



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**®

St. Paul District

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**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Mississippi River Commission

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### Mississippi River Commission

Following several decades of constitutional squabbles, engineering disputes and regional bickering dating back to the early 1800s, Congress recognized the need to harmonize river improvements through a central organization. On June 28, 1879, the federal legislature, assisted by the efforts of a congressional coalition of navigation and flood-control interests, established the Mississippi River Commission as an executive body.

The president appoints the Mississippi River Commission, which is mandated to have three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' officers, one member from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and three civilians. The work of the Mississippi River Commission is directed by its president, commander of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division, and carried out by the six Army Engineer districts at St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans.

The general duties of the Mississippi River Commission include the recommendation of policy and civil work programs along the river, the study of and reporting upon the necessity for modifications or additions to the Mississippi River flood control and navigation projects, recommendation upon any matters authorized by law, inspection trips and holding public hearings. Each year, the commission takes a high- and low-water inspection trip onboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI. During each inspection trip, the commission hosts several public hearings in different river towns along the way.

### Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI

Today's Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI, built in 1993 by Halter Marine, is the fifth Corps of Engineers' towboat to bear the name. It is the biggest diesel towboat in the United States at 241 feet long and 58 feet wide with 6,300 horsepower. The MV MISSISSIPPI is also a passenger boat. It has 22 staterooms and can accommodate 150 passengers. The conference room seats 115 people and is used for public meetings, commission and congressional meetings. Its dining room seats 85.

The MV MISSISSIPPI spends more than 90 percent of its time as a working towboat for Memphis District moving barges, equipment and supplies on the Mississippi River. However, it also still serves as an inspection boat for the Mississippi River Commission, as well as a giant floating ambassador for the Corps of Engineers.



Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI