

# 2020 State Priorities in the Meramec Region

An Issues Report  
For the Region's Legislative Delegation

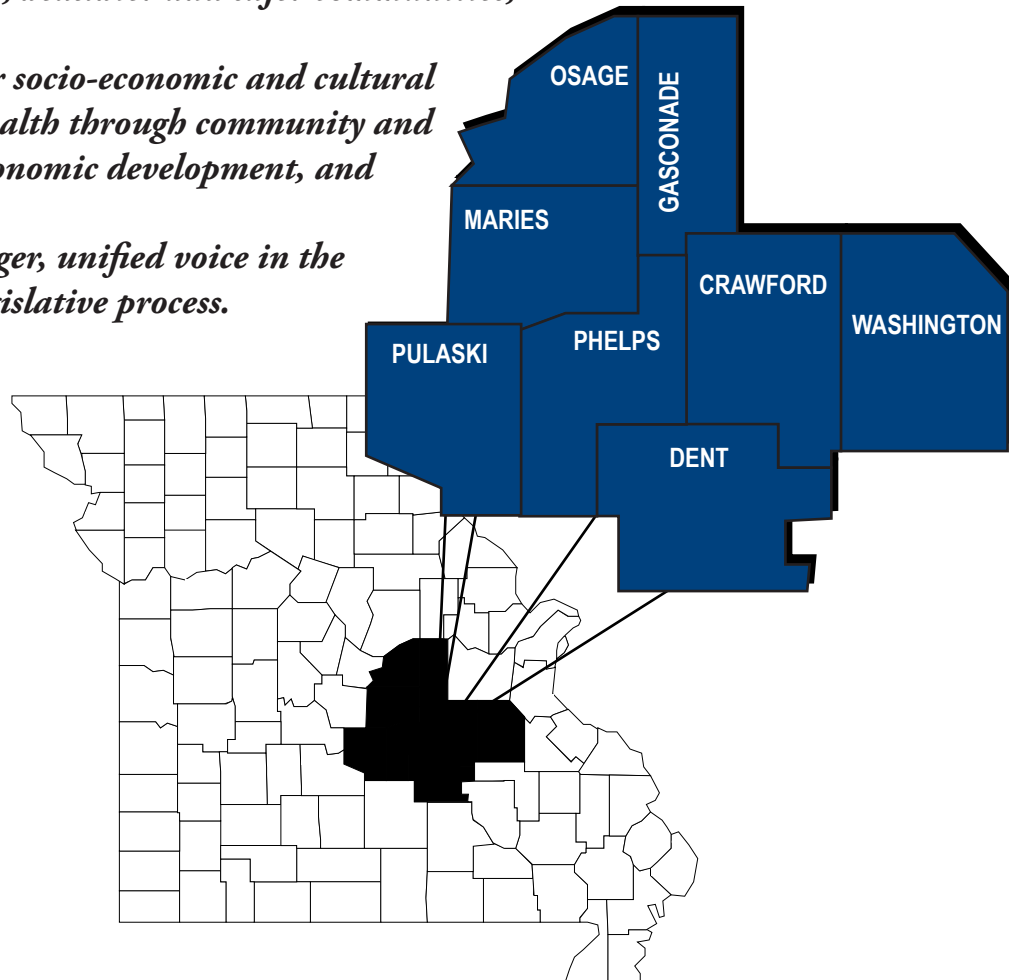


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# *The Meramec Regional Planning Commission's Mission*

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.

# **2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN THE MERAMEC REGION**

As the 2020 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. Increase funding for rural transit, including OATS and SMTS with a focus on persons with disabilities.
2. 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.
3. Assist in finding additional funding for Highways 63 and 50.
4. Fully support MoDOT and MRPC planning process and the transportation priorities put forth each year and work with regional and local partners across the state to find sustainable transportation funding to advance projects.

