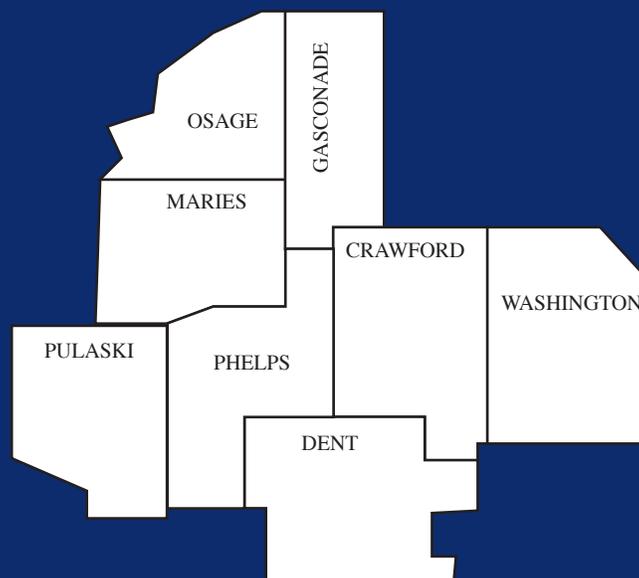


# State Priorities in the Meramec Region

A State legislative priorities report



*An Issues Report*

*For the Region's Legislative Delegation*

Prepared by:  
Meramec Regional Planning Commission  
4 Industrial Drive • St. James, MO 65559

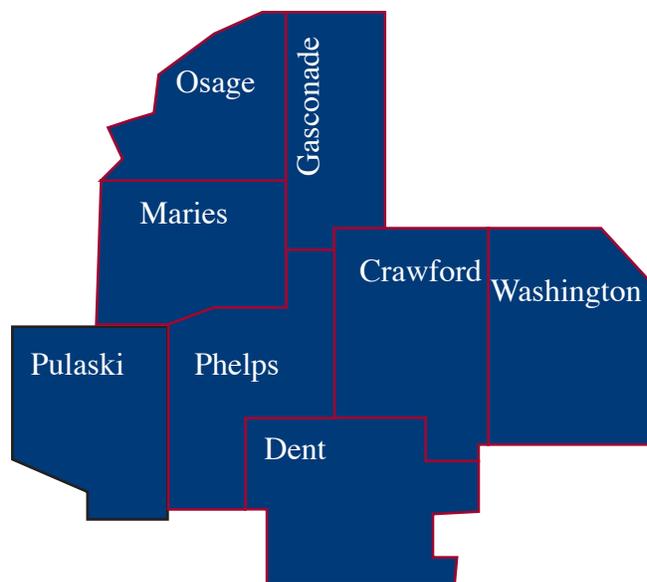
# MRPC

2016

# 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.

# **2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN THE MERAMEC REGION**

As the 2016 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. Based on safety, economic development and quality of life issues, the legislature needs to explore all options of state and federal funding to effectively address transportation project needs and develop a long-term funding solution through taxes and fees or other options.
2. If new construction funds become available, MRPC encourages the development of statewide corridors and supports the four-laning of Highway 63 and Highway 50. On Highway 63, MRPC supports improvements from Arkansas to Iowa, with the Phelps, Maries and Osage section being the first priority, followed by the Phelps County to Arkansas section. MRPC supports the four-laning of Highway 50 from Sedalia to Union, a step at a time.

### **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

1. MRPC encourages the state of Missouri to consider Fort Leonard Wood as one of the state's prime industries and actively work to protect, maintain and expand the mission of the base and jobs located there.
2. MRPC supports financial incentives to encourage expansion of existing industries and entrepreneurship and to attract out-of-state and foreign businesses to Missouri. This may include a more friendly tax and regulatory environment.
3. MRPC supports the continued state funding of regional planning commissions to carry out activities that promote regional economic development and to serve as match dollars for federal funding opportunities.

