

State Priorities in the Meramec Region

An Issues Report

For the Region's Legislative Delegation

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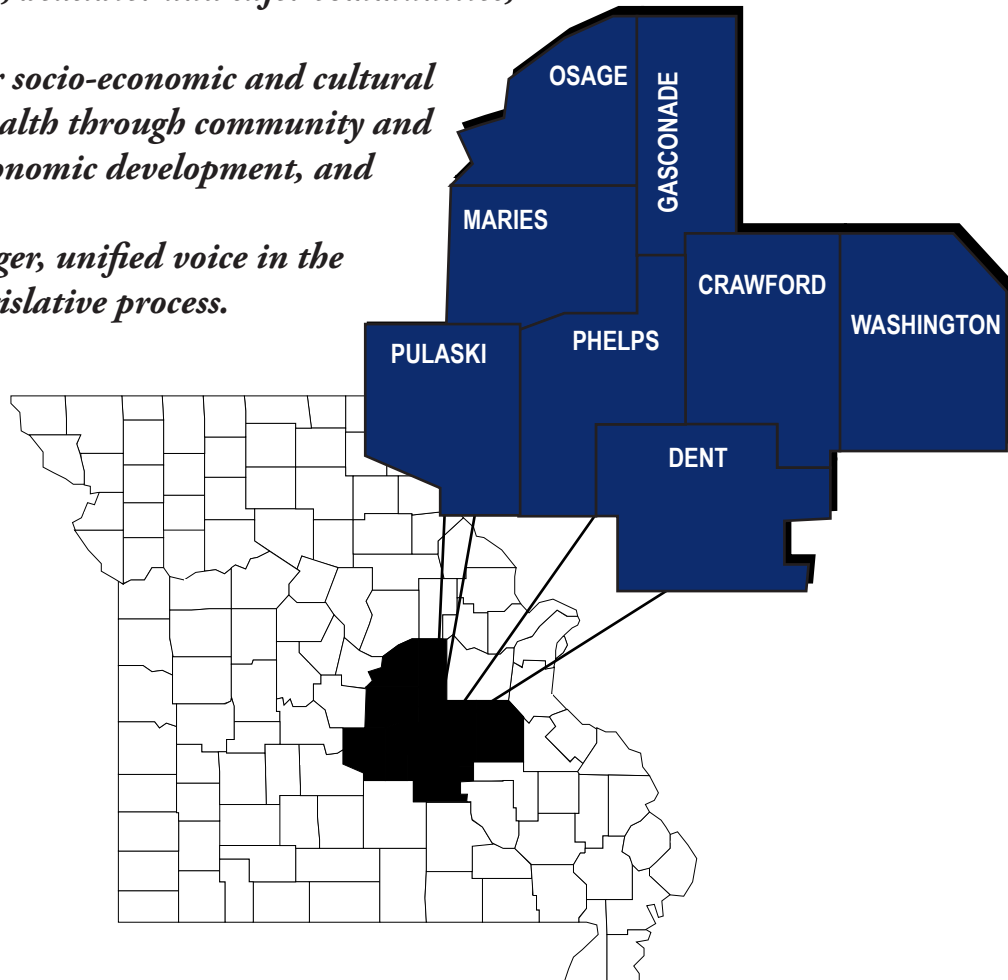
2019



The Meramec Regional Planning Commission's Mission

The mission of MRPC is to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Meramec Region. In pursuit of this mission, MRPC will bring about results in these areas:

- *Cleaner, healthier and safer communities,*
- *Greater socio-economic and cultural wealth through community and economic development, and*
- *A stronger, unified voice in the legislative process.*



The Meramec Regional Planning Commission is a voluntary council of local governments serving the Meramec area. The MRPC area includes the eight counties of Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington and their respective cities. Those cities are Bourbon, Cuba, Leasburg, Steelville, Sullivan, West Sullivan, Salem, Bland, Gasconade, Hermann, Morrison, Owensville, Rosebud, Belle, Vienna, Argyle, Chamois, Freeburg, Linn, Meta, Westphalia, Doolittle, Edgar Springs, Newburg, Rolla, St. James, Crocker, Dixon, Richland, St. Robert, Waynesville, Caledonia, Irondale, Mineral Point and Potosi.

2019 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN THE MERAMEC REGION

As the 2019 legislative session begins, the board of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission would like to share with you concerns that are of interest to our organization as a whole and to our individual cities and counties. Each item is listed below with a brief explanation, in order of priority, as ranked by the MRPC board.

MRPC'S TOP STATE PRIORITIES

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION:

1. Fully support MoDOT and MRPC planning process and the transportation priorities put forth each year.
2. Assist in finding additional funding for Highways 63 and 50.
3. Support a state appropriation to cities and counties to address local transportation issues including updating existing bridges, low water crossings and chip and seal roads to insure access for emergency vehicles, school transportation and access to emergency services.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

1. Appropriate state dollars to help implement the state broadband plan which would increase access to high speed internet in rural communities. Ideally this would lead to the availability of 100 GB service.
2. Provide state incentives for downtown revitalization in rural areas.
3. Fully support Fort Leonard Wood and recognize that it is an economic development engine for Missouri.
4. Revise state tax laws to allow Missouri to adhere to the South Dakota vs. Wayfair Supreme Court decision and collect state and local sales taxes on all internet sales using a streamlined uniform approach that does not place too great a burden on small businesses.