### **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. Revise state tax laws to allow Missouri to comply with 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. Currently the State collects sales tax on out of state internet sales. Current restrictions are unfair to brick and mortar businesses that collect and submit sales taxes for local purchases. Recommendation: Allow for collection of internet sales taxes without requiring a vote at the county level.
3. Fully support Fort Leonard Wood and recognize that it is an economic development engine for Missouri.
4. Fully fund regional planning commissions. Most RPCs use their state planning dollars to leverage other funds. Currently, 19 RPCs/COGs share \$300,000. State law allows for appropriations of \$400,000.

### **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 and ensure access to those programs.
3. Provide low cost quality health care to rural underserved populations. Provide services through rural clinics, and provide for programs that allow rural hospitals and clinics to operate successfully. Too many rural clinics and hospitals have failed due to state and federal government policies. The refusal of Missouri to support

the Affordable Healthcare Act has caused the loss of federal reimbursement for indigent care which has resulted in these rural hospitals and clinics to fail.

4. Support Medicaid expansion across the state in order to decrease the number of uninsured and underinsured individuals accessing healthcare at Missouri hospitals.
5. Support programs to protect healthcare workers from violence in the workplace. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 52% of all workplace violence incidents were recorded in healthcare settings. Contributing factors are the shortage of psychiatric beds resulting in boarding of patients in the emergency department, an expanding opioid crisis and the increased prevalence of weapons.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL:**

1. Reinstate MDNR's tire amnesty recycling program that served local governments.
2. 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.
3. Review all state environmental laws every five to 10 years to validate effectiveness/necessity of time.
4. Empower MDNR to work cooperatively with local communities on improvements/upgrades to sanitary treatment facilities. EPA mandates continue to place significant financial burdens on communities and users.

### **EDUCATION:**

1. Continue to fully fund the Foundation Formula for public education.
2. Most third class county school boards are unable to offer competitive salaries for teachers and staff due to comparatively low tax bases. Recommendation: Raise the state's per-student rate to rural school districts 8% and require the increase to go to teachers and staff (not administration) salaries.
3. Continue expansion of technical education, certificate programs and two year colleges and degrees, which supports Governor Parson's workforce development initiatives.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CITY/COUNTY):**

1. Increase reimbursement to counties for costs of housing inmates held on state charges.
2. Repeal or amend prevailing wage statutes to require that prevailing wage must be applied only if the construction project costs more than \$500,000 and is receiving 50% or more funding from the State.
3. More grants or low interest loans available to small municipalities with smaller operating budgets for things such as improving roads, cleaning up properties, updating sewer systems and updates to infrastructure.
4. Stop unfunded mandates. See our local governments as partners, not adversaries. Example: When cities in third class counties close their municipal courts, the county circuit courts absorb the cities' caseloads. Gasconade County Circuit Court, the second week in August, had a one day caseload of 66 - only 10 were related to the county. Recommendation: Have municipalities pay a per-case fee that is adjudicated by the county circuit courts. Example 2: EPA full disinfection of all treatment plant discharge (Include peak flow in heavy rains); phosphorous and ammonia removal. Recommendation: EPA stream reclassification for discharge; Department of Justice - ADA compliance - the new standard is 1/4" difference from old standard - nearly impossible to achieve everywhere.

### **General:**

1. Eliminate dark money contributions and insure full disclosure of all contributions.
2. Repeal or lengthen term limits.
3. 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 2018-19. Each administrative dollar MRPC spent in Fiscal Year 2018-19 brought \$3.21 into the region for the benefit of its communities and residents. MRPC's 2018-19 expenditures were \$1.83 million, while the agency generated \$5.87 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 \$14.7 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 2018-19. 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. The TAC also updated and adopted a new planning matrix to use in county prioritization of projects. 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 2018-19, \$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 2018-19, staff assisted member communities with the following funding opportunities:

- Economic Development Administration's Planning Partnership Grant for MRPC to provide economic development and technical assistance to the cities and counties in the region