### **HEALTH CARE/SOCIAL SERVICE:**

1. MRPC supports the adoption of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, a nation-wide prescrip-

tion database. Missouri is the only state NOT participating in the database that tracks prescription drugs and is used to prevent their abuse by preventing people from going from doctor-to-doctor and pharmacy-to-pharmacy to fill prescriptions for painkillers and other addictive drugs. Currently, people are traveling from other states to Missouri to illegally obtain prescription medications because they can do so without being tracked. Not participating in the program allows criminal activity and presents potential dangers on Missouri highways by adding to the number of people who may be driving impaired.

2. MRPC supports efforts to improve Healthcare for Missouri citizens by expanding Medicaid.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL:**

1. MRPC encourages the state to expand/continue loan and grant programs to improve water system and sewage treatment facilities and encourages the Department of Natural Resources to make available additional funding mechanisms for small rural communities as well as for on-site systems for homeowners.
2. MRPC supports the construction of alternative electric production facilities, (such as hydroelectricity production, co-generation and/or nuclear facilities), thus reducing reliance on diesel and coal as energy sources. It needs to be cost effective and environmentally friendly for Missouri citizens to meet the requirements of state plan reductions.

### **EDUCATION:**

1. MRPC requests that the state legislature ensure that rural areas receive their fair share of education dollars based on factors of transportation costs, internet access and economic demographics.
2. MRPC supports greater emphasis on reading, writing, math and science competency and encourages the emphasis of reading and writing as they relate to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

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

1. MRPC supports full funding of state mandates on local governments. For example—jails, education, wastewater treatment facilities, judicial expenses, i.e., per diem for prisoners in county jails.
2. MRPC supports exempting local governments from prevailing wage requirements when doing repairs and public works maintenance projects costing \$250,000 or less.

### **GENERAL:**

1. MRPC supports the removal of term limitations on state elected representatives and senators.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## • MRPC's Impact

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission had a strong year in 2014-15. For every administrative dollar MRPC spent in Fiscal Year 2014-15, it brought \$5.41 into the region for the benefit of its communities and residents. MRPC's 2014-15 expenditures were \$1,520,982 while the agency generated \$8.23 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 \$20.58 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 2014-15. The group continued to stress the importance of the region's top two transportation priorities—Highways 63 and 50. 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 worked with two counties, one community and two regional entities to submit funding requests for transportation-related projects. Some \$3,140,802 was granted for projects in the region.

## • 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 2014-15, \$3.8 million in federal and state grant monies flowed through the planning and development department for community and economic development projects. In FY 2014-15, staff assisted member communities with the following funding opportunities:

- The Delta Regional Authority 2014 SEDAP grant application for the Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation to complete Phase II of Naturally Meramec
- Delta Regional Authority 2014 SEDAP grant application for the city of Steelville to extend a road and sewer line to facilitate the location of Bearcat Lodge.
- Delta Regional Authority 2014 SEDAP grant application for Phelps County to pave County Road 7210 to connect businesses to US 63, avoiding County Road 7240.
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the city of Waynesville to replace a low water crossing on Dyer Street with a span bridge to reduce flooding in Mitchell Creek.
- Missouri Department of Public Safety State Homeland Security Grant Program 2014 for the Waynesville Police Department to purchase 14 MOSWIN compatible portable radios- funded two mobile radios.
- Missouri Department of Public Safety LLEBG for the Crocker Police Department to purchase cameras, vests and patrol car light bars.
- Missouri Housing Trust Fund FY2015 MHTF for the Missouri Housing Trust Fund to repair owner-occupied housing.
- Missouri Department of Public Safety LLEBG for the Newburg Police Department to purchase MOSWIN radios and vehicle light bars.
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources SHPO Heritage Properties Program for Maries County to repair, replace and seal the exterior masonry of the courthouse.
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources SHPO Heritage Properties Program for Gasconade County to renovate the old jail area into an office space, ADA restroom and storage.
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources SHPO Heritage Properties Program for Washington County to restore the courthouse tower.
- Economic Development Administration 2014 Regional Innovation Grant for the Rolla Regional EC to complete a feasibility study for MO Biomedical Research Group.
- Missouri Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Program for the city of Potosi to extend sidewalks throughout town.
- Missouri Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Programs for the city of Vienna to extend sidewalks throughout town.
- Missouri Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Programs for the city of Hermann to extend sidewalks in downtown.
- The Missouri Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) General Infrastructure for Phelps County to begin construction of North Outer Road to divert commercial traffic out of residential area known as Northwye.
- Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program for Washington County to upgrade Berryman Road between Hwy 8 and USFS Berryman Trail and Campground.
- Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program for Washington County to upgrade Pigeon Roost Road from Hwy 8 to Jinkerson Road to improve connection between Berryman Campground and Hazel Creek Campground.
- Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program for Washington County to replace a bridge over Hazel Creek on Brazil Road near USFS campground.
- Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program for Washington County to upgrade

Jinkerson Road from Hwy. 8 to Hwy. P to improve access to MTNF.

- Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program for Washington County to upgrade Berryman Road and Floyd Tower Road between Berryman Campground and Hwy. W near Brazil Campground.
- Missouri Department of Transportation 5310 Program for Meramec Regional Planning Commission to establish the Mobility Management Program.
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources Scrap Tire Program for the city of Salem to purchase recycled tire material for a playground at the city park.
- Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council Mobility Manager for Meramec Regional Planning Commission to establish the Mobility Management System.
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund for the city of Cuba to make ADA improvements at the Cuba Sports Complex.
- Missouri Department of Economic Development NAP program for Dixon Area Caring Center to build a new fitness center and renovations to the recycling center to increase service.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Community Facility for Rolla Area Sheltered Workshop, sponsored by Phelps County, to purchase neighboring property so the workshop can expand.
- Missouri Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grant General Infrastructure for Washington County to replace the low water crossing over Mill Creek on Tiff Road.
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program for Whispering Oaks Estates, Inc., to renovate 26 low income/senior apartments.
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program for Meramec Regional Planning Commission to make home repairs on low income housing.
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program for Golden Years Apartments to renovate 12 apartments and upgrade the septic system.
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program for the Haven Manor of New Haven, Inc., to renovate 36 USDA funded senior apartments.

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. MRPC, working in cooperation with the Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation, continued efforts to assist communities in meeting the need for affordable housing for low-to-moderate income families. Staff continued to work with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee. This group provides oversight and input into the region's overall economic development strategy.

## • **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 Corporation 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 Microloan funding.

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, RLF and micro-loans reduce the banks' exposure. All loans are made in partnership with local private financial institutions. Eligibility for financing in these programs is dependent on saving and/or creating jobs in the region, as well as financial stability and use of proceeds. The Meramec Region has used the SBA 504 program since 1991 and the RLF since 1985, to assist in financing business start-ups and expansions.

Since 1991, SBA 504 loans have created or retained 1,301 jobs in the Meramec Region for an average investment of \$19,683 per job. SBA's requirement is one job for every \$65,000 invested. Using the RLF program, which was established in 1985, the local development board has created or retained 859 jobs at a cost of \$4,158 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 67 loans worth \$3,572,337 have been made through the RLF over the life of the program. Under the IRP program, which was established in 2006, staff has made 14 loans and created or retained nearly 117 jobs, an average cost of \$9,449 per job. The total amount loaned through the IRP is \$1,105,834.

## • 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.

The MRPC homeownership program originated with \$793,000 in state and federal funding. Since then, over \$333,800 has been donated in cash, material, labor and a house. Sales proceeds, in the amount of \$1.5 million, were reinvested in the program. With MRPC's homeownership program, homes were purchased and renovated to meet federal housing-quality standards and equipped with a new range and refrigerator. Grant funds were available to cover closing costs and help subsidize the down payment. Some 30 homes have been rehabilitated and sold since 1994, and the final home in Cuba was renovated and was sold shortly after the start of FY14-15.

In more recent years, MCEC and MRPC have committed to helping low-income homeowners maintain their homes through a renovation program. The program, which is funded through the Missouri Housing Trust Fund and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines, allows qualified homeowners to make home repairs and improvements creating safer, healthier and more energy efficient homes.

