Mayors Make Gains on Pandemic

Mississippi River Mayors Join Efforts to Limit Contagion

Beginning in March, MRCTI Co-Chairs Mayor Sharon Weston Broome of Baton Rouge, LA and Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA, began taking steps to bring Mayors along the Mississippi River together in an united and coordinated effort designed to control contagion throughout the corridor and create as much capacity as possible to address overlapping disasters through the Summer and fall. The following steps were taken by the association but would also apply to each individual city as a strong plan to treat this pandemic:

• MRCTI Mayors ensured Federal agencies would fully respond if called;
• From March through October MRCTI will pursue donated PPE supplies;
• MRCTI Launched a COVID-19 Coalition to assist our cities with expertise;
• MRCTI Partnered with Rotary Club Int. to secure COVID response grants;
• Coordinate Regional, National, and Global messaging to gain resources;
• Host webinars for MRCTI cities to better access both CARES Act and FEMA;
• Create a united voice for direct aid from Federal Stimulus Packages.

The above efforts will continue through the fall as COVID-19 cases fluctuate along the corridor over the looming threats of a very active hurricane season, encroaching drought, intense heat, and convective storms.

MRCTI will be working to supply cities with body coverings, thermometers, and masks to assist in the reopening of schools through September and October.

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Staggering $6.2 billion Cost of 2019 Flood Exacerbated by Pandemic

This March in Washington, DC MRCTI released an economic impact analysis, compiled by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, detailing the 2019 flood season, and reported losses exceeding $20 billion across 19 states.

These costs include total direct losses (insured and uninsured assets), field crops (crop damage and prevented-planting), livestock, public infrastructure (levees, roads, bridges, dams, etc.), and damage to homes, businesses and vehicles. A detailed assessment of the costs now show:

1) The total cost of the 2019 floods to the Mississippi River main stem corridor was $6.2B for 11 states;
2) The states in the main stem corridor that sustained the most costs from the 2019 floods were Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas, with each of these states incurring impacts of $1 to $2 billion;
3) The states in the Mississippi River Basin that sustained the most costs from the 2019 floods were Nebraska and South Dakota with both states incurring $2 to $5 billion in damages;
4) MRCTI cities that actually sustained some of the worst flooding including the Quad Cities, which realized a record flood level;
5) MRCTI cities that sustained some of the worst impacts include Grafton, IL which lost 80 percent of its economy, and Vidalia, LA which witnessed 270 consecutive days of flooding, a new national record.

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Mississippi River and Great Lakes Mayors Unite on Stimulus Action

Mayors from the tip of the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Gulf of Mexico called on the U.S. Senate for emergency fiscal assistance for municipal governments in the U.S. Senate CARES stimulus plan.

“Some may think revenue replacement for state and local governments is a sort of bailout, but it isn’t. This is a matter of fiscal survival for our cities including keeping city services running. Absolutely every cent we receive from any assistance will go straight back into our communities and businesses,” emphasized Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

“Municipal governments, along with state and county partners, continue to take part on the front lines in combating the COVID-19 virus,” said Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot. “Simultaneously, municipalities are struggling to address the catastrophic decrease in revenues they have experienced because of the pandemic – revenues that support critical services provided to their residents and the overall economy of their state.”

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Mayors representing cities along the Mississippi River are gathered for the eighth Capitol meeting of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) to communicate the costs of flooding to federal policymakers and push for a slate of solutions.

MRCTI 2020 Policy Platform
At their 2020 Capitol Meeting, MRCTI mayors presented their 2020 proposal to strengthen the essential natural and built infrastructure of the Mississippi River corridor and pushed for critical congressional support and investment to better protect communities against increasing risk. The platform of 12 appropriation and four infrastructure priorities is to address the acute shocks and chronic stresses the region has sustained, totaling more than $206 billion in actual losses since 2005. This platform includes both existing and new programs. Mayors of the Mississippi River developed the $6.85 billion proposal to build resilience, mitigate mounting climate risk, create more than 128,000 jobs, and generate more than $20.5 billion in economic activity.

