Unless otherwise noted, all sessions and events are open to all mayors and officially invited attendees. Meeting services are located within the Radisson Country Inn & Suites, 927 Lake Shore Drive, NE, Bemidji, MN 56601. Check www.mrcti.org frequently for Annual Meeting Agenda updates.

September 12

Registration
10:00am – 6:00pm, Sandford Center, Main Lobby, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE

Shuttle from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to Bemidji
1:00pm – 4:30pm, Travel Coach will meet guests and Mayors at main terminal parking for transport to Annual Meeting host hotel 927 Lake Shore Drive, NE

Opening Ceremony & Welcome Reception

Opening Ceremonies, Sponsored by the Red Lake Nation [Attire: Business Casual]
6:00pm – 6:30pm, Red Lake Nation Wellness & Event Center, 15525 Mendota Avenue, Redby, MN 56670
For the first time, a portion of the Annual Meeting will be hosted by a First Nation. Join Mayors, federal officials, and the leaders of the Red Lake Nation at their new state-of-the-art event center for a truly immersive experience into the culture and heritage of the headwaters region.

Mayors and guests may gather in the Country Inn lobby at 5:20pm to board buses for a 20-minute ride to venue.

Welcome: HON. JORGE PRINCE
Mayor of Bemidji, MN
MRCTI Host City

HON. DARRELL G. SEKI
Chairman, Red Lake Nation
First Nation Host
Opening:
HON. JIM STRICKLAND
Mayor of Memphis, TN
MRCTI Co-Chair

HON. ERRICK SIMMONS
Mayor of Greenville, MS
MRCTI Co-Chair

Procession of States & Nations:
REPRESENTATIVE
Presentation of Colors

FIRST NATIONS
Entering Ceremony

Welcome Reception, Sponsored by the Red Lake Nation
7:00pm – 8:30pm, Red Lake Nation Wellness & Event Center, 15525 Mendota Avenue, Redby, MN 56670
Join Mayor Prince as he and the MRCTI Co-Chairs open the 12th Annual Meeting of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative by recognizing and celebrating the First Nations of our sacred river and this beloved land.

Opening:
HON. JORGE PRINCE
Mayor of Bemidji, MN
MRCTI Host City

HON. DARRELL G. SEKI
Chairman, Red Lake Nation
First Nation Host

HON. FARON JACKSON, SR.
Chairman, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
First Nation Host

HON. MICHAEL FAIRBANKS
Chairman, White Earth Nation
First Nation Host

Greetings:
HON. MELVIN CARTER, invited
Mayor of St. Paul, MN
MRCTI Missouri State Chair

Signing:
MRCTI and First Nations Enter into Commitment
HON. JORGE PRINCE
Mayor of Bemidji, MN

Introduction:

Keynote:
REPRESENTATIVE
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
September 13
Registration
7:30am – 5:00pm, Country Inn & Suites, Main Lobby, 927 Lake Shore Drive, NE

Opening Breakfast Plenary, Sponsored by the White Earth Nation, The Decade of the American City 2025 – 2035 [Attire: Business]
8:00am – 9:00am, Lake View A, Sanford Center, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE
Mayors and guests may proceed directly to the morning venue attached to the host hotel
Presiding: Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA, MRCTI Immediate Past Co-Chair
Tim Baudier, Mayor of Harahan, LA
Opening: HON. JACOB FREY, invited Mayor of Minneapolis
Introduction: HON. GEORGE FLAGGS
Mayor of Vicksburg, MS
MRCTI Mississippi State Chair
Keynote: A New Day for Infrastructure in America, If Cities Can Seize It
HON. JOHN ROBERT SMITH
Chairman
Transportation for America

SESSION I: THE STATE OF RESILIENCE ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, ARE WE GAINING GROUND?
9:15am – 10:30am, Lake View A, Sanford Center, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE
Moderating: Mitch Reynolds, Mayor of La Crosse, WI, MRCTI Wisconsin State Chair
Presentation: True Resilience Incorporates Multiple Solutions
HON. MIKE MATSON
Mayor of Davenport, IA
Discussion: DAVID GOLDWATER
Vice President
Stantec
HON. JAIME PINKHAM
Principal Dept. Asst. Sec. for Civil Works
U.S. Department of Defense
COL. ERIN SWENSON
Commander
St. Paul District, USACE
COL. JESSE CURRY
Commander
Rock Island District, USACE
COL. ANDY PANEER
Commander
St. Louis District, USACE
Announcement: SASKIA PARDAANS
Senior Advisor
Infrastructure & Water
Kingdom of the Netherlands
Introduction:  HON. HOLLIES WINSTON  
Mayor of Brooklyn Park, MN

