunt (MO) for his leadership of the Mississippi River Caucus in the U.S. Senate. 4) MRCTI Executive Committee members meet with mission directors for the Embassy of Canada to discuss trade with the River's largest trading partner. 5) Members of the Minnesota delegation congratulate Rep. Betty McCollum (MN) on upon her becoming the new Mississippi River Caucus Co-Chair. 6) Quantified Ventures CEO Eric Letsinger, 2nd from left, and Todd Appel, Managing Director, far right, launch new EIB challenge with MRCTI Co-Chairs. 7) IL, IA, and MO Mayors meet with Congressman Rodney Davis (IL) on the Resilience Revolving Loan Fund.



Mayors Launch Environmental Impact Bond Challenge



In a new partnership with Quantified Ventures, two MRCTI Cities will be selected to have an environmental impact bond (EIB) assembled for each city's natural infrastructure project(s). Quantified Ventures has agreed to develop and deploy an EIB that will provide a financial mechanism by which natural infrastructure projects can be financed.

Quantified Ventures monetizes environmental improvements and sells that benefit on the open bond market. Sale of the bonds allow cities to finance natural infrastructure project such as wetland restoration, riverfront parks, catch basins, urban forest restoration, etc. to buffer the city from impacts of intense heat, floods, droughts, and storms.

Mayors Unveil Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Proposal

Mississippi River Mayors unveiled their proposal for the establishment of a Resilience Revolving Loan Fund (RRF) to be administered by FEMA. Under the proposal, Congress will appropriate \$100 million over two years for FEMA to award capitalization grants to states for the establishment of an RRF. MRCTI is working with the Mississippi River Caucus to introduce this proposal as a bill. The RRF will be the most flexible spending tool yet for cities to mitigate disasters.



Rep. Betty McCollum (MN) is Appointed new Mississippi River Caucus Co-Chair

Mayor Frey of Minneapolis (pictured right) and Rep. Ron Kind (WI) officially welcomed Ms. McCollum (pictured right, standing left) into her new role. Former Congressman and now MN Governor Tim Walz previously held the seat of Caucus Co-Chair. Upon being elected to Governor, the seat became open and the senior majority Co-Chair, Rep. Kind, chose Rep. McCollum to serve. MRCTI is excited to work with Ms. McCollum in her new role. As the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Ms. McCollum bring a formidable position to the River.



Flooding, Continued from page 3

“As Mayor Walker (Alton, IL) stated, he has had the top six out of the ten largest floods just during his time in office. We don’t see this letting-up.

We have been warning everyone that will listen in regards to these impacts since February.

Due to the winter being one of the wettest on record (Iowa, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Tennessee, Minnesota) we have little capacity to absorb any more rain.

We can’t hope to solve our flood issues within the bounds of our cities. The Mississippi River is a system where one part impacts another. We must manage our impacts at corridor scale. Difficult decisions and discussions will need to take place about practices leveeing vast stretches of agricultural land.

We’ve worked to increase the pre-disaster mitigation grant from \$22 million to \$246 million. We’ve proposed to Congress establishment of a Resilience Revolving Loan Fund.



Pictured here is the main road leading into Nutwood, IL northeast of St. Louis. The town was nearly surrounded by the Mississippi. Inset: Mayor Rick Eberlin of Grafton, IL looks out over flooding next to and within his city.

We expect to be going through this into July. The Bottom line here is that Mayors have been working toward solutions, we’ve realized new investment, and we have been moving people out of the floodplain. We are ready to work with the various interests of the corridor and the Corps to determine critical areas where natural infrastructure can be restored for the largest pay-back and where our extended levee systems can be adjusted to account for our new level of risk,” concludes Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA at an MRCTI press conference in May.

Mayors Engage with New Federal Water Cabinet

Comprised of the top water officials across all the science and engineering agencies of the Administration, the newly proposed “water cabinet” would coordinate all things water-related for the federal government at a level of cooperation not realized before. The officials comprising this new body would include in part:

Dave Ross Environmental Protection Agency Assistant Administrator for Water;

Tim Gallaudet Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for Oceans & Atmosphere;

R.D. James Department of the Army Assistant Secretary for Civil Works;

Bill Northey Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Farm Production Conservation;

Tim Petty Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Water & Science;

Jim Reilly Department of the Interior Director of the U.S. Geological Survey;

Daniel Simmons Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Though this “cabinet” is not official yet, the idea was proposed formally at the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force Nutrient Roundtable on May 15 in Baton Rouge, LA. MRCTI Mayors

were invited to keynote the discussion and set the stage for dialogue on how to better address nutrient loading into the nation’s watersheds.

MRCTI Co-Chair, Mayor Lionel Johnson of St. Gabriel, LA as well as Mayor Kevin Smith of Helena-West Helena, AR and Buzz Craft, Mayor of Vidalia, LA presented to the leaders of the agencies gathered for the announcement and roundtable.

Mayors explained that nutrient loading was the single most acute threat to their water security and that reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus will provide benefits beyond just cleaner water, but also resilience to disasters through the support of a healthy ecology that can better absorb impacts.

“Here’s the bottom line...the science and regulatory work of the DOI, USDA, and EPA we see as protecting the environmental assets our economy depends on. Without clean water, we don’t have the preeminent position in the global commodity supply chain that we enjoy. We need to protect our natural infrastructure to protect our jobs and our development,” summarized Mayor Johnson.



MRCTI Presents to 160 Wall Street Investors at Columbia Water Summit

New York: MRCTI Co-Chair, Mayor Lionel Johnson of St. Gabriel, LA keynoted the Columbia Water Summit in New York City. The Summit convened over 160 investors with global portfolios in infrastructure.

Mayor Johnson made the case for MRCTI member city water infrastructure needs profiling project needs in St. Louis, Park Allen, and others. MRCTI was asked to frame the challenge for the investment community.

“We have considerable financing challenges that we stand ready to work with [Wall Street] on. The drinking water infrastructure need for our 10-state corridor is \$49.7 billion alone. And, the waste water backlog is \$42.33 billion,” explained Mayor Johnson during the summit.

Investors are looking for smaller projects: One of the critical lessons learned at the Summit is infrastructure investment firms are looking for both large and small projects in cities worth \$5 million or more which opens the door for more member communities.

MRCTI works to connect members to infrastructure financing options of all kinds so that cities have choices in meeting their needs on the ground.



Above clockwise: Mayor Johnson meets with Patrick Decker, CEO of Xylem; Mayor Johnson conducts interview with Summit Co-Host Alexander Loucopoulos, Partner at Sciens Capital Management; Mayors Johnson meets with investors and infrastructure experts to profile MRCTI City needs.



MRCTI Mayors pitch to Cargill and General Mills Executives on Reducing Nutrient Load in the Watershed, Secure Source Water

MRCTI Co-Chairs and Minnesota Mayors gathered near Minneapolis to meet with executives from two of the world’s largest commodity supply chain companies which happen to be headquartered along the Mississippi—Cargill and General Mills. Cargill continues to be the largest private company in the Nation with revenues of \$114.7 billion in 2018, employing over 155,000 in 66 countries, responsible for 25% of all U.S. grain exports.

Forming a new partnership was the mission this April and both companies responded positively. General Mills Director of State Government Relations, Lee Anderson said “I know MRCTI came to pitch to us, but we would actually like to pitch to you on how we can help with your efforts to incentivize nutrient reduction.”

Cities purchase food for programs, facilities, and special projects including schools, prisons, and city-owned buildings. The food purchased by cities can support continuous improvement in water quality through a responsible procurement directive that preferentially sources agricultural products from acreage engaged in nutrient reduction not unlike procurement controls cities have for products that meet sustainable development standards.

Continued on next page under “Commodity.”

Pictured L to R: Sharon Spies, Cargill Product Line Manager & Sustainability Lead; Ryan Sirolli, Sustainability Director; Rod Snyder, President of Field to Market; Tim McNeil, Mayor of Dayton, MN; Frank Klipsch, Mayor of Davenport, IA; Becca Martin, Director of State & Local Government; Lionel Johnson, Mayor of St. Gabriel, LA; Jason Meyer, Regional General Manager, Cargill Ag Supply Chain; Jeff Webb, President, Barge and Marine Terminal Business.



Commodity, Continued from page 7

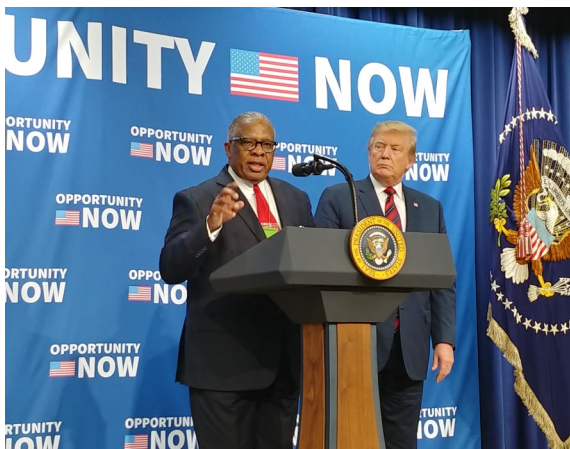
Cargill Executives discussed a broad partnership with MRCTI that covers multiple pieces of their value chain. One example is partnering with Mayors and the Department of Interior on deploying nutrient sensors from the barges Cargill uses to move product up and down the Mississippi.

Mayors also detailed the added benefits to other portions of the economy from increased sustainability on acreage including growth for the cruise industry, water-intensive manufacturing, outdoor recreation, drinking water security, and disaster resilience from a ecology to absorbing impacts.

Most importantly, however, Mayors emphasized the added jobs that come with a Mississippi River Corridor partnership. The facility and supplier footprint of both companies throughout the valley is considerable which creates the opportunity for business line expansion in MRCTI towns.



Pictured L to R: Lionel Johnson, Mayor of St. Gabriel, LA; Jerry Koch, Mayor of Coon Rapids, MN; Tim McNeil, Mayor of Dayton, MN; Frank Klipsch, Mayor of Davenport, IA; Lee Anderson, General Mills Director of State Government Relations; Rod Snyder, President of Field to Market; Colin Wellenkamp, MRCTI Executive Director.



MRCTI Cities Recognized at White House Opportunity Zone Kick-Off

According to a report assembled by Smart Growth America and the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at George Washington University, all ten Mississippi River States have opportunity zones that are performing at the top 10 percent of the country—most of which are within MRCTI cities.

Mayor George Flaggs of Vicksburg, MS (picture left) represented MRCTI at the White House kick-off event marking the release of new rules and guidance on opportunity zone performance.



MRCTI ANNUAL MEETING Sept 17-19, 2019
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