HEALTH CARE/SOCIAL SERVICE:

1. Establish a statewide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Missouri is the only state in the nation without a PDMP.
2. Provide funding for more mental health programs to insure access to those programs.
3. Provide low cost quality health care to rural underserved populations. Provide services through rural clinics, provide for programs that allow rural hospitals and clinics to operate. Too many rural clinics and hospitals have failed due to state and federal government policies.
4. Support Medicaid expansion across the state in order to decrease the number of uninsured and underinsured individuals accessing healthcare at Missouri hospitals.

ENVIRONMENTAL:

1. Maintain the tipping fee and formula that funds solid waste management districts as these local grant programs provide much needed support for recycling and waste reduction programs.
2. Support programs that provide incentives for market development and strive to establish more markets for recyclables in Missouri in order to create jobs and support local resource recovery programs.
3. Support expanded use of nuclear energy for electrical generation.

EDUCATION:

1. Continue expansion of technical education, certificate programs and two-year colleges and degrees.
2. Continue to fully fund the Foundation Formula for public education.
3. Ensure the state board of education is neutral politically and focuses on policies that will build and train an exceptional workforce for the industries of the future. Recognizing that traditional industries and jobs have to evolve with the new fields.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CITY/COUNTY):

1. Cap prosecuting attorneys' salary at 80 percent of Associate Judges' salary and require they fund their retirement fund the same as judges and other county elected office holders.
2. Increase reimbursement to counties for costs of housing inmates held on state charges.
3. Allow counties to amend their own budgets as they have a need and see fit.
4. Repeal prevailing wage statutes and consider using the Maryland Compromise as a model - prevailing wage does not apply to projects under \$500,000, unless 50 percent or more is state funded.

General:

1. Eliminate dark money contributions and insure full disclosure of all contributions.
2. Ensure that the Department of Revenue meets compliance standards and deadlines so that Missouri will achieve the Real ID requirements by the deadline of October 1, 2020, when the Federal government will begin fully enforcing the Real ID Act.
3. Repeal or lengthen term limits.
4. Work toward providing competitive salaries for state employees so that Missouri does not have the distinction of having the lowest paid public employees in the nation.

Highlights of 2018 Accomplishments

• **MRPC's Impact**

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission had a strong year in 2017-18. Each administrative dollar MRPC spent in Fiscal Year 2017-18 brought \$4.26 into the region for the benefit of its communities and residents. MRPC's 2017-18 expenditures were \$1.67 million, while the agency generated \$7.13 million in pass-through dollars. Pass-through dollars are those funds that go through MRPC directly into the region as grants to cities and counties, loans to businesses and housing assistance to landlords and tenants. The impact doesn't end there. Using a conservative multiplier of 2.5, MRPC had an economic impact valued at \$21.98 million in the Meramec Region.

• **Transportation**

The partnership between Missouri regional planning commissions and the Missouri Department of Transportation continues to grow. Federal transportation legislation calls for increased local input into the state's planning programs and specifically mentions the regional development organizations as one of the means to involve local officials. The Framework for Transportation Planning and decision-making continues to be an important tool for increasing local input into transportation planning. This planning framework outlines the process for decision making and how local input, facilitated by regional planning organizations, affects transportation priorities.

MRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee held six meetings in 2017-18. The group continued to stress the importance of the region's top two transportation priorities—Highways 63 and 50 and provided input to MoDOT for the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The TAC also continued to make traffic counters available to perform traffic studies. MRPC staff prepared and distributed press releases and made social media posts related to transportation issues. Through MoDOT, MRPC staff also worked with the Coalition for Roadway Safety to reduce the number of fatalities in the region through awareness efforts. Staff continued working with two communities on funding for transportation-related projects. Between the two, \$889,723 was granted to complete the projects.

• **Community and Economic Development**

MRPC is a designated Economic Development District (EDD), and through its planning grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, continues to work with its counties and cities to improve the infrastructure and economy of the region. With EDA planning funds, staff prepared funding applications for community and economic development projects. During FY 2017-18, \$3,616,285.55 in federal and state grant monies flowed through the planning and development department for community and economic development projects. In FY 2017-18, staff assisted member communities with the following funding opportunities:

- Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program for Greenway Village, Inc. to renovate 12 senior apartments
- Missouri Department of Economic Development's (MoDED's) Community Development Block