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), a seven-county area that includes seven of the region's counties, 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 125 grants totaling \$2.34 million to support local and regional projects. These grants have targeted businesses, local governments, schools and non-profits. The 2015 grant cycle provided funding for: drop-off recycling in the City of Salem; litter and illegal dumping cleanup programs in Maries and Phelps counties; establishing recycling in the Phelps County Courthouse; permanent household hazardous collection sites in the cities of Rolla and St. Robert; recycling initiatives at Wallis Companies in Cuba; and recycling and education programs in Dixon and Waynesville school districts. The Meramec Regional Planning Commission's grants provide for 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 2010 and 2014, HHW collections totaled 42.90 tons at the two sites. Annual collections averaged 6.2 tons and the 2014 collection increased to 10.6 tons. The district is currently investigating opportunities to develop a third HHW collection site.

Special collections are routinely held for residential electronics, appliances and tires. The district has organized 42 electronic waste collections since April 2003 along with 31 collections for appliances and 25 collections for tires since 2005. The district has also assisted with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Scrap Tire program by helping coordinate amnesty tire collections in four counties.

The district continues to facilitate its annual student poster and trash art contests. This project has annually engaged an average of 800 students from 15 schools in themed activities promoting recycling. Staff exhibits winning entries at various venues such as Missouri University of Science and Technology's Earth Day event to educate the community and promote the district's programs. One example is school field trips to recycling and landfill facilities. The district coordinates and funds student field trips

to recycling and solid waste facilities. Since 2009, the district has provided 1,750 students with first-hand experience and education for reducing and recycling solid waste. These field trips often serve as precursors to initiating school-based recycling programs.

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 140 dump sites have been cleaned up. In doing so, an estimated 900 tons of trash has been removed and properly disposed; 72 tons of metal have been recycled, and 19,389 tires have been collected for recycling. The district has recruited 1,629 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 2014, more than 611 tons – or the equivalent of 61,183 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 also works under contract with the Meramec Regional Emergency Planning Committee, 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 also conducted one tabletop training exercise and coordinated one hazardous materials training.

### • **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 2005FY, the first grant awarded to the project was \$506,593. Since then, grant funds consistently decreased to as low as \$49,354 in 2012FY, before it increased to \$106,494 in 2014FY, but decreased again in 2015FY when it awarded MRPC with a \$90,497.47 grant. 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.

Staff also worked with the State Emergency Management Agency on a functional exercise for Region I in 2012 and 2013 and performed the NIMSCAST roll up for all six counties in Region I from 2008 to 2012. In 2013-15, staff and HSOC members completed work on a regional Threats and Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment, provided credentials for first responders and began working closely with SEMA to provide local workshops for Missouri's Faith-Based Organizations Active in Disasters Initiative.

### • **Hazard Mitigation Planning**

In 2015, MRPC worked in partnership with Pulaski County to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), using grant funds through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). 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. Currently, the Pulaski County HMP is awaiting adoption by its jurisdictions and school districts. The final draft will then be submitted to SEMA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval. Additionally, MRPC started working on the first draft of the Phelps County HMP. MRPC completed initial plans and updates for seven of its eight counties between 2011 and 2014.

### • **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 FY2014-15, MRPC assisted, on average, 677 families by providing \$2.8 million in rental assistance each year. PHA staff also performed 1,401 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, 17 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 78 families in the FSS program, 39 families have escrow accounts totalling \$87,107. In FY 2014-15, five clients successfully completed their FSS contracts and received their escrow accounts. The five shared \$18,778.

## • **Services to Local Governments**

***Ordinance Codification:*** For well over two decades, MRPC has provided ordinance codification services to its member cities for a fee. Staff prepare an electronic version of all ordinances, indexes, 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 and asbestos inspection services to its member governments and private industry. MRPC also assists the cities of Bland and Owensville with code enforcement issues, under contract.