- Missouri Department of Economic Development's (MoDED) Emergency Grant Program for Disaster Recovery for the City of St. Robert to construct a new waste water treatment facility
- AmerisourceBergen Foundation's Opioid Resource Grant Program to Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation (MCEC) for opioid abuse prevention
- USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant to Richland Community Development Corporation for funds to implement a new marketing website for the community
- Community Foundation of the Ozarks' (CFO) 2019 Natural Disaster PREP Grant Program to Meramec Regional Community Foundation (MRCF) for disaster preparedness education and promotion of vulnerable populations of the region
- BNSF Railway Foundation's Community Grantmaking Program to the St. James Caring Center for funds for food to support low income families
- MoDED's CDBG Demolition program to the City of Hermann for demolition of three structures in town
- MoDED's CDBG General Infrastructure program to Pulaski County for construction of a new bridge on Bunker Road over Bell Creek
- MoDED's CDBG Community Facility program to St. James Caring Center for parking lot upgrades and caring center facility renovations
- MoDED's CDBG General Infrastructure program to the City of Linn for reconstruction of 5th street and rehabilitation of 1st street
- FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant to Bland Fire Protection District for purchase of new equipment including SCBA, hoses, thermal camera and turnout gear
- MoDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to City of St. Robert for installation of new ADA concrete sidewalk and crosswalks along Missouri Avenue
- MoDOT's TAP to city of Potosi for installation of new ADA concrete sidewalk and crosswalks along N. Missouri Street
- MoDOT's TAP to city of Waynesville for installation of new ADA concrete sidewalks on Historic 66 from Oak to the Roubideaux Bridge
- MoDOT's TAP city of Caledonia for installation of new ADA concrete sidewalks and crosswalks along Hwy 21
- BNSF Railway Foundation's Community Grantmaking Program to St. James Senior Center for senior daily meals program
- Walmart Foundation's Community Grantmaking Program to Duke Rural Fire Department for construction of a new building next to current fire house
- Department of Agriculture's Rural Solid Waste Program to MRPC for protection against prescription drug and illegal dump contamination of water resources
- Coover Charitable Foundation's Regional Grantmaking Program to MCEC for the Duke Rural Fire Department's new building
- Meramec Regional Community Foundation to MCEC for the Duke Rural Fire Department's new building
- Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant to MRPC to conduct inventory, prioritization and assessment of brownfields to prepare sites for future
- CFO's Rural Ozarks Health Initiative to MRCF for grantmaking to local projects addressing sub-

stance abuse issues

- MDNR's Land and Water Conservation Fund to the city of Salem for development of Salem soccer complex including two regulation soccer fields, access road and parking
- AmerisourceBergen's Safe Disposal Product Support to Prevention Consultants for delivery of 2,500 safe disposal pouches to pharmacies, healthcare providers and law enforcement
- MoDOT's Traffic Enforcement Program to Osage County Sheriff's Department for purchase of two new radar units
- Missouri Department of Public Safety's Justice Assistance Grant to Osage County Sheriff's Department to replace two single-band mobile radios with new dual-band radios for patrol
- Missouri Department of Public Safety's Justice Assistance Grant to Gasconade County Sheriff's Department to replace two single-band mobile radios with new dual-band radios for patrol
- EDA's Public Works to State Technical College of Missouri to construct the new utility technician center to add and expand utility programs
- Department of Homeland Security's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response to city of St. Robert to add three full time fire fighters to the St. Robert Fire Department
- Department of Homeland Security's Volunteer Recruitment and Retention program to city of Owensville for training of 20 fire fighters to be NFPA compliant and for Fire Fighter I and Fire Fighter II certifications
- USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant to city of Richland to install lighting in the downtown business district
- Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) SEDAP 2019 to Duke Rural Fire Department to construct new building next to current fire station
- AARP's Community Challenge Grant to Newburg Community Housing for repairs to housing damaged by water and installation of drain pipe
- MDNR's Playground Scrap Tire Grant Program to city of St. Robert for purchase of pour-in-place surface material for play areas in park
- MDNR's Playground Scrap Tire Grant Program to St. James School District for purchase of pour-in-place surface material for play areas in park
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Opioid Affected Youth Initiative to MRPC to develop a multi-disciplinary task force to address opioid crisis
- CFO's Rural Ozarks Health Initiative to MCEC to conduct a regional job/resources fair focused on individuals with substance use disorders
- CFO's Rural Ozarks Health Initiative to MCEC to purchase and distribute lockable prescription storage bags to seniors
- MoDED's CDBG General Infrastructure program to the city of Newburg to reconstruct Wolf Pride Drive and Walnut Street
- MoDED's CDBG Community Facility program to Washington County for modifications to renovations at the county courthouse annex
- Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program to MRPC for low-income homeowners house rehabilitation and homeowner education
- DRA's SEDAP 2019 to Dent County for upgrades to county road 6670 of State Hwy YY
- DRA's SEDAP 2019 to Washington County's Assessor's office for upgrades to the county's GIS data

