



# Morrow, Mississippi River Mayors Step-Up Resilience Projects as Spring Flood Season

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ST. LOUIS – Mayors of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative gathered this week for their virtual Capitol Meeting in Washington, DC to meet with national leaders on resilience and infrastructure spending.

Leaders in Washington for the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative 10th virtual Capitol Meeting addressed three key points during the meetings announced at today's press conference:

On the eve of flood season 2022, Mayors are working to make critical progress on the partnership launched with Ducks Unlimited - dirt is moving and new flood storage is being made;

Mayors are launching a new and unique MRCTI Infrastructure Facility to help cities add a new level of capacity to compete for Jobs Act grants over the next several cycles;

Mayors announce the opening of the second Outcomes-based Financing Challenge with Quantified Ventures. The Two-Rivers Project with Ducks Unlimited will work to create natural flood storage at within the confluence area of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers reducing vulnerability for both Illinois and Missouri cities that sustained significant damage during the 2016 and 2019 floods.

"The historic floods of 2019 wiped-out more than 80 percent (80%) of my city's economy and then COVID-19 took the rest," said Mayor Mike Morrow of Grafton, IL. "The Two-Rivers Project with Ducks Unlimited will work to divert acres of inundation away from my city and into wetland areas." "We now have the design work completed, the necessary permitting, and we're moving dirt to make sure the Mississippi and the Illinois rivers flood a natural area before the downtown centers of Grafton, IL; West Alton, MO; Alton, IL and others."

"What's more is that this project is just one of many we unveiled in September 2021 with MRCTI to increase resilience at corridor scale," explained Michael Sertle, Chief Project Biologist with Ducks Unlimited.

The \$1.5 trillion spending bill known as the Jobs Act, or Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Package is partly comprised of competitive funds at the state and federal level. In order to better position the Mississippi river corridor, MRCTI has entered into an agreement with a number of partners in Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Washington, D. C. and along the Corridor to provide cities a new level of capacity called the MRCTI Infrastructure Facility to help compete for the estimated \$75 billion in federal funding that will be coming into the corridor over the next five years.

Mayor Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS, and Co-Chair of MRCTI said, “This Infrastructure Facility is going to lift our cities to a point where they could move out more and better Jobs Act proposals with more sound strategy, science, priority, resilience, and environmental justice.”

Four partners comprise the MRCTI Infrastructure Facility with more to come. Each organization brings a valuable Jobs Act asset including Arnold & Porter for general strategy and priority-setting; CSRS for disaster resilience and climate mitigation; Quantified Ventures for financial structuring and share assemblage; and Two Degrees Adapt for data analysis, science, and knowledge-based approaches. Finally, Mayors announced in close partnership with Quantified Ventures a second Outcomes-based Financing Challenge through which additional Mississippi River cities will be awarded a grant to structure an outcomes-based finance model for a resilience/environmental improvement project pertaining to any type of infrastructure. “When we launched the first challenge in 2019, we weren’t sure what kind of projects we would end-up with where. But, the first round ended-up making history with the development of the Mississippi River Corridor’s first ever green mortgage program in New Orleans,” explained Eric Letsinger, founder and CEO of Quantified Ventures.

“Sustaining the beauty and restoration of the Wolf River wetlands is vital, and Memphis is poised to implement our resiliency project,” said Mayor Jim Strickland of Memphis and MRCTI CoChair.

Participants and Contacts: Presiding: Jim Strickland, Mayor of Memphis, TN, MRCTI Co-Chair Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS, MRCTI Co-Chair Spring Flood Season: Hon. Mike Morrow, Mayor of Grafton, IL Michael Sertle, Chief Biologist, Ducks Unlimited Announcement: James Kim, Partner – Arnold & Porter Brian Smoliak, Partner – Two Degrees Adapt Tim Barfield, President CSRS Eric Letsinger, CEO & Founder – Quantified Ventures