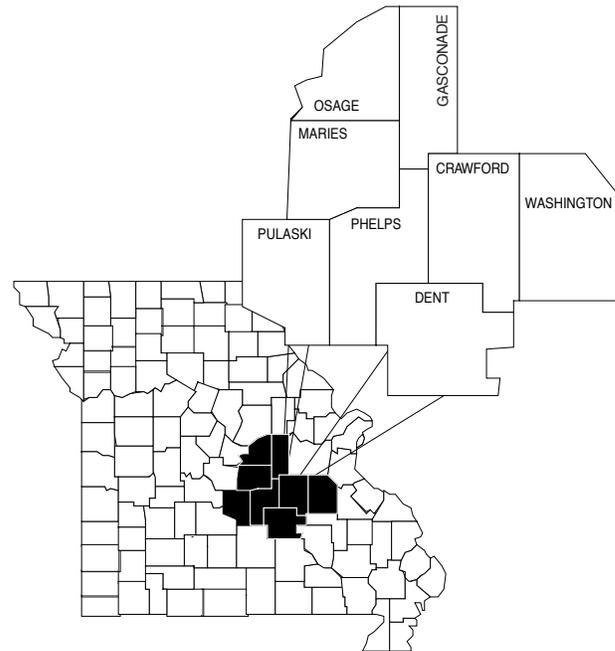
# MERAMEC REGION FACTS

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 35 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 2014, the eight-county Meramec Region was home to 201,247 people, reflecting a decrease of seven people from the 2010 decennial census and essentially no growth.

Individual 2014 estimate county populations range from a low of 9,013 in Maries County to 53,436 in Pulaski County. Between 2010 to 2014, Pulaski County's population increased by nearly 2.5 percent. All other individual counties previously experienced high growth rates reflected in



the 2010 Census. From 2010 through 2014, the state of Missouri is estimated to have grown by .1 percent.

The largest city in the region continues to be Rolla, the county seat of Phelps County. It has 19,926 people by 2014 estimates, up from 19,559 in 2010. The smallest city is Morrison in Gasconade County with 139 residents.

The region's population in 2014 showed slightly more males than females, just as it did in 2010. The region's median age in 2014 was 39.3 years, which is slightly older than the median age in the state and nation.

The region is predominantly white with a 10 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.

Demographics 2014	
Population.....	201,832
Male.....	55.2%
Female.....	44.8%
White.....	90%
Black.....	4%
Asian.....	.1.6%
American Indian.....	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific.....	0.2%
Some Other Race.....	0.8%
Two or More Races.....	2.6%

Source: 2010-14 ACS 5 Year Estimate

## 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 2014 Census information, was \$41,982. The state median income was \$47,764 while the U.S. median income was \$53,482.

The region's median income is 88 percent of the state's rate and only 78 percent of the nation's rate.

The majority of families in Missouri and those 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 2014 Census data.

The region's poverty rate also runs higher than the state and nation's. Meramec residents living in poverty in 2014 numbered 25,558, which represents 12.7 percent of the population. Some 11.1

Population by Age	
Under 5.....	6.1%
0-17 .....	20.5%
18 & Over .....	76.9%
65+ .....	16%
Median Age.....	39.3 years
Source: 2014 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis	

percent of all Missouri residents live in poverty while 11.5 percent of all U.S. residents were living in poverty in 2014. Washington County had the highest poverty rate in the region with 23.4 percent. The lowest was Pulaski County with 12.8 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. The 2014 unemployment rate for the region was 6.6 percent, slightly higher than the state average at 6.1 percent. The U.S. average for 2014 was 8.6 percent. The unemployment rate for 2015 has not yet been finalized.

Median Household Incomes	
Meramec Region .....	\$41,982
Missouri .....	\$47,764
U.S.....	\$53,482
Region as % of State.....	88%
Region as % of Nation.....	78%
Source: 2014 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis	
Family Income	
Families in the region .....	48,030
Under \$10,000.....	5.3%
\$10,000-14,999 .....	3.4%
\$15,000-24,999 .....	10.4%
\$25,000-34,999 .....	11.6%
\$35,000 & over .....	69.3%
Source: 2014 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis	
Persons in Poverty	
Meramec Region .....	12.7%
Missouri .....	11.1%
U.S.....	11.5%
Source: 2014 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis	

Unemployment	
Employed .....	76,096
Unemployed .....	5,520
Total Labor Force.....	81,616
Region's unemployment rate.....	6.6%
State's unemployment rate.....	6.1%
U.S. unemployment rate.....	8.6%
*All data compiled with Jan. 2015 - Nov. 2015 averages. Source: Missouri Department of Economic Development, MRPC	

## Housing

The Meramec Region has 86,957 total housing units with 72,073 occupied, according to the 2013 ACS five year estimates. The average population per unit in the region, based on 2010 census data, is 2.49 people, which almost mirrors the state

average of 2.45 people.