- MoDED's CDBG demolition program to the city of Crocker for demolition of 23 residential and commercial structures
- MFA Oil Foundation's Community Grants to the city of Edgar Springs to install playground equipment at the city park
- Walmart Community Foundation's Community Grants to the city of Edgar Springs to install playground equipment at the city park

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 gap 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 1,291 jobs in the Meramec Region for an average investment of \$20,763 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 1,147 jobs at a cost of \$3,905 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 75 loans worth \$4.48 million have been made through the RLF over the life of the program. Under the IRP program, which was established in 2006, staff has made 19 loans and created or retained nearly 194 jobs, an average cost of \$7,597 per job. The total amount loaned through the IRP is \$1,473,867.



## • 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 161 grants totaling \$2.87 million to support local and regional projects. These grants have targeted businesses, local governments, schools and non-profits. The 2020 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, illegal dump cleanup program and prioritization of potential clean-up projects, HHW collection sites in the cities of Rolla and St. Robert, special waste collections (appliances, electronics, tires), educational programs for schools and community outreach and assistance. Each of these projects is consistent with the district's plan and goals.

The residential household hazardous waste (HHW) program established two satellite collection facilities in 2008. Batteries, automotive fluids, fertilizers/pesticides and flammable materials are some of the materials collected. To curb expenses, latex paint was removed as an accepted material in 2017, as latex paint is technically not a hazardous waste. HHW volumes are now averaging 5.2 tons annually from 1,214 residents at a cost of approximately \$11,400 a year. The Missouri Recycling Association (MORA) and the solid waste districts are currently working with the Product Stewardship Council to develop and implement a paint stewardship initiative where paint could be returned to the point of purchase.

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 \$24,412, with transporting and recycling 134 tons of illegally dumped tires collected by county road crews.

Through the Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District's grant program, MRPC has organized

57 special waste collections since April 2003. These subsidized collections have recycled 503.34 tons of residential electronics, appliances and tires. It is of vital importance for every county to host a special collection to help reduce the occurrence and cost of illegal dumping and clean-up.

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 144 dump sites have been cleaned up. In doing so, an estimated 917 tons of trash has been removed and properly disposed; and 19,406 tires have been collected for recycling. The district has recruited 1,678 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 2019, more than 760 tons – or the equivalent of 76,000 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 47, 32, 42, 8, 100, 72, 63, 19, 21, 50 and I-44 transportation corridors, as well as three railroads and all of the pipelines in the region. MRPC has applied for funding to carry out a flow study on highways 28, 68, 89, 133 and state route A in Washington county in 2020.

## • **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 few years, the grant program has seen a slight increase with \$91,943.11 in FY2017, \$93,959.39 in FY2018 and \$90,930.58 in FY2019. 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 2018-19, 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 2019, MRPC began working to update the Pulaski and Phelps counties' Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP), using grant funds through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and county funds. The Maries County hazard mitigation plan was completed and approved by SEMA and FEMA. 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 a current 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 FY2018-19, MRPC assisted, on average, 715 families by providing \$2.9 million in rental assistance for the year. PHA staff also performed 1,266 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 Phelps and Crawford counties. Laclede and Franklin counties allow the Phelps County PHA to administer the program in their counties. To date, 24 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 partici-

pant. Of the 85 families in the FSS program, 29 families have escrow accounts, totaling \$84,281.44. In FY 2018-19, three clients successfully completed their FSS contracts and received their escrow accounts. They shared \$17,662.96.