MRCTI Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Act Passes U.S. House
In a major victory for Mississippi River Mayors, the U.S. House of Representatives passed MRCTI’s proposed Resilience Revolving Loan Fund Act (RRF) as part of the House’s highway bill, HR 2. Championed by Congresswoman Angie Craig (picture B right) and Congressman Rodney Davis (picture D right), the RRF was co-sponsored by Congressman Cedric Richmond (picture B right) and Congressman Garrett Graves (picture C right). Key support was also being provided by the US Chamber of Commerce (picture A, Thomas Donohue, Chamber CEO) and the American Society of Civil Engineers. The RRF provides capitalization grants to states for the establishment of a resilience loan fund that is allocated to cities for disaster mitigation projects. The loans must be provided at an interest rate of 1.25 percent or less. The RRF moves to the Senate next.

2019 Flood Economic Impact Analysis
MRCTI released an economic impact analysis, compiled by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, detailing the 2019 flood season, and reported losses exceeding $20 billion across 19 states.

- The total cost of the 2019 floods to the Mississippi River main stem corridor was $6.28 billion for 11 states;
- The states in the main stem corridor that sustained the most costs from the 2019 floods were Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas, with each of these states incurring impacts of $1 to $2 billion;
• MRCTI cities that actually sustained some of the worst flooding including the Quad Cities, which realized a record flood level.

• MRCTI cities that sustained some of the worst impacts included Grafton, IL which lost 80 percent of its economy, and Vidalia, LA which witnessed 270 consecutive days of flooding, a new national record.

“There is definitely an upward trend we can chart over the last few years,” said Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, Iowa and MRCTI Co-Chair. “The spatial scale and duration of the 2019 Central U.S. flooding set many records. According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, it’s plausible to expect this trend to be more frequent with damaging riverine and urban floods to continue.”

The Science of Increasing Floods

The 2019 flooding is part of a trend of more billion-dollar, non-hurricane, inland flood disasters in the last decade (2010-2019) than have occurred over the previous three decades combined (1980-2009). Strong attribution science shows that climate change is a major factor driving increasing frequent and severe flooding up and down America’s largest waterway, contributing at least 18 separate billion-dollar inland flood disasters over the last decade compared to a total of 14 such disaster events over the previous 30 years.

“This all begs the question of what we’re doing to address these issues and mitigate our seemingly mounting risk,” said Hon. Sharon Weston Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and MRCTI Co-Chair. “Meeting these challenges is part of the reason for the MRCTI visit to Washington, DC.”

Mayors Discuss Partnership with Ducks Unlimited to Deploy Critical Natural Infrastructure along Corridor

In an effort to broaden Mayors’ reach in developing natural infrastructure projects that mitigate disasters and improve water quality MRCTI began negotiations with Ducks Unlimited Director of Public Policy, Kellis Moss (picture D left) in Washington, DC during the 2020 Capitol Meeting. DU has a tremendous portfolio of ecosystem restoration projects and Mayors have essential needs for regions along the waterway that are subject to the most repetitive loss. Together, MRCTI and DU can partner to develop project sites near cities incurring significant disaster impacts where natural infrastructure assets will have the most benefits.

Mayors Move to Vest Key Lawmakers in Work on Nutrient Pollution

Mayors met with House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Congressman Collin Peterson (picture G left) and Senate Pro Temp Chuck Schumer (picture H left) to discuss incentivizing nutrient pollution reduction through city, county, and state procurement aimed at making products produced more sustainably. Joining the Mayors in several of these discussions was Bill Gordon, President of the American Soybean Association (picture F left). The question at-hand is if public procurement directives can send a large enough market signal to motivate private sector action toward great commitments around sustainably grown commodities. Congressman Peterson cautioned that major producers would have to be sold on the effort and realize a large enough ROI. Senator Grassley urged that farmers must be protected and benefit directly.

MRCTI & Quantified Ventures Deploy two Environmental Impact Bonds

Environmental Impact Bonds offer cities a way to pay for resilient infrastructure based on the outcomes these projects actually achieve, rather than paying for projects themselves and hoping for the best. In this way, they can help make public spending more efficient and capitalize on the multiple benefits of these projects.

