



Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

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Mississippi River Cities in Battleground States Unite Efforts to Address Record COVID Surge, Ensure a Safe Election

October 30, 2020, La Crosse, WI – Mayors of the [Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative](#) (MRCTI) in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa announce unified efforts throughout the Mississippi River Corridor where COVID-19 cases are surging to provide PPE in preparation for election day and to bolster city healthcare systems dealing with an unprecedented level of new cases.

Mayors Pursue Ten-State Corridor Approach to Alleviate Pandemic Impacts

Mayors from all ten states along the Mississippi River have been working steadily throughout the COVID-19 crisis to build capacity within their emergency response systems to address both the pandemic and prolonged economic collapse at the local level.

“Eight out of our ten states along the Mississippi River are now sustaining the greatest increase in COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began. Despite a worsening and in some areas crippling reduction of local government revenues, cities are partnering to respond. MRCTI has distributed over 125,000 units of PPE to more than 77 cities,” explained **Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA and Co-Chair of MRCTI.**

Wisconsin is Experiencing the Largest Rise in Cases

Wisconsin local governments are rushing to control the dramatic rise in COVID-19 cases on the eve of a national election. The entire state is in the grips of an unprecedented pandemic surge.

“We have twice as many cases now than we did during our worst period back in August,” said **Tim Kabat, Mayor of La Crosse and MRCTI Wisconsin State Chair**. “The Mayors of MRCTI coordinated to secure 2,000 surgical masks, 1,000 N95 masks, 200 isolation gowns, and thermometers to help our area address contagion and run a safe election.

Minnesota Deals With a Long Gradual Climb Taxing Resources

As COVID-19 cases increase over a long period and city revenues continue to decrease, cities face an uncertain winter. That is why Mississippi River Cities expanded partnerships early and pursued broad coalitions to address needs that supplement each city's own shrinking budget capacity.

“Here in Minnesota, the pandemic has been worsening since the summer. Though central Minnesota is seeing the largest spike in new cases right now, the virus is showing a relatively uniform increase over the last four months,” calibrated **Sean Dowse of Red Wing, MN and MRCTI Minnesota State Chair**. “Along with thousands of units of PPE sent over the last six months to the Twin Cities region, we just deployed 3,000 additional units to the St. Cloud area this week.”

Iowa Nears a New Record in COVID-19 Deaths

“All indicators of community spread are increasing in Iowa and it is even more concerning that the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations continues to hit new highs this week, leading to potential resource constraints. Masks are one of the key mitigation strategies we have as we try to reverse these trends and we are thankful to have received additional units of PPE through MRCTI,” explained **Roy Buol, Mayor of Dubuque, IA**.

The CARES Act Only Scratched the Surface of Need

Funding provided to states and localities through the CARES Act is restricted to direct COVID-related expenses and many times only through a reimbursement model. The needs of cities and states persist with revenues down no less than 10 percent; as much as 60 to 80 percent for some.

“Davenport stands with the other Mississippi River Cities calling on Congress for direct funding to cities. As we know- the execution of policies, services to our communities, and the very important needs for our first responders are in our local municipalities,” emphasized **Mike Matson, Mayor of Davenport, IA**.

Generous Donations from Global Partners have Made the Difference

“We have been collecting contributions from both corporate and individual donors globally through the MRCTI International COVID-19 Coalition. No one has worked harder to save more lives than the Guardians of the Angeles Charitable Foundation and the US Heartland China Association led by former Missouri Governor Bob Holden,” credited **Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA and MRCTI Co-Chair**.

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Mayors available for media inquiries:

- Hon. Bob Gallagher – City of Bettendorf, IA & MRCTI Co-Chair
- Hon. Sean Dowse, Mayor of Red Wing, MN, MRCTI MN Chair
- Hon. Tim Kabat, Mayor of La Crosse, WI, MRCTI WI Chair
- Hon. Roy D. Buol, Mayor of Dubuque, IA
- Colin Wellenkamp, MRCTI Executive Director

Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative ([MRCTI](#)) is a coalition of 100 mayors from across the Mississippi River Corridor which spans along ten states from Minnesota to Louisiana. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 40 percent of the nation's agricultural commodity output moves on the Mississippi River. The River's resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.