## • **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, funded by a HRSA grant, is a consortium of health and social service organizations in Crawford, Dent, Maries and Phelps counties to addressing 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 continues to create awareness to improve prevention, treatment and recovery from opioid addiction and identify gaps in services needed. A workshop was held this year in efforts to address a growing workforce problem including five sessions on how employers can hire recovering addicts. Some 30 individual were in attendance at the day-long workshop.

## • **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 Belle and Bland with code enforcement issues, under contract.



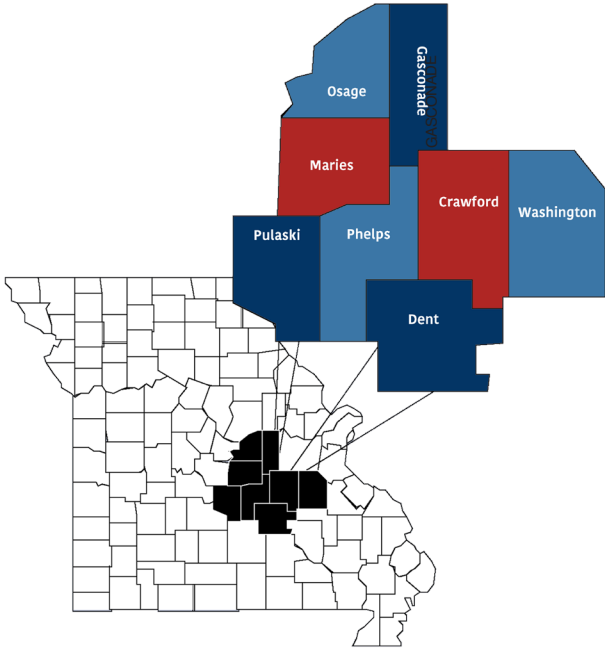
# Meramec Region Facts

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 2018, the eight-county Meramec Region was home to 199,344 people, reflecting a decrease of 1,910 people from the 2010 decennial census.

Individual 2018 estimates county populations range from a low of 8,884 in Maries County to 52,591 in Pulaski County. Pulaski County saw a decrease of .1 percent in the 2014-18 American Community Survey (ACS) from the 2013-17 ACS. However, all counties in the region, except for Pulaski, showed a decrease in population as reported in the 2014-18 ACS compared to the 2010 census data. From 2014 through 2018, the state of Missouri is estimated to have grown by only .2 percent.



The largest city in the region continues to be Rolla, the county seat of Phelps County. It has 20,117 people by 2018 estimates, up from 19,559 in 2010. The smallest city is Morrison in Gasconade County with 89 residents.

The region's population in 2018 showed slightly more males than females, just as it did in 2010. The region's median age in 2018 was 40.1 years, which is slightly older than the median age in the state and nation. The median age in the region has been steadily increasing.

The region is predominantly white with a 10.6 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 2018 Census infor-

| Demographics 2018                      |         |
|--|---------|
| Population.....                        | 199,344 |
| Male .....                             | 52.7%   |
| Female.....                            | 47.3%   |
| White .....                            | 89.4%   |
| Black.....                             | 4.2%    |
| Asian.....                             | .1.7%   |
| American Indian.....                   | 0.7%    |
| Native Hawaiian and other Pacific..... | 0.1%    |
| Some Other Race.....                   | 1.2%    |
| Two or More Races .....                | 2.7%    |
| Source: 2018 ACS 5 Year Estimate       |         |

mation, was \$46,054. The state median income was \$53,560 while the U.S. median income was \$60,293.