MRCTI began operations for two Environmental Impact Bonds, in partnership with outcomes-based capital firm Quantified Ventures (pictured left at podium, QV CEO Eric Letsinger) and with support from the McKnight and Walton Family Foundations. Through the partnership, Quantified Ventures will bring its expertise structuring Environmental Impact Bonds to help communities finance more natural and resilient infrastructure throughout the river corridor. New Orleans, Louisiana, and Memphis, Tennessee, each of MRCTI cities, will receive the first dose of bonds. New Orleans will use its Environmental Impact Bond to scale green mortgage offerings from the Finance Authority of New Orleans (FANO) as well as capitalize a Green Infrastructure Fund to implement resilience projects throughout the city. Memphis will focus its Environmental Impact Bond on financing a suite of green infrastructure projects in the Fairgrounds and Beltline neighborhoods to reduce local flooding, improve water quality, provide community green space, and revitalize undersitized areas.

“It’s wonderful to win the first Environmental Impact Bond grant from MRCTI and Quantified Ventures, and congratulations to our neighbors a little upstream in Memphis,” said Hon. LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana. “We hope the success of these two projects yields more ELI deployments throughout our region for natural infrastructure.”
MRCTI Links 100,000 Units of PPE to Member Cities for Pandemic Response

Since March, MRCTI has been working with suppliers and charities across the world to provide as much PPE to member cities as possible. Of the 100,000 units secured, 84 percent (84%) has been donated either in the form of direct contributions, or through funds given directly to MRCTI; one hundred percent (100%) of all PPE funds allocated to MRCTI have gone toward the purchase of PPE.

Mayors Call for More Resources to Assist in Pandemic

Mayors from Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Illinois, and Tennessee emphasized that the need for PPE and supplies including testing would be ongoing into the fall.

“We are hoping this will see the peak of the demand on our healthcare resources. The sooner we can get to the down-curve the better. We need as much time between peak COVID19 demand and potential hurricane impacts as possible,” warned LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, LA. “Also, an expansion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Individual Assistance program (IA) would allow residents access to financial assistance for rents and mortgages, groceries, child care expenses for essential workers, medical expenses.”

“There is a disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities with less economic advantages as well as those facing other threats,” said Mayor Robert Eastern, III, Mayor of East St. Louis, IL. “The economic impacts are significant. The recently passed stimulus will help, but my residents are going to be hurting for a while. I hope additional packages can address the longer term drain of the pandemic.”

Economic Fall-out Continues for Cities from the 2019 Floods

Cash-strapped cities along the Mississippi River struggle to accumulate the supplies needed to address COVID-19 and add capacity for other looming disasters during the 2020 hurricane season. Cities are working to purchase additional PPE, but it is difficult while still carrying the debt from 2019 record floods.

“Many Delta communities are still reeling from the floods of 2019. I still have people displaced from last year’s flood to worry about. Plus, with our poverty rate, the acute nature of the pandemic’s economic downturn is felt more here than many other places. We have almost no capacity to weather furloughs and a sharp spike in unemployment,” explained Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS.

Mayors Working to Secure Additional Supplies and Testing

Mayors along the Mississippi River used their collective demand to secure additional resources for all cities throughout the Corridor. “Here in Tennessee, we too pursued additional PPE supplies to prepare and did link to the resources connected by MRCTI and we are very thankful for that,” explained Jim Strickland, Mayor of Memphis, TN.

“We obtained most of our PPE supply from MRCTI.”

-Hon. Kevin Smith, Mayor of Helena—West Helena, AR

“I want to thank MRCTI for all they have done for us. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the high levels of the Mississippi River, present a significant complexity to the 2020 hurricane season.” - Hon. LaToya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, LA.

The Threat of Flooding Helped MRCTI Prepare Early

“It was not hard for my Co-Chair, Mayor Gallagher and I to see that the pandemic could hit us right at one of the most dangerous times of the year, thus we projected an urgency of rapid response and preparation for COVID-19 as early as possible. I’m happy to say that urgency was shared up river,” stated MRCTI Co-Chair Mayor Sharon Weston Broome of Baton Rouge, LA.

We were among the first to issue a state of emergency and launch contagion controls,” iterated Kevin Smith, Mayor of Helena-West Helena, AR.
Organizations Across the Globe Mobilize to Help MRCTI Cities

Entities in North America, Europe, and Asia all answered MRCTI’s call for assistance to cities from Minnesota to Louisiana. Northern cities required additional PPE to open and operate cooling centers, lower river cities need to build supply for an active hurricane season, and all cities need as much supply as possible to help their schools open safely.