Proposal:  Developing A Mississippi River Compact  
HON. JOHN HOFFMAN  
Minnesota State Senate  
Chair, Health & Human Services Committee  
ALEXANDRA CAMPBELL-FERRARI  
Executive Director  
Center for Water Sec. & Cooperation

Mayors’ Press Conference  
11:00am – 11:30am, Visit Bemidji Tourist Center, 300 Bemidji Avenue N, Bemidji, MN 56601  
Mayor Prince, Mayor Strickland, and Mayor Simmons will convene a press conference to make several announcements regarding global-level developments led by MRCTI for the Mississippi River Corridor.  
*Mayors and guests may board buses to press conference venue at the Sandford Center. Buses will return to host hotel before continuing to the headwaters for the rest of the day.*  
Presiding:  Jim Strickland, Mayor of Memphis, TN, MRCTI Co-Chair  
Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS, MRCTI Co-Chair

Introduction:  HON. JORGE PRINCE  
Mayor of Bemidji, MN  
MRCTI Host City

Remarks:  RAFAEL PERALTA  
North America Director  
United Nations Environmental Programme
Lunch Plenary: States and Cities Working Together to Leverage Jobs Act/IRA Funding
12:45pm – 1:50pm, Lake Itasca Amphitheater and Outdoor Banquet Area [Attire: Outdoor Casual]
Mayors and guests may board buses to the headwaters at 12:10pm. Buses will not return to the host hotel until the evening after the host city showcase dinner. Formal program at amphitheater will follow lunch.
Presiding: Sharon West Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA

Introduction: HON. MARK KUZMA
Mayor of Ramsey, MN

Presentation: State & Cities Working Together to Leverage Historic Funding Vehicles
HON. SARAH STROMMEN
Director, Department of Natural Resources
State of Minnesota

Introduction: HON. BELINDA CONSTANT
Mayor of Gretna, LA
MRCTI Louisiana State Chair

Presentation: The Importance of Subnational Work on the Global Stage
AMBASSADOR NINA HACHIGIAN
Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy
U.S Department of State, Office of Global Partnerships

Tour of the Mississippi River Headwaters
2:00pm – 3:15pm, Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center, Shevlin, MN 56676
Mayor Prince, leaders of First Nations, and Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources Mayors and guests to experience one of the most powerful and iconic natural marvels of the world – the beginning of the Mississippi
SESSION II: A New Era for Watershed-Scale City Partnerships
3:30pm – 4:45pm, University of Minnesota Lake Itasca Biological Station, Shelvin, MN 56676

Moderating: Mayor Melisa Logan, Mayor of Blytheville, AR
            Mayor Scott Maddaison, Mayor Clinton, IA

Welcome:    JEFF ETTINGER
            President
            University of Minnesota System

Jobs Act, IRA:  ELIZABETH “NENA” SHAW
Guidance:    Director, Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division
              U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

BECCA TRUEMAN
SRF Watershed Coordinator, Mississippi River Basin
Quantified Ventures

Introduction: RAFAEL PERALTA                JENNEY WENDT
             North America Director                Plastic Waste Reduction Campaign Manager
             United Nations Environmental Programme Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative

Presentation: Final Report of First Plastic Pollution Initiative Data Collection Round
              PROFESSOR JENNA JAMBECK, PHD
              New Materials Institute, Circularity Informatics Lab
              College of Engineering, University of Georgia
              Morgan Stanley Plastic Waste Resolution Senior Researcher
Host City Dinner: An Evening at the Top of the River, Sponsored by Sanford Health, Paul Bunyan Communications [Attire: Casual]

5:00pm – 7:00pm, Lake Side Ballroom, Sanford Center, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE
The City of Bemidji, partnering First Nations, and University of Minnesota invite Mayors of the Mississippi River to gather for an incredible host city showcase dinner where guests will sample timeless local dishes.

Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS, MRCTI Co-Chair
Jorge Prince, Mayor of Bemidji, MN, MRCTI Annual Meeting Host City

Welcome: BILL GASSEN
President & CEO
Sanford Health

CHAD BULLOCK
Incoming CEO
Paul Bunyan Communications

Keynote: HON. PEGGY FLANAGAN, invited
Lieutenant Governor
State of Minnesota

Showcase: City of Bemidji Transformative Project

MRCTI 2021-23 Executive Committee Awards
7:00pm – 8:00pm, Lake Side Ballroom, Sanford Center, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE
VISION, LEADERSHIP, RESULTS are the hallmarks of MRCTI member mayors. Join us in recognizing our best.