The region's median income is 86 percent of the state's rate and only 76.4 percent of the nation's rate. 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 2018 ACS data.

The region's poverty rate also runs higher than the state and nation's. Meramec residents living in poverty in 2018 numbered 34,428, which represents 17.3 percent of the population. This is an increase from 2017's 16.5 percent, but still higher than the state and national percentage, which both decreased in 2018. Some 14.2 percent of all Missouri residents live in poverty while 14.1 percent of all U.S. residents were living in poverty in 2018.

### Median Household Incomes

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Meramec Region .....       | \$46,054 |
| Missouri .....             | \$53,560 |
| U.S.....                   | \$60,293 |
| Region as % of State.....  | 86%      |
| Region as % of Nation..... | 76.4%    |

Source: 2018 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

### Family Income

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Families in the region ..... | 48,315 |
| Under \$10,000.....          | 4.9%   |
| \$10,000-14,999 .....        | 3.4%   |
| \$15,000-24,999 .....        | 8.6%   |
| \$25,000-34,999 .....        | 9.5%   |
| \$35,000 & over .....        | 72.6%  |

Source: 2018 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

### Persons in Poverty

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Meramec Region ..... | 17.3% |
| Missouri .....       | 14.2% |
| U.S.....             | 14.1% |

Source: 2018 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

### Population by Age

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Under 5.....    | 5.9%       |
| 0-17 .....      | 22.1%      |
| 18 & Over ..... | 77.9%      |
| 65+ .....       | 15.3%      |
| Median Age..... | 40.1 years |

Source: 2018 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

Phelps County had the highest poverty rate in the region with 22.3 percent. The lowest was Osage County with 7.2 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 November 2019 unemployment rate for the region was 3.4 percent, slightly higher than the state average at 3.0 percent, but lower than the 4.3 percent in 2017. The U.S. average for 2019 was 3.3 percent. The region continues to experience unemployment rates slightly higher than state and national averages.

### Unemployment

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Employed .....                  | 78,668 |
| Unemployed .....                | 2,794  |
| Total Labor Force.....          | 81,462 |
| Region's unemployment rate..... | 3.4%   |
| State's unemployment rate.....  | 3%     |
| U.S. unemployment rate.....     | 3.3%   |

\*All data compiled with Nov. 2019 data.

Source: Missouri Department of Economic Development, MRPC

### Housing

The Meramec Region has 89,113 total housing units with 72,388 occupied, according to the 2018 ACS five-year estimates. The average number of individuals per unit in the region is 2.51 people, which is slightly higher than the state average of 2.43 people.

The number of occupied housing units in the region appears to be increasing, as there were 72,036 in 2017 and 72,388 in 2018.

Of the 72,388 occupied units, 48,082 are owner occupied while 24,306 are renter occupied, according to the 2018 ACS five year estimates. In 2018, the median value of a home in the region was \$125,562.50, compared to a state average of \$145,400. The average monthly rent for a home in the region in 2018 was \$641.63 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 2018 ACS five year estimates.

| Education Levels   |       |
|--|-------|
| 2018 percent of adults 25 years and older with at least a high school diploma. |       |
| Meramec Region .....   | 85.1% |
| Missouri .....   | 89.6% |
| U.S.....   | 87.7% |
| Source: 2018 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis                            |       |

## Education Levels

Some 85.1 percent of the region’s population aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, according to the 2018 ACS five year estimates. This percentage is 4.5 percent less than the state and 2.6 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 3.5 percent.

The region’s most educated county in 2018 was Pulaski, with 91.4 percent of adults with high school diplomas or higher education level.