- Grant (CDBG) for city of St. Robert to connect the city and Fort Leonard Wood's water system
- Health Resources and Services Administration's Rural Health Opioid Program for MRPC to form a consortium of health and social service providers to improve prevention, treatment and recovery from opioid addiction
 - Department of Public Safety's LLEBG for Doolittle Police Department to purchase of three mobile laptop units for patrol vehicles
 - Department of Public Safety's LLEBG for Edgar Springs Police Department to purchase of a used police cruiser to replace the current vehicle
 - Department of Public Safety's LLEBG For Steelville Police Department to purchase equipment for officers and patrol cars to improve officer safety
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Flood Mitigation Assistance for the city of Hermann to acquire and demolish the Hermann Area District Hospital Clinic that is a repetitive loss property
 - Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Local Foods, Local Places program for Rolla Downtown Farmer's Market to host a two-day technical assistance workshop to help promote the downtown and farmer's market to all parts of the community
 - Missouri Department of Public Safety's 2018-19 STOP Violence Against Women Act Program for the Phelps County Prosecutors Office to hire an assistant prosecutor and victim advocate for domestic violence and sexual assault crimes
 - Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) Public Works and Economic Development program for the city of Potosi to build a new natural gas main from Desloge to Potosi border station which will increase capacity on the system allowing for new and expanding businesses
 - Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority's Missouri Value-Added Grant for the Naturally Meramec Consortium to conduct a food hub feasibility study for local producers
 - MFA Oil Foundation for the Caledonia Community Foundation to add playground and picnic equipment to Village Park
 - FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant for the city of Newburg to replace an old non-functioning siren with a new emergency warning siren
 - Coover Charitable Foundation's Regional Grantmaking Program for the Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation to continue collective marketing efforts of Show-Me Local: Naturally Meramec
 - FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant for Doolittle Rural Fire Protection District to install a new storm siren at Jerome fire station to serve the unincorporated community
 - Coover Charitable Foundation's Regional Grantmaking Program for the St. James Caring Center to purchase a new commercial walk-in freezer to serve the food pantry and senior center
 - Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Land and Water Conservation Fund for the city of Rolla to improve Buehler Park with restrooms, new playground, ADA walkway and pavilion upgrades
 - MoDED's CDBG Emergency program for the city of Pacific to acquire and demolish properties in the floodplain
 - MoDED's CDBG Emergency program for the city of Pacific to repair waste water treatment plant damaged by the flood
 - Community Foundation of the Ozarks' Rural Ozarks Health Initiative for Meramec Regional Com-

munity Foundation to allow MRCF to convene a substance abuse workshop of area health and social services, and make community grants

- MoDED's CDBG Demolition program for the city of Belle to demolish seven vacant and dilapidated residential structures
- MoDED's CDBG Demolition program for the city of Crocker to demolish 22 structures around town to eliminate blight
- USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant for MRPC to continue development of Naturally Meramec and marketing events
- MoDED's Neighborhood Assistance Program for the Life Church of Potosi to acquire blighted lots and demolish structures for development of transitional housing and emergency shelter
- MoDED's Neighborhood Assistance Program for the St. James Senior Center to implement the new senior center with three years of operation budget
- Missouri Division of Tourism's FY19 Marketing Match Grant for the Cuba Tourism Commission to promote tourism in the county in print and on TV
- USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant for the city of St. James to hire a consultant for the St. James Commercial Corridor Improvement Plan
- USDA's FMPP Grant for MRPC to support new, regionally-focused, innovative, non-duplicated marketing efforts that will assist producers in further expanding the market base and creating food promotion jobs
- Delta Regional Authority's (DRA's) SEDAP 2018 for Crawford County to replace Brickey Bridge over Huzzah Creek
- Missouri Department of Natural Resource's Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Grant for MRPC to complete a feasibility study for shared operational responsibility between two or more small waste water systems
- Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program for Whispering Oaks Estates to renovate 26-unit apartment complex
- Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program for MRPC to repair owner-occupied housing
- Ameren Corporation's Ameren Charitable Giving Program for the Caledonia Community Foundation to make improvements to the Village Park in Caledonia
- EDA's FY18 Disaster Supplemental for the city of Potosi for a new natural gas main from Desloge to Potosi
- DRA's SEDAP 2018 for Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation to address workforce issue with development of a program focused on ex-offenders in county jails and legal systems
- DRA's SEDAP 2018 for Duke Rural Fire Department to construct a new building next to its current fire station to house larger vehicles and equipment
- DRA's Community Infrastructure Fund 2018 for the city of Potosi for a new natural gas main from Desloge to Potosi
- MACOG's Disaster Recovery Planning Program for MRPC to conduct a flood detour study in Hermann to determine detour options, necessary upgrades, signage and implementation
- DRA's SEDAP 2018 for Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation to assist with business development and entrepreneurship training for market expansion of the Naturally Meramec Consortium

- DRA's SEDAP 2018 for the city of St. James to upgrade public infrastructure around Prock Operations to facilitate the company's expansion bringing a new product line to its facility

Staff continued to disseminate funding information to member communities through grant alerts, workshops and seminars. Additionally, staff continued to improve methods of resource research by placing more emphasis on searches via the Internet and expanded their knowledge on new funding opportunities, as well as hiring an additional grant writer to address the increasing demand for those services. MRPC, continued efforts to assist communities in meeting the need for affordable housing for low-to-moderate income families. Staff completed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is an important document for those requesting grant funds as a requirement for many grants is that the project be identified through an economic development plan.

• Business Loan Programs

MRPC assists in developing the region's local economies by partnering to promote and assist the growth and development of businesses through innovative financing. Working in partnership with the Meramec Regional Development Corp., MRPC continues to manage a U.S. Small Business Administration Certified Development Company providing SBA 504 loan programs. Additionally, MRPC operates the region's revolving loan fund (RLF), which was created with an EDA grant and local matching funds. This fund was recapitalized in 2010 with \$375,000 of additional funding. In 2006-07, USDA provided a \$500,000 loan to MRPC to establish a new intermediary re-lending program, which was loaned out in 18 months. MRPC applied for, and received, an additional \$175,000 in IRP funding in 2010. MRPC was also awarded \$125,000 from the Missouri Department of Economic Development Microenterprise Grant fund.