Companies that contributed to the MRCTI Mask Fund or donated masks directly include:

Rotary International Joins MRCTI on Disaster Response Micro-Grants.
In a building collaboration with Rotary International, MRCTI coordinated at corridor scale to organize micro-grants for cities from the Rotary Disaster Response Fund. MRCTI cities that received grants include Guttenberg, IA; Dubuque, IA; Arnold, MO; and New Orleans, LA.

Mayors can link directly with their Rotary Club Presidents to apply for additional funds toward infrastructure and recovery activities. Click the link below for info. https://www.mrcti.org/s/Newsletter-Jan-2020-2.pdf

US Heartland China Association Partners with MRCTI to secure largest donations of PPE

MRCTI has gained many champions and advocates through the pandemic including Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia of St. Louis City who secured 20,000 masks for Mississippi River cities from her own efforts with donors. Another champion is Allison Fajans-Turner from Climate Nexus who worked directly with suppliers overseas to secure 25,000 masks for New Orleans.

Our Mayors and their work to keep people safe have inspired many to take action and support what they have been trying to do for their communities. One of MRCTI’s most successful supporters has been the US Heartland China Association (USCHA) lead by Governor Bob Holden of Missouri (pictured right).

USCHA has worked hard with charities in California and China to secure the majority of MRCTI’s PPE supply. The work with USCHA has been especially valuable in supplying lower river cities with resources to safely address hurricane impacts, and in providing all MRCTI cities with supplies to assist in reopening schools while protecting both students and teachers.
In the Wake of Civil Unrest, MRCITI Cities Find a Voice Through Mayor Carter

[Editor’s Note: After the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd, five MRCITI cities experienced episodes of civil unrest and many Mayors published their own statement of solidarity. Mayor Carter offers his own here. For our first installment of a new editorial section for our Mayors to share their particular views, we thought it appropriate to publish what follows.]

We are the Mayors along the Mississippi River, custodians of America’s heartland, and I call upon us to stand together for equity, justice, and the protection of all our rights as individuals and a society.

This time is truly extraordinary and remarkable in our nation’s trail-blazing history. Flooding, drought, and now a global pandemic along with civil unrest are testing our resolve as protectors of our most sacred and closely-held beliefs that stitch together the rich tapestry of our liberty.

Tested we may be, but we shall not hesitate in our promise to protect and serve our citizens.

Our Mississippi River is America’s original Mainstreet and the resource that founded our culture, heritage, and history. The cross-currents of the Mississippi mirror the passions of our hearts and minds to build the most prosperous communities.

The current can be strong and sweep us away if we neglect the issues that build into waves of anger and fear. Suppression has diminishing returns when compared to policies of prevention, intervention, and assistance. Too often resources are pushed to activities that don’t address the root causes of lawlessness.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." 
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

FEMA Unveils New Pre-Disaster Grant

New Program Provides $660 million

Mayors may recall the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) which was one of the only grants in the federal portfolio that funded resilience activity before a disaster struck. Pursuant to the Disaster Reform Act passed in 2018, PDM was replaced by the Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRC) program.

No longer reliant on an annual congressional appropriation, BRC is funded through a set-aside that is comprised of up to 6 percent of the funds spent on disasters the previous year. For this inaugural year of the BRC program, the available funding totals $660 million for both BRC and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant.

On August 4, 2020, FEMA posted the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Notification of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program and the new Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRC) pre-disaster mitigation grant program on grants.gov and at https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities

FEMA’s two competitive mitigation grant programs provide states, local communities, tribes and territories funding for eligible mitigation activities to strengthen our nation’s ability to build a culture of preparedness by reducing disaster losses and protecting life and property from future disaster damages.

The application period opens on September 30, 2020. Eligible applicants must apply for funding using the new FEMA Grants Outcome (FEMA GO), which is now the management system for FMA and BRC. Please submit applications in the FEMA Go Portal no later than 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on January 29, 2021.

I invite the highest levels of leadership in our land to help us calm the storm that we as Mayors are managing on the frontline of American public life. Our cities are not battlespace but permeable common space that we will keep open to all for all.