## The Economy

Over the years, the region has diversified its 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

| Housing at a Glance                    |              |
|--|--------------|
| Number of housing units in region..    | 89,113       |
| Number occupied .....                  | 72,388       |
| Number owner occupied.....             | 48,082       |
| Number renter occupied.....            | 24,306       |
| Vacant units .....                     | 16,725       |
| Persons per unit in region .....       | 2.51         |
| Persons per unit in state .....        | 2.42         |
| Median value in region .....           | \$125,562.50 |
| Median value in state.....             | \$151,600    |
| Median monthly rent in region .....    | \$641.63     |
| Median monthly rent in state .....     | \$809        |
| Housing units in region                |              |
| built before 1939.....                 | 8,189        |
| Housing units in region                |              |
| built 1940-59.....                     | 10,577       |
| Housing units in region                |              |
| built 1960-1979.....                   | 22,317       |
| Housing units in region                |              |
| built 1980-99.....                     | 27,930       |
| Housing units in region                |              |
| built 2000 and after.....              | 20,100       |
| Source: 2018 ACS 5 year, MRPC analysis |              |

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 19,712 employees, which makes up 25.4 percent of employment in the region, according to 2018 ACS Five Year Estimates.

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

The 2019 Missouri Directory of Manufacturers listed 479 manufacturing firms in the region, compared to 471 in 2018.

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. 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.

Three railways serve the region. Burlington Northern operates the most miles of track in the re-

## Regional Industrial Employment

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Employed persons 16 and over.....                               | 77,647 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining .....        | 2,035  |
| Construction .....  | 5,510  |
| Manufacturing.....  | 10,471 |
| Transportation/warehousing & utilities .....                    | 3,036  |
| Wholesale trade.....  | 1,250  |
| Retail trade .....  | 9,944  |
| Information.....  | 1,150  |
| Finance, insurance, real estate & rental/leasing .....          | 2,911  |
| Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin. & waste mgmt. ser. .... | 4,402  |
| Educational, health & social ser.....                           | 19,712 |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food ser.....  | 7,107  |
| Other services .....  | 3,468  |
| Public Administration .....                                     | 6,651  |

Source: 2018 ACS 5 Year Estimates and MRPC analysis

gion. 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  
Debbie Martin, representing the mayor of Cuba  
Kyle Hofstetter, representing for-profit sector  
Jared West, chairman of Leasburg  
Sharon Hubbard, representing mayor of Steelville  
Dave Lafferty, 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, representing the mayor of Morrison  
Ron Kraettli, representing for-profit sector  
Lee Medlock, mayor of Bland  
John Kamler, mayor of Owensville  
Debbie Green, mayor of Gasconade

## **MARIES COUNTY**

Vacant, mayor of Vienna  
Ray Schwartze, representing for-profit sector  
Vic Stratman, presiding commissioner  
Steve Vogt, representing mayor of Belle

## **OSAGE COUNTY**

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Harold Libbert, 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**

Jason Shenefield, representing healthcare  
William Gallion, mayor of Edgar Springs  
Jeff Medows, representing for-profit sector  
James Shields, representing the mayor of Rolla  
Rick Elder, representing the 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 Fleming, mayor of St. James

## **PULASKI COUNTY**

Dana Tanner, mayor of Richland  
Allan Kuehl, mayor of Dixon  
George Lauritson, mayor of St. Robert  
Luge Hardman, mayor of Waynesville  
Glen Smith, mayor of Crocker  
Gene Newkirk, presiding commissioner  
Michael Dunbar, representing for-profit  
Brenda Doyle, representing seniors

## **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

# 2020 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: .....Mary Heywood, City of Bourbon  
Executive Director: .....Bonnie J. Prigge  
Assistant Director: .....Tammy Snodgrass  
Fiscal Officer: .....Linda Loughridge  
Environmental Programs Manager: .....Tammy Snodgrass  
Project Development Manager: .....Kelly Sink-Blair  
Housing Programs Manager: .....Donald Keeney  
Planning Manager: .....Anne Freand

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## 2020 Associate Members

### PLATINUM MEMBERS

Legends Bank  
Pulaski County Sewer District #1

### GOLD MEMBERS

Town & Country Bank - Salem

### SILVER MEMBERS

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

### EXCHANGE MEMBERS

Cuba Chamber of Commerce  
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



2020

*State Priorities in the  
Meramec Region*



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

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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