The 12th Annual Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Organizational Meeting

MISSISSIPPI RIVER CITIES & TOWNS INITIATIVE ANNUAL MEETING
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA, SEPT. 12-14

Agenda

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, Sanford 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. Please RSVP your seat via the Annual Meeting reservation link at www.mrcti.com

Opening Ceremony & Welcome Reception

Opening Ceremonies, Sponsored by the Red Lake Nation [Attire: 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. This is a no-alcohol event.

*Mayors and guests may gather in the Country Inn lobby at 5:20pm to board buses for a 30-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
Ceremonies:

- Grand Entry: Procession of States & Nations
  - FIRST NATIONS: Entrance of Princesses and Braves
  - FIRST NATIONS: Presenting of Staffs & Flags

- BEMIDJI VFW POST 1260
  - FIRST NATIONS: American Legion, Ralph Gracie Post #14

- Presenting of State Colors
  - FIRST NATIONS: Veterans, Exhibition Songs

Singing of National Anthems:

- BLAKE STAINES
  - Department of Music
  - Anthems of the First Nations

- Bemidji State University

Welcome Reception and Dinner, 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 LAROQUE
  - Secretary Treasurer, White Earth Nation
  - First Nation Host

Signing:

- MRCTI and First Nations Enter into Commitment for the Mississippi River

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

- HON. JIM STRICKLAND
  - Mayor of Memphis, TN
  - MRCTI Co-Chair

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

- HON. DARRELL G. SEKI
  - Chairman
  - Red Lake Nation

- HON. FARON JACKSON
  - Chairman
  - Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

- HON. MICHAEL LAROQUE
  - Secretary-Treasurer
  - White Earth Nation

Introduction:

- MIGDALIA LOYOLA MELENDEZ
  - Deputy Chief of Staff, Public Engagement
  - Office of Governor Tim Walz (MN)

- BRADLEY HARRINGTON
  - Director of Tribal Relations
  - MN Department of Natural Resources

Remarks:

- HON. LYNN TRUJILLO
  - Senior Counselor to Secretary Haaland
  - United States Department of the Interior

MRCTI Late Night, Sponsored by Evolve Creative

9:00pm – 11:00pm, The Tavern on South Shore, 929 Lake Shore Drive, NE, Bemidji, MN 56601
Join MRCTI Co-Chairs and Bemidji hosts for extra celebration of this historic moment for the Mississippi River Corridor, its people, and its future.
September 13

Registration
7:30am – 5:00pm, Sanford Center, Main Lobby, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE

Opening Breakfast Plenary: The Decade of the American City 2025 – 2035, Sponsored by the White Earth Nation [Attire: Outdoor Casual]
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
           Phil Stang, Mayor of Kimmswick, MO, MRCTI Missouri State Chair

Welcome:    HON. MICHAEL LA ROQUE
           Secretary-Treasurer
           White Earth Nation

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
             Jerry Koch, Mayor of Coon Rapids, MN

Presentation: True Resilience Incorporates Multiple Solutions
              DAVID GOLDWATER
              Vice President, Stantec

Discussion:  HON. JAIME PINKHAM
             Principal Dept. Asst. Sec. for Civil Works
             U.S. Department of Defense

             COL. ERIC SWENSON     ANDREW GOODALL, P.E., PMP
             Commander             NESP Regional Prog. Mgr.
             St. Paul District, USACE  Rock Island District, USACE

Proposal:    Developing A Mississippi River Compact
              HON. JOHN HOFFMAN     ALEXANDRA CAMPBELL-FERRARI
              Minnesota State Senate  Executive Director
              Chair, Health & Human Services Com  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 corridor-level developments led by MRCTI.

*Mayors and guests may board buses to press conference venue at the Sanford Center. Buses will then continue to the headwaters directly from the press conference 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 Environment Programme

PROFESSOR JENNA JAMBECK, PHD
College of Engineering
University of Georgia

**Announcement of Partnership:** MARK ARMEN
Founder and CEO
Replenysh: Enterprise Circularity Platform

**Announcement of Agreement:** HON. DARRELL G. SEKI
Chairman
Red Lake Nation

HON. FARON JACKSON
Chairman
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

HON. MICHAEL LAROQUE
Secretary-Treasurer
White Earth Nation

**Persistent Drought:** HON. MITCH REYNOLDS
Mayor of La Crosse, WI
Lunch Plenary: States and Cities Working Together to Leverage Jobs Act/IRA Funding, Spon-
sored by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
12:45pm – 1:50pm, Lake Itasca Amphitheater and Outdoor Banquet Area [Attire: Outdoor Casual]
Mayors and guests will board buses from the press conference to Lake Itasca State Park. Buses will not return
to the host hotel until later afternoon. Formal program at amphitheater will follow lunch.
Presiding: Sharon West Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA

Welcome: HON. FARON JACKSON, Sr.
Chairman, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Introduction: HON. MARK KUZMA
Mayor of Ramsey, MN

Presentation: State & Cities Working Together to Leverage Historic Funding
HON. SARAH STROMMEN
Commissioner, 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 invite 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 Brad Bark, Mayor of Muscatine, IA

Welcome: JONATHAN SCHILLING
Director, Lake Itacca Biological Station and Laboratories
University of Minnesota

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

Announcement: New SRF Technical Assistance Partnership with Quantified Ventures
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

Announcement: Equipping Cities with Tools They Need for Waste Management Infrastructure
MARK ARMEN
Founder & CEO
Replenysh: Enterprise Circularity Platform
Host City Dinner: An Evening at the Top of the River, Sponsored by Sanford Health, Paul Bunyan Communications [Attire: Casual, Business Casual Optional]

6:30pm – 8:00pm, Lake Side Ballroom, Sanford Center, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE
The City of Bemidji, partnering First Nations, and the State of Minnesota invite Mayors of the Mississippi River to gather for an incredible host city showcase dinner where guests will learn of a vital local project.

Presiding: Jim Strickland, Mayor of Memphis, TN, MRCTI Co-Chair
           Jorge Prince, Mayor of Bemidji, MN, MRCTI Annual Meeting Host City

Welcome: GARY JOHNSON
           Incoming CEO
           Paul Bunyan Communications

          TIM TERRILL
           Executive Director
           Mississippi Headwaters Board

Announcement: SASKIA PARDAANS
          Senior Advisor
          Infrastructure & Water
          Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Showcase: City of Bemidji Transformative Project
          SAM ANDERSON, PE
          City Engineer, Director of Public Works
          City of Bemidji

MRCTI 2021-23 Executive Committee Awards
8:00pm – 9:00pm, 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

Special Recognition: HON. SARAH STROMMEN
           Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
           State of Minnesota

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

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

           COLIN WELLENKAMP
           Executive Director
           MRCTI
September 14

Registration
7:30am – 10:30am, Sanford Center, Main Lobby, 1111 Event Center Drive, NE

Corporate Advisory Board Breakfast, Sponsored by Stantec, Otter Tail Power Company
8:00am – 10:00am, Concordia Language Village, Korean Activity Building, Sup sogūi Hosu, 11380 Turtle River Lake Rd NE [Attire: Casual, Business Casual Optional]

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
Scott Sherman, Mayor of Winona, 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
Hon. Mike Thoms
Mayor Rock Island, IL

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)
36th 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.
Nora Corley
Elkay
Incoming MRCTI CAB Chair

Remarks: Tim Hightower
President & CEO
Deconstruction Development Partners

Break, 10:00am – 10:15am
MRCTI Business Meeting
10:15am – 12:00pm, Concordia Language Village, Korean Activity Building, Sup sogŭi Hosu, 11380 Turtle River Lake Rd NE [Attire: Casual, Business Casual Optional]
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
Cliff Berry, Mayor of Tiptonville, TN, MRCTI Secretary

Remarks: Professor Brenda Child
Northrop Professor of American Studies
University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts

Revised Bylaws: Adoption of Bylaw Changes Proposed by Executive Committee

Motion: Enactment of Formal Effort to Pursue Mississippi River Compact
MRCTI membership will entertain a motion to formalize an effort to pursue a Mississippi River Compact for the ten-state corridor that will protect the freshwater resources of the Main Stem and sustain the environmental services provided by such resources.

Introduction: Large-Scale, Multi-City River Cruise Terminal Facility Buildout
MRCTI Mayors will engage in a discussion to use Jobs Act funds available from the Delta Regional Authority and U.S. DOT to plan and implement new cruise terminal and multi-use facilities for our more economically distressed communities.

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

Concordia Bus Tour
12:15pm – 12:40pm, Concordia Language Village Campus
Mayors and guests remaining in Bemidji, for the afternoon as well as those going on the excursion can enjoy a brief bus tour of the Concordia Village campus on their way back to the host hotel. This tour does not require any stops or exits from the bus.

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, Sponsored by First National Bank of Bemidji, Bemidji Chamber of Commerce [Attire: Outdoor Casual; RSVP to tlumas@mrcti.org]

2:30pm – 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.