These loan programs are important to rural Missouri as they provide much needed gap financing. Many rural banks are unwilling to make higher-risk commercial loans, however, the subordinated financing available through the SBA 504, the IRP and RLF reduce the banks' exposure. All loans are made in partnership with local private financial institutions. Eligibility for financing in these programs is dependent on creating and/or retaining jobs in the region, as well as financial stability and use of proceeds. The Meramec Region has used the SBA 504 program since 1991, the RLF since 1985 and the IRP since 2006, to assist in financing business start-ups and expansions.

Since 1991, SBA 504 loans have created or retained 1,287 jobs in the Meramec Region for an average investment of \$20,828 per job. SBA's requirement is one job for every \$75,000 invested. Using the RLF program, which was established in 1985, the local development board has created or retained 1,088 jobs at a cost of \$4,010 per job. EDA's requirement is one job for every \$20,000 invested. The initial \$400,000 grant, plus 25 percent matching funds provided by member communities, has fully revolved. Some 73 loans worth \$4,362,749 have been made through the RLF over the life of the program. Under the IRP program, which was established in 2006, staff has made 17 loans and created or retained nearly 177 jobs, an average cost of \$6,810 per job. The total amount loaned through the IRP is \$1,205,384.

• Homeownership and Housing Renovation

One of the major barriers to economic development in Missouri is the availability of affordable housing, and Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation and MRPC have an established history

of working together to provide homeownership opportunities to the region's low-income families.

Because MRPC employs a housing inspector with lead, mold and asbestos certification, MRPC also offers inspection services as well as code enforcement services for a fee to local governments and the private sector.

• **Solid Waste Management**

Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District (ORSWMD) is a seven-county area that includes Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington counties. ORSWMD contracts with MRPC to provide solid waste management programs across the Ozark Rivers region and manage day-to-day district operations.

Originally seven landfills served this area. These have all closed, and the region now has three transfer stations and two landfills. Solid waste management is now more crucial than ever for rural areas. The state of Missouri has targeted a 40 percent reduction of waste being landfilled, and the district has played a role in that effort. Efforts have been achieved through emphasis on education, expanding recycling opportunities, providing technical assistance and providing grant monies for local needs.

Since 2007, Ozark Rivers has awarded 148 grants totaling \$2.68 million to support local and regional projects. These grants have targeted businesses, local governments, schools and non-profits. The 2019 grant cycle provided funding for: textile recycling coordinator and community education to increase awareness of textile recycling, implementation of a new hospital-based recycling and waste reduction program, staff salary and equipment maintenance for a community based recycling center, recycling bins and educational materials for a city based recycling program and a new initiative for a tool lending and reuse of salvaged construction materials programming. The Meramec Regional Planning Commission's grants provide for collection of illegally dumped tires along county roads, a district survey of illegal dump sites and prioritization of potential clean-up projects, HHW collection sites in the cities of Rolla and St. Robert, special waste collections (appliances, electronics, tires), illegal dump cleanup program, educational programs for schools and community outreach and assistance. Each of these projects is consistent with the district's plan and goals.

Recycling and disposal services for household hazardous waste (HHW) have been extremely effective. For years, the district provided one-day paint and one-day full-scale household hazardous waste (HHW) collections, and in 2008, the district established two satellite collection facilities that accept HHW throughout the year. Between 2009 and 2017, HHW collections totaled 58.9 tons at the two sites. Annual collections averaged 6.5 tons. The district also provides presentations on HHW.

Through the ORSWMD's grant program, MRPC has organized 52 special waste collections since April 2003. These subsidized collections have recycled 461.39 tons of residential electronics, appliances and tires. It is of vital importance for every county to host a special collection to help reduce the cost of illegal dump clean-ups. Since the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Scrap Tire program was eliminated in April of 2016, an MRPC grant project has financially assisted counties in the Ozark Rivers district, at a cost of \$16,159, with transporting and recycling 90 tons of illegally dumped tires collected by county road crews.

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Several years ago, a region-wide survey was completed for illegal dumps in the region. As a follow-up to that survey, MRPC secured funds from USDA Rural Development to implement a dump cleanup program. This project takes a watershed approach by educating the public on how illegal dumping can endanger water resources. Since 2004, more than 143 dump sites have been cleaned up. In doing so, an estimated 915 tons of trash has been removed and properly disposed; and 19,406 tires have been collected for recycling. The district has recruited 1,650 volunteers to assist with these cleanups. The district also assists member counties with the disposal of illegally dumped tires picked up by county road crews. Between 1996 and 2017, more than 723 tons – or the equivalent of 72,306 passenger tires – were picked up along county roads in the district and recycled. Through the efforts of many people and implementation of these vital programs, the ORSWMD continues to provide valuable services that improve the quality of life for area residents.

• **Hazardous Materials Planning**

MRPC provides staffing and administrative services for the Meramec Regional Emergency Planning Committee (MREPC), which is responsible for maintaining and updating the region's (excluding Pulaski County) hazardous materials response plan and Community Right-to-Know records. The MREPC also applies for training grants and coordinates educational opportunities for emergency responders and local elected officials in the region. In addition to applying for local emergency responder trainings, MREPC, with the help of MRPC, also completed commodity flow studies for Highways 72, 63, 19, 21, 50 and I-44 transportation corridors, as well as three railroads and all of the pipelines in the region. MRPC's currently doing flow studies on highways 100, 47, 32, 42 and 8 in 2019.

