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## Group Unveils Plan to Promote Region

By Joe Barker, Missourian Staff Writer

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# Missouri River Country

A new logo and a dedicated group working on promoting the region were two of the highlights of the second annual Commerce and Conservation workshop.

A group of people from communities along the Missouri River attended the conference at Jesuit Hall. Last year's event was described by organizer Dan Burkhardt as a "think tank" for ideas to promote the area dubbed the "Missouri River Country" — a region covering Hermann to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

If 2015 was about ideas, the 2016 conference was about putting ideas to work.



## New Logo

After last year's conference, a group of civic leaders from the Missouri River Country began meeting and brainstorming ways to promote the area. One idea was to create a unified destination brand.

Diann Cage, a St. Louis based designer, unveiled the new logo for Missouri River Country. Cage explained the logo features many shapes and symbols that will be familiar to people in the area.

The logo is intended to have multiple meanings. For example, the upper right corner of the design features a yellow image. Cage said the image could be the sun's rays, a bike spoke or a windmill — it's up to the viewer to decide.

The logo is intended to be used by all communities along the river. Washington Mayor Sandy Lucy, a member of the committee who approved the logo, said she envisioned it being on city limit signs at some point in the future.

"I'm very excited about the whole idea to market us as a region," Lucy said. "We are all separate entities along this trail. We all have our own focus, and yet, in reality we don't have enough to invite someone to come for a week and entertain them in our borders. We need to be able to partner with New Haven or Hermann or Augusta or Marthasville. The world is changing and we look at everything more regionally now."

## Boonslick Board

Creating the logo was the first step. Chad Eggen, executive director of the Boonslick Regional Planning Commission, provided the second.

Edgen said Boonslick is going to create a board devoted to the Missouri River Country. The board of directors will be made up of people from all the communities from diverse backgrounds.

The idea behind the board is to have some full-time work on promoting the area. The group, using Boonslick's connections, can apply for grants and focus solely on this one project.

Lucy said the committee that was behind the logo was working just part time and couldn't devote its full energy to the project. The new board could.

"We really think putting it in with Boonslick Regional Planning is just the perfect place for it to be," she said. "They already have a funding stream. They already have an organization and structure."

Burkhardt said he was thrilled the Missouri River Country idea is moving forward.

"I really couldn't be happier," Burkhardt said. "This is what we saw other areas, other regions doing and we were envious. We wanted to see our part of the world tell its story and collaborate. This is what we hoped for."

## **Other Presentations**

One of the ideas presented at last year's session was creating a designated area along the Missouri River that celebrates the area's German history.

Steve Belko, executive director with the Missouri Humanities Council, told the gathered crowd about the success of the idea.

Local legislators Justin Alferman and Dave Schatz sponsored legislation to designate the area the German Heritage Corridor. Belko said the measure garnered wide support in both the House and Senate.

Belko said the next step is applying for a federal grant to do more research on the corridor. One thing that won't be done he said was a ton of changes.

"We want people to see it as it is, and as it was," he said.

The workshop also featured presentations and videos from The Nine Network and Trailnet.

Jack Galmiche, CEO of The Nine Network of Public Media, talked about how his network has done features and videos on the Missouri River area. The videos are shared on public television throughout the state, online and on other platforms.

Galmiche said The Nine Network is constantly working on how to make its projects more widely shared.

Ralph Pfremer, executive director of Trailnet, talked about how biking has connected parts of St. Louis.

He said the goal of the Missouri River area should be to leverage wine country and the Katy Trail into a larger overall narrative of the St. Louis region.

By connecting the river area to the St. Louis area, Pfremer said the region can help change its outside narrative.