2024 Annual Mtg Preview: HON. SHARON WESTON BROOME
Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA
Immediate Past MRCTI Co-Chair

Recognition of 2021-23 Exec Comm: HON. JIM STRICKLAND
Mayor of Memphis, TN
MRCTI Co-Chair

HON. ERRICK SIMMONS
Mayor of Greenville, MS
MRCTI Co-Chair

COLIN WELLENKAMP
Executive Director
MRCTI
September 14
Registration
7:30am – 10:30am, Country Inn & Suites, Main Lobby, 927 Lake Shore Drive, NE

Corporate Advisory Board Breakfast, Sponsored by Stantec, Otter Tail Power Company
8:00am – 10:00am, Concordia Language Village, Korean Activity Building, Sup sogüi Hosu, 11380 Turtle River Lake Rd NE [Attire: Business]
Buses will begin loading at Country Inn & Suites at 7:30am to transport mayors and guests to breakfast venue.
Presiding: Belinda Constant, Mayor of Gretna, LA
            Hollies J. Winston, Mayor of Brooklyn Park, MN
Welcome: MARY MAUS KOSIR
         Executive Director
         Concordia Language Village
Greetings: DAVID GOLDWATER
         Vice President
         Stantec Corporation
         TIMOTHY J. ROGELSTAD
         President
         Otter Tail Power Company
Presentation: Corn Belt Ports – Federal and State Designation Achieved: How Can Cities Benefit
ROBERT SINKLER
Founder & CEO
Riverside Global
HON. MIKE HALPIN
State Senator (IL)
72nd Senate District of Illinois
Announcement: Chair, Vice Chair, and New Members of MRCTI Corporate Advisory Board
Transition: MARK BINSFELD
           Vice President
           J.F. Brennan Company Inc.
           MRCTI CAB Chair
           REPRESENTATIVE
           Principal
           Elkay
           Incoming MRCTI CAB Chair
Remarks: TIM HIGHTOWER
         President & CEO
         Deconstruction Partners

Break, 10:00am – 10:15am
MRCTI Business Meeting
10:15am – 12:00pm, 8:00am – 10:00am, Concordia Language Village, Korean Activity Building, Sup sogŭi Hosu, 11380 Turtle River Lake Rd NE [Attire: Business Casual]
Mayors will meet in an open-door session to discuss new business brought before the Association. Mayors interested in hosting an annual meeting may also officially list their city as a candidate for the 2026 meeting.

Presiding: Jim Strickland, Mayor of Memphis, TN, MRCTI Co-Chair
          Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS, MRCTI Co-Chair

Remarks: PROFESSOR BRENDA CHILD
          Northrop Professor of American Studies
          University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts

Elections: MRCTI Co-Chairs
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Remarks: NEWLY ELECTED MRCTI CO-CHAIRS

Nominations: MRCTI 2026 ANNUAL MEETING HOST CITY CANDIDATES
Nominations will be accepted for a lower stem city to host the 2026 Annual Meeting. The Executive Committee will vote the winning candidate city in February 2024.

Meeting Adjournment
12:00pm

Shuttle to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport
12:15pm, Concordia Language Village, Korean Activity Building, Sup sogŭi Hosu, 11380 Turtle River Lake Rd NE
Excursion: Private Boat Tour of Lake Bemidji, Destination Ruttger’s Historic Resort [Attire: Outdoor Casual; RSVP to tlumas@mrcti.org]
2:00pm – 7:00pm, Ruttger’s Bay Lake Resort, 7598 Bemidji Road, NE, Bemidji, MN 56601

Imagine this spot and this view being your ‘finish-line’ to an already tremendous experience. Join Mayor Prince as your exclusive guide on-board a private chartered vessel across Lake Bemidji to one of the best kept secrets in the Mississippi River Corridor – Ruttger’s historic resort. You will be treated to pre-dinner drinks and snacks before enjoying dinner all while taking-in sweeping vistas like the one above. Mayors and their plus-one only, please. RSVP to Tiara Lumas, MRCTI Operations Manager at tlumas@mrcti.org.

Mayors and their guest will meet in the Country Inn Lobby at 2:00pm to proceed to chartered vessel.