• **Homeland Security Program**

In 2006, MRPC entered into a contract with the State Emergency Management Agency to provide planning and administrative support to the Region I Homeland Security Oversight Committee (HSOC). This local committee of volunteers is tasked with determining needs and recommending homeland security grant fund awards in the six-county region, which includes Crawford, Dent, Maries, Phelps, Pulaski and Laclede counties, and serving as a conduit between local emergency responders, local governments, schools and the state-level Homeland Security Advisory Committee. The state program is now operated through the Department of Public Safety-Office of Homeland Security.

When the relationship between MRPC and HSOC began in FY2005, the first grant awarded to the project was \$506,593. Since then, grant funds consistently decreased to as low as \$49,354 in FY2012, before it increased to \$106,494 in FY2014, but decreased again in FY2015 and FY2016 when it awarded MRPC with a \$90,497.47 grant each year. For the last two years, the grant program has seen a slight increase with \$91,943.11 in FY2017 and \$93,959.39 in FY2018. As fiscal agent and regional administrator, MRPC has fiscal responsibility for all grant funds and is responsible for all procurement and payment of vendors and coordinating quarterly and special meetings of the local HSOC.

From that grant program, MRPC was awarded funds to continue to develop a regional interoperability communications plan; establish advisory committees, volunteers and shelters; assist in establishing a network of shelters in the region and train and establish CERT teams in each of the six counties.

In 2017-18, MRPC has coordinated Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), provided badges to local emergency response agencies, provided support to local VOADs and COADs and worked with the State Emergency Management Agency area coordinator to plan regional exercises.

• **Hazard Mitigation Planning**

In 2018, MRPC worked in partnership with Crawford, Osage and Washington counties to update those county Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP), using grant funds through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and county funds. In addition, MRPC worked with Dent County to complete its first hazard mitigation plan. All four of these plans were approved. The purpose of this plan is to help jurisdictions become less vulnerable to natural hazards such as tornadoes, flooding and winter storms. To be eligible for hazard mitigation grants, counties must maintain an up-to-date plan, which means updating every five years.

• **HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program**

In 1976, MRPC began operating the HUD Section 8 Housing Program. The program provides very-low income families with greater access to decent, safe and modest housing in the six original counties. (Osage County is served through the Boone County housing agency. Pulaski County is served by Missouri Ozarks Community Action, Inc.) Through the Housing Choice Voucher program in FY2017-18, MRPC assisted, on average, 723 families by providing \$2,957,512 in rental assistance each year. PHA staff also performed 1,325 tenant inspections.

• **HUD Section 8 Homeownership**

In 2006, the Phelps County PHA, which is administered by MRPC, began the Section 8 Homeownership Program. The homeownership program allows first-time homeowners to use their voucher subsidy to meet their monthly mortgage payment and other homeownership expenses. Clients have purchased homes in Maries, Phelps, Washington and Crawford counties. Laclede, Franklin and Pulaski counties allow the Phelps County PHA to administer the program in their counties. To date, 20 homes have been purchased by clients through the Section 8 Homeownership program.

• **Family Self-Sufficiency**

The HUD Family Self-Sufficiency program, administered by MRPC, empowers participants to become free of welfare assistance. Once a participant signs up, a housing/FSS coordinator aids that participant in assessing current and future needs, then assists in the development of an action plan. This plan will enable the family to reach the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency. Participants are contacted frequently to ensure they progress toward their goals. Employment and enrollment in vocational training or post-secondary education, which leads to higher paying professional positions, is encouraged for participants.

The FSS program also offers an incentive program that establishes an escrow account in the participant's name. As a participant pays more of his or her rent, HUD makes a contribution equal to the increase in the portion of the rent paid by the participant. This savings account has the potential to grow

into thousands of dollars. Upon successful completion of the contract, this money is paid to the participant. Of the 84 families in the FSS program, 34 families have escrow accounts, totaling \$60,644.50. In FY 2017-18, three clients successfully completed their FSS contracts and received their escrow accounts. They shared \$25,932.48.

• Naturally Meramec Consortium

MRPC continues to work with the Naturally Meramec Consortium in the eight-county region to promote local agri-tourism businesses in the region. The Meramec Region has a plethora of options to tourists visiting the region and the consortium works to ensure the region is a destination spot for potential and returning visitors. The consortium strives to increase the use of products and services to grow jobs and to be a destination where visitors stay for more than a day. This year, MRPC, on behalf of the consortium, is working on a food hub feasibility study that will help to connect local producers with local buyers, as well as working on Taste of County events to bring local producers products to a larger audience of potential buyers.

• Meramec Region Rural Opioid Program

Meramec Region Rural Opioid Program is a new project, funded by a HRSA grant. MRPC is coordinating a consortium of health and social service organizations in Crawford, Dent, Maries and Phelps counties to address the rising opioid epidemic in our region. With the help of partners including Prevention Consultants of Missouri, Your Community Health Center, Phelps/Maries Health Department, Dent County Health Department, Invent Yourself LLC and Compass Health, the consortium hopes to create awareness to improve prevention, treatment and recovery from opioid addiction and to identify gaps in services needed.