The Mississippi River runs purple – we are as mixed as the water that runs through our cities from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico. Our dreams, our hopes, our future are immersed in the backgrounds and values that are as diverse as our own corridor and we are stronger for it.

I feel compelled now more than ever to continue taking overt steps toward unity, open dialogue, and empathetic action that will absorb the floods of discontent we find ourselves drowning under.

Therefore, I urge the Mayors along America’s Great Waterway to pledge our entire duty and provision to a new future where equity and assistance are the driving forces of change. We can adapt our own approach within our cities to emphasize progression over suppression. This new beginning can move from our streets to our city halls then to our state capitals and spread from the banks of the Mississippi to across our land.

Elected officials and residents alike can join and support us in this work, hold us accountable, and pick-up this charge where we may falter. MRCITI can be a convening force for the work ahead helping our effort at a collective level.

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." President John F. Kennedy

We all share some culpability but despair and indignation are not good motivators. The oppressed have languished and now their pain is a force for change that can wash away inequities and we must work to channel that pain into positive action.

Poverty is passive oppression because it robs one the chance to imagine something better. Our cities shall be the new centers of a better life imagined then turned reality. There is much more struggle to come and the worst may not be behind us but neither is the best. We can prosper as long as we proceed together.

Moments like this are turning points in human events. The challenge of our time is not just protecting our home but each other.

Offered with blessings and favor,
The Honorable Melvin Carter
Mayor of St. Paul, MN

Members of the MRCITI Executive Committee unanimously endorsed Mayor Carter’s statement.

Pictured left to right above: Mayors speak with James Bodron and Col. Sattinger of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as Jesse Munoz, Director of FEMA Mitigation Division, Region IV and Darden Benninger, Chief of Staff, Illinois Emergency Management Agency as part of a panel assembled to discuss outcomes and solutions to the 2019 record flood.
MRCTI Mayors form International COVID-19 Coalition to Help Cities Economically Recover

On April 27, 2020 Mayors of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) announced a broad international partnership with partners working to assist communities facing both the pandemic and multiple hazards including flooding and catastrophic storms.

Mayors Along America’s Most Essential Waterway Secure Coalition

Mayors from all ten states along the Mississippi River have been working steadfastly throughout the COVID-19 crisis to build capacity within their emergency response systems to address both the pandemic and multiple hazards.

“Our Mayors began working to limit the pandemic earlier than many because we could see it may hit us near the height of flood season – one of the most dangerous times of the year for our corridor,” explained Sharon Weston Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA and Co-Chair of MRCTI.

“An unprecedented mounting of threats calls for a unique and unprecedented response and that is exactly what we have been pursuing with results linking to finance, engineering, supply chain, disaster response, and public service organizations and companies,” said Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA and Co-Chair of MRCTI.


“We have 450 offices in over 23 countries worldwide. We knew we could help our Mayors meet the layered crisis of pandemic and major storms so we worked to connect them to suppliers both state-side and overseas to address their overwhelming PPE demand,” detailed Jeremy Travis, Tetra Tech Business Unit Leader and Past Chair of the MRCTI Corporate Advisory Board.

Corporations and organizations are stepping-up to help cities deliver. If city services falter, the whole economy will.

“Even as many cities face the dual challenges of floods and the pandemic, they are finding new ways to work together and find solutions. Our Small Businesses and City Revenues Have Been Decimated,” said Bob Holden, former Governor of Missouri and Chairman of the U.S. China Heartland Association.

On April 27, 2020 Mayors of the 25,000 units just last week – MRCTI cities offers cities the infrastructure to make that partnership feasible,” said Bob Holden, former Governor of Missouri and Chairman of the U.S. China Heartland Association.

Our Small Businesses and City Revenues Have Been Decimated
Cities along the Mississippi River went into the pandemic facing terrific revenue challenges due to the nationally historic floods of 2019. FEMA reimbursements from last year have yet to arrive in many Mississippi River cities and the floods destroyed 80 percent of the economy in some places along the waterway. This left little revenue to contain COVID-19 through the purchase of expensive and increasingly rare PPE.

