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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MUSCATINE MAYOR NAMED TO LEADERSHIP BOARD

Bark to be Iowa State Chair for Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

ST. LOUIS – Muscatine Mayor Brad Bark was named to the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative ([MRCTI](#)) executive committee during the 12th Annual MRCTI Meeting held at the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Bemidji, Minnesota, where the mighty Mississippi River begins. He will serve as the Iowa State Chair.

"The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative has a clear mission and set of goals to guide their efforts," Bark said. "The primary mission of MRCTI is to foster a cooperative partnership among cities and towns along the entire length of the Mississippi River. This collaboration is aimed at addressing common challenges, promoting





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sustainable development, and improving the overall well-being of the river and its communities."

Mayors from along the Mississippi River selected new leaders this month as part of the annual meeting. MRCTI's governing structure calls for two co-chairs and an executive committee member from each state along the main stem all representing over 104 cities along America's most vital waterway.

The newly elected executive committee members are:

- Hon. Mitch Reynolds, La Crosse, Wisconsin - MRCTI Co-Chair
- Hon. George Flaggs, Vicksburg, Mississippi - MRCTI Co-Chair
- Hon. Jerry Koch, Coon Rapids, Minnesota State Chair
- Hon. Brad Bark, Muscatine, Iowa State Chair
- Hon. David Goins, Alton, Illinois State Chair
- Hon. Phil Stang, Kimmswick, Missouri State Chair
- Hon. Cliff Berry, Tiptonville, Tennessee State Chair
- Hon. Melisa Logan, Blytheville, Arkansas State Chair
- Hon. Errick Simmons, Greenville, Mississippi State Chair
- Hon. Belinda Constant, Gretna, Louisiana State Chair & Corp. Advisory Bd. Presiding Mayor
- Hon. Buz Craft, Vidalia, Louisiana - City/State Task Force Chair

The goals of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative include:

1. Environmental Stewardship: MRCTI aims to protect and enhance the environmental health of the Mississippi River and its watershed. This involves working towards cleaner water, reducing pollution, and preserving the river's natural habitats.
2. Economic Development: MRCTI seeks to promote economic growth and vitality in the cities and towns along the Mississippi River. This includes attracting investments,



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supporting local businesses, and creating job opportunities to improve the quality of life for residents.

3. Infrastructure and Transportation: MRCTI focuses on improving the infrastructure and transportation systems along the river to facilitate commerce, enhance connectivity, and ensure the efficient movement of goods and people.
4. Sustainable Tourism: MRCTI recognizes the importance of promoting tourism along the Mississippi River. By showcasing the region's unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities, they aim to attract visitors, boost local economies, and create a sustainable tourism industry.
5. Resilience and Adaptation: MRCTI aims to enhance the resilience of riverfront communities against the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, and other challenges. They work towards implementing strategies that improve preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

By pursuing these missions and goals, the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative strives to create a collective voice for the cities and towns along the Mississippi River, driving positive change, and ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the region and its residents.

MRCTI 2023 Annual Meeting Recap

The 2023 conference brought together dozens of mayors from each of the ten states along the river as well as global stakeholders to address key issues facing the Mississippi River and the communities along its banks.

- The mayors unanimously adopted a resolution to facilitate the pursuit of a Mississippi River Compact, modeled alongside other multi-state waterway compacts focused on the protection and livelihood of the Mississippi River;
- MRCTI, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the University of Georgia released a [plastic pollution report](#) detailing the culmination of a citizen science



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report along the entire Mississippi River that provides an accurate detail of the plastic pollution intensity along the Corridor and offers a brand audit to encourage plastic reduction commitments;

- In tandem with the release of the report, mayors announced a new and innovative partnership to equip MRCTI cities with the tools and capacity to implement plastic circularity components such as broader recycling with Replenish. The first of its kind, Replenish's technology and network enable brands to recover and reuse their recyclable materials with full traceability, making it easy to act, accelerate engagement through trust, and achieve rapid impact;
- Among the first of its kind in the nation, MRCTI completed an historic agreement between the Indigenous Nations of the headwater's region and MRCTI in the form of a Memorandum of Common Purpose to address the drought impacts currently gripping the Corridor.

About the Mississippi Rivers Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI)

MRCTI is a coalition of 104 mayors from across the Mississippi River Basin, which spans nearly a third of the country. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 60 billion gallons of fresh water is withdrawn from the river daily. The river's resources support 1.5 million jobs and generate nearly \$500 billion in annual revenue.

<https://www.mrcti.org/>

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