• Services to Local Governments

Ordinance Codification: Since 1975, MRPC has provided ordinance codification services to cities - including Rolla, Potosi, Vienna, Newburg, Cuba, Bland, and Freeburg - for a fee. Staff prepare an electronic version of all ordinances, indexes and tracks their history and updates them on a schedule selected by the city. MRPC also makes the ordinances available online for the ease of residents, contractors and developers.

Floodplain Management: MRPC serves as the floodplain coordinator for two counties and one city. Staff handles public awareness and outreach and processes floodplain permit requests in Phelps and Maries counties and the City of Meta.

Inspection Services: MRPC offers lead, mold and asbestos inspection services to its member governments and private industry. MRPC also assists the city of Bland with code enforcement issues, under contract.

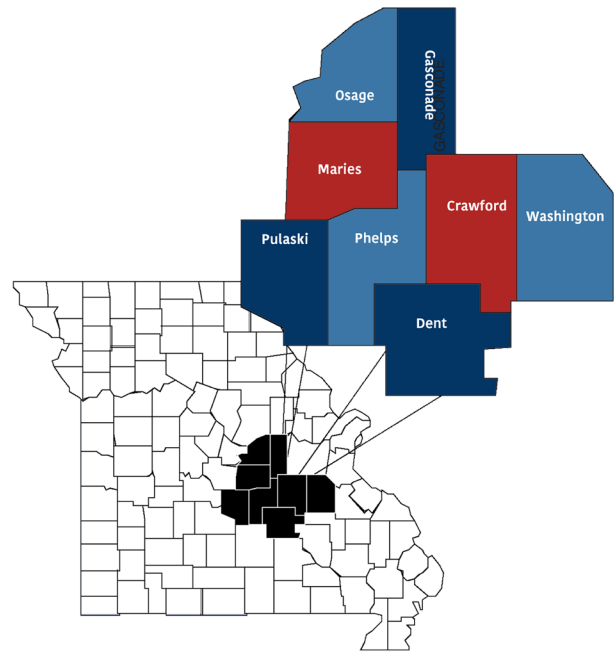
Meramec Region Facts

The Meramec Region is an eight-county area located in the southeast-central portion of Missouri. The area covers over 5,131 square miles and includes 36 municipalities. The region is marked with gently rolling hills, deep valleys and plateaus. Numerous rivers and streams transverse the region, creating a natural draw for outdoor enthusiasts. Many of the small towns are industrial havens, yet the small farmer is still prevalent. Many wineries dot the countryside, making it a popular draw for tourists.

General Demographics

In 2017, the eight-county Meramec Region was home to 200,264 people, reflecting a decrease of 990 people from the 2010 decennial census.

Individual 2017 estimates county populations range from a low of 8,959 in Maries County to 53,132 in Pulaski County. Pulaski County saw a decrease of .3 percent in the 2013-17 American Community Survey (ACS) from the 2012-16 ACS. However, all counties in the region, except for Pulaski, showed a decrease in population as reported in the 2013-17 ACS compared to the 2010 census data. From 2013 through 2017, the state of Missouri is estimated to have grown by only .3 percent.



The largest city in the region continues to be Rolla, the county seat of Phelps County. It has 20,013 people by 2017 estimates, up from 19,559 in 2010. The smallest city is Morrison in Gasconade County with 79 residents.

The region's population in 2017 showed slightly more males than females, just as it did in 2010. The region's median age in 2017 was 39.9 years, which is slightly older than the median age in the state and nation.

The region is predominantly white with a 10.4 percent minority population. This is up from 9.2 percent in 2010. Pulaski County is the region's most racially diverse county. It is home to the Department of Defense's Fort Leonard Wood.

Income, Poverty and Unemployment

Incomes in the Meramec Region continue to be lower than the state or nation. The region's median income, based on 2017 Census information, was \$44,191. The state median income

Demographics 2017

Population.....	200,264
Male.....	52.7%
Female.....	47.3%
White	89.6%
Black.....	4.4%
Asian.....	.1.6%
American Indian.....	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific.....	0.1%
Some Other Race.....	1%
Two or More Races	2.6%

Source: 2013 - 17 ACS 5 Year Estimate

was \$51,542 while the U.S. median income was \$57,652.

The region's median income is 85.7 percent of the state's rate and only 76.7 percent of the nation's rate. A decrease in both cases from the 2012-16 findings.

The majority of families in Missouri and families in the nation make \$35,000 or more a year, as well as the majority of the families in the Meramec Region, according to 2017 ACS data.

The region's poverty rate also runs higher than the state and nation's. Meramec residents living in poverty in 2017 numbered 33,044, which represents 16.5 percent of the population. This is a decrease from 2016's 17.4 percent, but still slightly higher than the state and national percentage. Some 14.6 percent of all Missouri residents live in poverty while 14.6 percent of all U.S. residents

Median Household Incomes

Meramec Region	\$44,191
Missouri	\$51,542
U.S.....	\$57,652
Region as % of State.....	85.7%
Region as % of Nation.....	76.4%

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

Family Income

Families in the region	72,036
Under \$10,000.....	8.2%
\$10,000-14,999	6.5%
\$15,000-24,999	13.2%
\$25,000-34,999	11.8%
\$35,000 & over	60.3%

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

Persons in Poverty

Meramec Region	16.5%
Missouri	14.6%
U.S.....	14.6%

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

Population by Age

Under 5.....	6%
0-17	22.2%
18 & Over	77.8%
65+	14.9%
Median Age.....	39.9 years

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

were living in poverty in 2017. Dent County had the highest poverty rate in the region with 20.8 percent. The lowest was Osage County with 6.8 percent.