“My region sustained the largest tornado in the State of Mississippi’s history on April 12 then was hit again by another tornado one week later. We have to respond to these events with or without enough equipment to limit contagion. I know we’ll receive stimulus funds but I don’t know when and I’m not positive how much will finally make it to my city,” stated George Flagg of Vicksburg, MS and MRCTI Mississippi Chair.

“More than half a million people have applied for unemployment in my state of Mississippi alone. Less than ten million applied for unemployment nationally during the financial crisis and we’ve just been fighting this for less than two months. Broad regional coalitions are going to be needed to make sure areas and people don’t get left behind. We need partnerships like this to give our cities capacity,” emphasized Melvin Carter, Mayor of St. Paul, MN.

“The cities and ports along the Mississippi River are essential to the global commodity supply chain, support businesses, and don’t necessarily have the capacity to navigate and secure resources from complex and overlapping federal outlets like the CARES Act. That’s where we can offer guidance and ultimately increase funding for MRCTI cities through our firm Witt O’Brien’s, which is part of the Seacor family. We deploy disaster response consulting all over the world and U.S. communities with the details and processes to maximize Federal assistance. We were connected to the Initiative through past MRCTI Corporate Advisory Board Chair Tim Power of SCF Marine which is also part of Seacor,” said Andy Robinson, Managing Director at Witt O’Brien’s.

More PPE is Needed Every Day

“My city of 12,000 people has only a few COVID-19 cases, but 100 surgical masks or 50 N95 masks can make a big difference. Just that small supply can ensure my first responders don’t contract the virus and spread it around just doing their jobs every day,” emphasized Kevin Smith of Helena, AR.

“We are happy to help the city of Helena. They had sustained flooding, a tornado, and their healthcare facilities needed additional supplies. We’re here in New York where we know the need is great, but we also wanted to send our discrete supplists to where they would make the most difference on the ground,” calibrated Alexander Loucopoulos, Partner at Sciens Water and a member of the MRCTI Corporate Advisory Board.

New Challenges Require New Solutions

“American cities are facing a triple threat: climate change, COVID-19 and the economic downturn,” said Katie Walsh, Head of Cities, States & Regions at CDP North America. “Mississippi River cities are up against spring flooding, and soon, extreme summer heat – already significant challenges in a typical year. To endure the next few months, cities must rally behind sustainable solutions. This will not only help cities to weather this storm, but will build resilience and protect vulnerable populations who have been hardest hit by COVID-19 and ongoing environmental injustices.”

Corporations and organizations are stepping-up to help cities deliver. If city services falter, the whole economy will.

Coalition Members Include:

- CDP
- Seacor
- Sciens Water
- Tetra Tech
- USHCA

Columbia Water Center
Earth Institute | Columbia University
Godfrey, IL Enacts Innovative Small Business Stimulus

To provide relief to local businesses that have been hard hit by the COVID 19 pandemic, Godfrey, IL is introducing a stimulus package called the “Small Business Community Gift Card” program.

When a patron purchases a $20 gift card from a participating business, the customer only pays $10 while the City of Godfrey subsidizes the rest. Thus, the public is incentivized to shop at Godfrey businesses by doubling their money in 20-dollar increments. Customers in support of participating businesses can purchase retailer-specific gift cards online through Riverbender.com. With the exception of gasoline and alcoholic beverages, the cards can be used to purchase any products from participating retailers. The Village of Godfrey values and is proud of its locally owned business and hopes that this program will provide them support during these tough economic times and moving forward,” said Mayor Mike McCormick, pictured below.

The stimulus program will continue on a first-come basis until $50,000 of funding has been exhausted. Funding for the program is made available through the Godfrey Business District. Because of the funding appropriation, only retailers that have paid sales taxes into the Business District are eligible to participate.

Businesses that are not part of the initial program can opt-in by arranging their participation through City Hall.

Mayor Simmons of Greenville, MS (L) and Mayor Craft of Vidalia, LA (R), images with masks, isolation gowns, and thermometers to assist my city with response. We got ahead of the pandemic as early as March began working to propel the U.S. economic recovery, and critical investments that will help propel the U.S. economic recovery,” said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. “For example, cities invest heavily in transportation systems to connect people to jobs and the water resources that serve residents and industry.”