The number of occupied housing units in the region appears to be declining, as there were 74,375 with 72,073 estimated in 2013.

Of the 72,073 occupied units, 49,023 are owner occupied while 23,057 are renter occupied, according to the 2013 ACS five year estimates. In 2013, the median value of a home in the region was \$106,600, compared to a state average of \$137,000. The average monthly rent for a home in the region in 2013 was \$611 while the state average was \$727.

Over half of the housing stock in the region—67.8 percent—was built in 1960 or after. Around 41.5 percent of the homes were built in 1980 or after, indicated by the 2013 ACS five year estimates.

## Housing at a Glance

Number of housing units in region.	86,957
Number occupied .....	72,073
Number owner occupied.....	49,023
Number renter occupied .....	23,057
Vacant units .....	14,884
Persons per unit in region (2010).....	2.49
Persons per unit in state (2010).....	2.45
Median value in region .....	\$106,600
Median value in state.....	\$137,000
Median monthly rent in region .....	\$611
Median monthly rent in state .....	\$727
Housing units in region	
built before 1939.....	8,538
Housing units in region	
built 1940-59.....	12,202
Housing units in region	
built 1960-1979.....	22,932
Housing units in region	
built 1980-99.....	26,078
Housing units in region	
built 2000 and after.....	17,207

Source: 2013 ACS 5 year & 2010 Census data, MRPC analysis

## Education Levels

2014 percent of adults 25 years and older with at least a high school diploma.

Meramec Region .....	82.8%
Missouri .....	88%
U.S.....	86.3%

Source: 2014 ACS 5 year estimates and MRPC Analysis

## Education Levels

Some 82.8 percent of the region's population aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, according to the 2014 ACS five year estimates. This percentage is 5.2 percent less than state and 3.5 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.

The region's most educated county in 2014

## Regional Industrial Employment

Employed persons 16 and over.....	74,964
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining .....	2,386
Construction .....	5,539
Manufacturing.....	9,967
Transportation/warehousing & utilities .....	3,139
Wholesale trade.....	1,290
Retail trade .....	9,012
Information.....	877
Finance, insurance, real estate & rental/leasing .....	2,803
Professional, scientific, mgmt., admin. & waste mgmt. ser. ....	3,378
Educational, health & social ser.....	18,808
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food ser. ....	6,886
Other services .....	3,484
Public Administration .....	7,065

Source: 2010-14 ACS 5 Year Estimates and MRPC analysis

was Osage, with 89.6 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 30 years ago. In the region, services was the largest employment sector with over 18,000 employees, followed by manufacturing and retail trade.

Health care, education and social assistance is the highest employment industry in the region with 18,808 employees, which makes up 25 percent of employment in the region, according to ACS Five Year Estimates.

The number of manufacturing firms in the region has continued to increase.

The 2015 Missouri Directory of Manufacturers listed 454 manufacturing firms in the region, compared to 413 in 2014.

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 the Walmart Distribution Center with 663 employees. It is located in Phelps County.

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. Flights from Cape Air bring passengers to and from St. Louis three to four times each day. 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 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, Ameren Missouri railbanked the line and put it under the management of Missouri State Parks for use as a trail. The development of a walking and biking trail is currently underway.

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  
Bob Baldwin, representing the mayor of Cuba  
Jim Barnett, representing for-profit sector  
Kathy Byrd, chairperson of Leasburg  
Dennis Watz, mayor of Sullivan  
Sharon Hubbard, representing mayor of Steelville  
Danny Skaggs, mayor of Bourbon

## **DENT COUNTY**

Ray Walden, representing mayor of Salem  
Darrell Skiles, presiding commissioner  
Vacant, representing for-profit

## **GASCONADE COUNTY**

Larry Miskel, presiding commissioner  
Mark Wallace, representing mayor of Hermann  
Shannon Grus, mayor of Rosebud  
Ron Kraettli, representing for-profit sector  
Matt Dittman, representing the mayor of Bland  
John Kamler, mayor of Owensville  
Debbie Green, mayor of Gasconade