The region, for several decades, has been plagued with high unemployment rates. Washington and Dent counties experienced mine closings while other counties lost shoe and textile manufacturers. However, for the past few years the region has seen decreases to their unemployment rates. The 2017 unemployment rate for the region was 4.3 percent, slightly higher than the state average at 3.7 percent, and higher than the 3.7 percent in 2016. The U.S. average for 2017 was 4.4 percent. The region continues to experience unemployment rates lower than state and national average. The unemployment rate for 2018 has not yet been finalized.

Unemployment

Employed	77,295
Unemployed	1,955
Total Labor Force.....	79,250
Region's unemployment rate.....	4.3%
State's unemployment rate.....	3.7%
U.S. unemployment rate.....	4.4%

*All data compiled with 2017 data.

Source: Missouri Department of Economic Development, MRPC

Housing

The Meramec Region has 88,792 total housing units with 72,036 occupied, according to the 2017 ACS five-year estimates. The average number

of individuals per unit in the region is 2.54 people, which is slightly higher than the state average of 2.43 people.

The number of occupied housing units in the region appears to still be on the decline, as there were 71,216 in 2016 and 72,036 in 2017.

Of the 72,036 occupied units, 47,862 are owner occupied while 24,174 are renter occupied, according to the 2017 ACS five year estimates. In 2017, the median value of a home in the region was \$120,987.50, compared to a state average of \$145,400. The average monthly rent for a home in the region in 2017 was \$636.13 while the state average was \$784. The majority of the housing stock — 78.9 percent — was built in 1960 or later, as indicated by the 2017 ACS five year estimates.

Education Levels

2016 percent of adults 25 years and older with at least a high school diploma.

Meramec Region	83.7%
Missouri	89.2%
U.S.....	87.3%

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

Education Levels

Some 83.7 percent of the region's population aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, according to the 2017 ACS five year estimates. This percentage is 5.5 percent less than the state and 3.6 percent less than the U.S. When compared to the 2010 percentage of 81.6 percent, the region improved in the percentage of adults 25 years and older who had at least a high school diploma by 2.1 percent.

The region's most educated county in 2017 was Pulaski, with 90.5 percent of adults with high school diplomas or higher education level.

The Economy

Over the years, the region has diversified its

Housing at a Glance

Number of housing units in region..	88,792
Number occupied	72,036
Number owner occupied.....	47,862
Number renter occupied	24,174
Vacant units	16,756
Persons per unit in region	2.54
Persons per unit in state	2.43
Median value in region	\$120,987.50
Median value in state.....	\$145,400
Median monthly rent in region	\$636.13
Median monthly rent in state	\$784
Housing units in region	
built before 1939.....	7,916
Housing units in region	
built 1940-59.....	10,791
Housing units in region	
built 1960-1979.....	21,641
Housing units in region	
built 1980-99.....	27,589
Housing units in region	
built 2000 and after.....	20,855

Source: 2017 ACS 5 year, MRPC analysis

economy—after taking hard hits in the mining and textile industries 25 to 35 years ago. In the region, services was the largest employment sector with over 34,000 employees, followed by manufacturing and retail trade.

Health care, education and social assistance is the highest employment industry in the region with 19,880 employees, which makes up 25.9 percent of employment in the region, according to 2017 ACS Five Year Estimates.

The number of manufacturing firms in the region has increased slightly.

The 2018 Missouri Directory of Manufacturers listed 471 manufacturing firms in the region, compared to 469 in 2017.

The major public employer in the region is Fort Leonard Wood with more than 12,000 day-

time jobs followed by the Missouri University of Science and Technology with 2,000 full-time and part-time employees and Phelps County Regional Medical Center with more than 1,700 employees. The region's top major private employer is Quaker Window Products with 800 plus employees. It is located in Maries and Osage counties.

While the number of jobs in the region increases, many residents still travel outside their home county to work outside the region.

Transportation

Three federal highways pass through the region: Interstate 44, U.S. 63 and U.S. 50. Interstate 44 bisects the region in a northeast to southwest direction and serves as the major highway between St. Louis and Springfield with Rolla as the half way point.

U.S. 63 connects Vienna and Rolla with Jefferson City, and U.S. 50 runs east and west through Gasconade and Osage counties. Most highways in the region are state highways, and most are narrow, winding and curvy.

Several Meramec communities have airports. The Waynesville-St. Robert Regional Airport at Forney Field in Pulaski County is located on the Fort Leonard Wood military base and is accessible to the public. Beginning Feb. 12, Contour Airlines will be serving Fort Leonard Wood with twice daily flights to St. Louis Lambert Field on a 30-seat jet. The airport is the only one in the region featuring an air traffic control tower.

The Rolla National Airport, located at Vichy and operated by the city of Rolla, and the Sullivan Airport, operated by the city of Sullivan, are defined as B-2 airports and are used primarily by airplanes with approach speeds up to 120 knots and wingspans up to 79 feet. Other airports in the region—Washington County, Salem, Cuba, Owensville, Hermann and State Technical College of Missouri at Linn—are classified as B-1s, which means they serve airplanes with approach speeds up to 120 knots and wingspans up to 49 feet.

Regional Industrial Employment

Employed persons 16 and over.....	77,088
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & mining	1,955
Construction	5,652
Manufacturing.....	10,857
Transportation/warehousing & utilities	3,008
Wholesale trade.....	1,174
Retail trade	9,897
Information.....	1,080
Finance, insurance, real estate & rental/leasing	2,619
Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin. & waste mgmt. ser.	4,031
Educational, health & social ser.....	19,880
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food ser.	6,555
Other services	3,762
Public Administration	6,618

Source: 2013-17 ACS 5 Year Estimates and MRPC analysis

Three railways serve the region. Burlington Northern operates the most miles of track in the region. That rail line follows the general route of I-44 through Crawford, Phelps and Pulaski counties.

Rail service in the region is not as prevalent as it once was. Several miles of the former Rock Island rail have been neglected since the early 1990s. In 2015, Missouri Central Railroad railbanked the line and is awaiting a decision from Missouri State Parks to accept the abandoned rail bed into the state system. The development of a walking and biking trail is on hold until such decision.

Amtrak also crosses the Meramec Region and stops at its very northeast point at Hermann.

Navigable water transportation is provided at three locations in the region, all on the Missouri River. Those sites are Hermann, Gasconade and Chamois.

Meramec Regional planning Commission's Board of Commissioners

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Leo Sanders, presiding commissioner
Ray Mortimeyer, mayor of Cuba
Kyle Hofstetter, representing for-profit sector
Jared West, chairman of Leasburg
Sharon Hubbard, representing mayor of Steelville
Danny Skaggs, mayor of Bourbon
Mary Heywood, representing the unemployed

DENT COUNTY

Ray Walden, representing the mayor of Salem
Darrell Skiles, presiding commissioner
Gary Brown, representing for-profit
Earl Brown, representing people with disabilities
Marcus Maggard, representing tourism
Robert Parsons, representing Farming/Agri Business

GASCONADE COUNTY

Larry Miskel, presiding commissioner
Mark Wallace, representing the mayor of Hermann
Shannon Grus, mayor of Rosebud
Jason Koenigsfeld, mayor pro-tem of Morrison
Ron Kraettli, representing for-profit sector
Ron Shafferkoetter, mayor of Bland
John Kamler, mayor of Owensville
Debbie Green, mayor of Gasconade

MARIES COUNTY

T.C. James, mayor of Vienna
Ray Schwartze, representing for-profit sector
Vic Stratman, presiding commissioner
Steve Vogt, representing mayor of Belle

OSAGE COUNTY

Mark Boyer, representing for-profit sector
Christopher Bursnall, mayor of Meta
Tammy Massman, mayor of Westphalia
Darryl Griffin, presiding commissioner
Jan Haviland, representing industry
Darryl Haller, chairman of Freeburg
Dwight Massey, mayor of Linn

Chris Brundick, chairman of Argyle
Elise Brochu, mayor of Chamois
Dr. Donald Claycomb, representing education

PHELPS COUNTY

Donald Brackhahn, representing seniors
Jason Shenefield, representing healthcare
Kevin Melton, mayor of Edgar Springs
Jeff Medows, representing for-profit sector
James Shields, representing the mayor of Rolla
James Poucher, mayor of Newburg
Janey Radford, representing lending institutions
Billy Martin, mayor of Doolittle
Shane Anselm, representing labor
Janet Walker, representing minorities
Randy Verkamp, presiding commissioner
Jim White, mayor of St. James

PULASKI COUNTY

Eldon Haun, mayor of Richland
George Lauritson, mayor of St. Robert
Luge Hardman, mayor of Waynesville
Glen Smith, mayor of Crocker
Gene Newkirk, presiding commissioner
Vacant, representing for-profit

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Kraig Bone, representing emergency management
Debby Bust, representing for-profit sector
John Casey, representing transportation
T.R. Dudley, mayor of Potosi
John W. Taylor, chairman of Mineral Point
Doris Keim, mayor of Irondale
John Robinson III, chairman of Caledonia
David Sansegraw, presiding commissioner
Laurel Boisonault, representing small business

2019 MRPC Leadership

Board & Staff

Chairman:Larry Miskel, Presiding Commissioner of Gasconade County
Vice Chairman:Steve Vogt, City of Belle
Treasurer:George Lauritson, Mayor of St. Robert
Secretary:Vacant
Executive Director:Bonnie J. Prigge
Assistant Director:Tammy Snodgrass
Fiscal Officer:Linda Loughridge
Environmental Programs Manager:Tammy Snodgrass
Planning & Development Manager:Kelly Sink-Blair
Housing Programs Manager:Linda Hollandsworth

2018 Associate Members

PLATINUM MEMBERS

C.M. Archer Group, P.C.
Legends Bank
Pulaski Co. Sewer District #1

GOLD MEMBERS

Town & Country Bank - Salem

SILVER MEMBERS

Argyle Catering
Gascosage Electric Cooperative
Investment Reality
Kenagy Law Office
Maries County Bank
State Technical College of Missouri
Unico Bank
Central Federal Savings & Loans

EXCHANGE MEMBERS

Hermann Area Chamber of Commerce
Steelville Area Chamber of Commerce
Rolla Area Chamber of Commerce
Waynesville-St.Robert Chamber of Commerce
Owensville Area Chamber of Commerce
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

2019

***State Priorities in the
Meramec Region***



*A voluntary council of local governments
serving the Meramec Region*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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