## **MARIES COUNTY**

J.C. James, mayor of Vienna  
Darrell Schulte, representing for-profit sector  
Ray Schwartze, presiding commissioner  
Steve Vogt, representing the mayor of Belle

## **OSAGE COUNTY**

Mark Boyer, representing for-profit sector  
Lawrence Hoffman, mayor pro-tem of Meta  
Tammy Massman, mayor of Westphalia  
Dave Dudenhoeffer, presiding commissioner  
Jerry Struempf, chairman of Freeburg  
Dwight Massey, mayor of Linn  
Chris Bundrick, chairman of Argyle  
James Wright, mayor of Chamois

## **PHELPS COUNTY**

Paula James, representing mayor of Edgar Springs

Jeff Medows, representing for-profit sector  
John Petersen, representing the mayor of Rolla  
James Poucher, mayor of Newburg  
Paul Smith, mayor of Doolittle  
Randy Verkamp, presiding commissioner  
Jim White, mayor of St. James

## **PULASKI COUNTY**

Ken Bassett, representing for-profit sector  
Shawn Wethington, mayor of Dixon  
Greg Stratman, representing mayor of Richland  
George Lauritson, mayor of St. Robert  
Luge Hardman, mayor of Waynesville  
James Morgan, mayor of Crocker  
Gene Newkirk, presiding commissioner

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

T.R. Dudley, mayor of Potosi  
Robin Husky, chairman of Mineral Point  
Doris Keim, mayor of Irondale  
Debby Bust, representing for-profit sector  
John Robinson III, chairman of Caledonia  
Marvin Wright, presiding commissioner

## **AT-LARGE MEMBERS**

Kraig Bone, representing emergency management  
Don Brackhahn, representing seniors  
Earl Brown, representing the disabled  
John Casey, representing transportation  
Dr. Don Claycomb, representing higher education  
Vacant, representing labor  
Jan Haviland, representing industry  
Mary Heywood, representing the unemployed  
Marla Stevenson, representing banking  
Marcus Maggard, representing tourism  
Robert Parsons, representing farming  
Janey Radford, representing small business  
Janet Walker, representing minorities  
Brenda Hughes, representing healthcare

# 2016 MRPC LEADERSHIP

## Board & Staff

Chairman: .....T.R. Dudley, Mayor of Potosi  
Vice Chairman: .....Ray Schwartze, Presiding Commissioner of Maries County  
Treasurer: .....Mary Heywood, At-Large Representative for Unemployed  
Secretary: .....James Morgan, Mayor of Crocker  
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

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## 2015 Associate Members:

### PLATINUM MEMBERS

Bank of Crocker  
Town and Country Bank  
Legends Bank  
ACE Manufacturing  
Pulaski Co. Sewer District #1

### GOLD MEMBERS

C.M. Archer Group, P.C.

### SILVER MEMBERS

Argyle Catering  
Southeast Mo. Transportation Service, Inc.  
Ameren Missouri  
First State Community Bank  
Community Foundation of the Ozarks  
First Community national Bank  
Gascosage Electric Cooperative  
Investment Reality  
Maries County Bank

Mid-America Bank & Trst  
Missouri S&T  
Perkins Lumber Company  
State Technical College of Missouri  
Three Rivers Electric Cooperative  
Unico Bank  
Verkamp & Malone  
21 Design Group Engineer & Consulting  
Sellers-Sexton, Inc.  
Central Federal Savings & Loans

### EXCHANGE MEMBERS

Hermann Area Chamber of Commerce  
Steelville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Sullivan Area Chamber of Commerce  
Rolla Area Chamber of Commerce  
Waynesville-St.Robert Chamber of Commerce  
Washington County/Potosi Chamber of Commerce  
Owensville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce



*Legislative Priorities in the  
Meramec Region*



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**

4 Industrial Drive, St. James, MO 65559  
Phone: (573)265-2993 • Fax: (573)265-3550  
Email: [info@missourimeramecregion.org](mailto:info@missourimeramecregion.org)

**Or visit:**

[www.meramecregion.org](http://www.meramecregion.org)  
[www.missourimeramecregion.org](http://www.missourimeramecregion.org)  
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