

News Conference

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Rock Island Schwiebert Riverfront Park Naming and Dedication Ceremony

Rock Island's newest park, located on the riverfront between 17th and 20th Streets, was officially named Schwiebert Riverfront Park at a ceremony on Friday, October 23, 2009, honoring former mayor, Mark Schwiebert.

The public ceremony was officiated by Mayor Dennis Pauley, Parks and Recreation Board Chairman Fred Dasso, Jim Hass of Williams / Valley Construction Management LLC, and William Nelson, Parks and Recreation Director. Mark and Debbie Schwiebert graciously acknowledged the dedication.

The downtown park will offer spectacular views of the Mississippi River, and will include an open-air stage, playground areas, interactive fountain, observation shelter, waterfront promenade, bike trail, beautifully landscaped grounds, and other amenities. The Parks and Recreation Department is making special event and activity plans for the park, including a grand opening event as well as family-friendly activities. In addition, the public will be able to reserve park space for reunions, weddings, parties, and other functions. The \$10 million park is on target to be completed in Summer 2010. Call 309-732-PARK or visit www.rigov.org for updates.

Honoring Mark Schwiebert

The new riverfront park in Downtown Rock Island, on the site of the former National Guard Armory, is being named for former mayor, Mark Schwiebert, for his tireless efforts to promote public use of the Mississippi Riverfront.

Mark Schwiebert served as mayor of Rock Island for twenty years. During his tenure, Mr. Schwiebert provided vision and leadership for the creation of this new riverfront park. Naming Schwiebert Riverfront Park recognizes Mr. Schwiebert's tireless efforts to guide the City of Rock Island in the decisions of what should be built on the riverfront, what it should look like, who it should serve, and how it will play a critical role in connecting The District to the Mississippi River. Naming this park for Mark Schwiebert is a fitting tribute for the countless hours he spent on this effort.

The Parks and Recreation Board recently created guidelines for naming parks; parks can be named for a marketing purpose, location or historical purpose, donation, or community service. The Parks and Recreation Board voted in August 2009 to name Schwiebert Riverfront Park to honor his 20+ years in a leadership position with significant impact on the park, as well as direct ties to the park including spearheading the development.

Background

In 1996, the National Guard vacated the Armory for a new facility, and requested proposals for purchase of the building and property. The City of Rock Island submitted the only proposal, with a purchase price of \$90,000. The offer was accepted with approval by Governor James Edgar in January 1997.

After much public debate, the City of Rock Island determined the highest and best use of the riverfront site was to demolish the Armory. After an impassioned, eloquent, and compelling presentation in March 2007 by then Mayor Schwiebert, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency approved release of a covenant on the property that allowed the City to decide whether partial or complete demolition of the Armory was appropriate. IHPA granted this permission on May 10, 2007.

The park honors the National Guard Armory Building that served as a sentinel on the riverfront for more than 70 years and provided space for numerous events such as ice skating performances, concerts, and the circus.

RiverVision Project

The Cities of Rock Island and Davenport, together with corporate and community groups, completed a bi-state public planning process in 2003 that resulted in the RiverVision plan being unanimously adopted by both cities in 2004. This bi-state plan, the only one of its kind in the nation, was the basis for the U.S. Conference of Mayors awarding First Place honors to Davenport and Rock Island in the 2007 City Livability Awards, calling RiverVision “a far-reaching and broadly participatory waterfront plan that provides a coordinated framework for channeling development and configuring urban public open space to improve the quality of living in Davenport and Rock Island.”

RiverVision is built on five strategic goals:

- Connect Rock Island and Davenport.
- Capitalize on the unique qualities of Rock Island and Davenport.
- Create new urban parks appropriate for each city.
- Identify catalysts for spurring economic development.
- Phase project implementation to demonstrate early success.

Creating a Riverfront Park

An important element of the RiverVision Plan in Rock Island is development of a public park on the Mississippi Riverfront. This one-fifth of a mile long park is adjacent to downtown. Much of the area was formerly used to support Jumer’s Casino Rock Island riverboat gaming operation, which has now relocated to the City’s southwest area, at the interchange of IL-92 and I-280. The City started working with Schreiber /Anderson Associates Inc. to design concepts for the riverfront park in 2004. Sub-contractors for the design include: Stanley Consultants for structural engineering and permitting, Gere~Dimer Architects as architects, KJWW Engineering Consultants as electrical engineer, and WESCO Fountain, Inc. for fountain mechanicals.

The park has several project goals:

1. Maximize use and flexibility of the green.
2. Iconic space on river.
3. Aesthetically pleasing, creative design.
4. Water access - physical & visual.
5. Public boat docks.
6. Retain flood control.

7. Capture river views.
8. Meet park programming needs.
9. Linkage to downtown and The District.
10. Enhance downtown and riverfront redevelopment opportunity.

After reviewing many options, holding a series of meetings to gain public comment in 2005-06, and refining the plans, then-Mayor Schwiebert and the City Council selected a preferred concept to move forward with design and development in February 2008.

Known at that time as the “Armory Silhouette” concept, it included a main stage area and great lawn that mimics the former Armory building’s footprint. The park also includes a water feature, an observation shelter, riverfront promenade, rain garden, playground equipment, urban beach, restrooms, parking, and flood protection. The plan shows an area for a dock, which could be added in the future. The park contains grass, plants and trees, along with some hard surfaces.

This park, when completed next year, will establish a beautiful riverfront area for public use that provides a year-round venue for arts and entertainment and recreational programming. It is the City’s goal to use the proximity of the riverfront to complement development activity in the downtown and create a legacy and point of pride for future generations.

Flood Protection

The north façade of the Armory was part of the City’s flood protection system. Due to the Armory’s demolition, the City designed and installed a demountable flood protection wall to replace the existing structure. This new system will only be installed when directed to do so by the Corps of Engineers. It will provide an unencumbered view of the Mississippi River and downtown Davenport for the majority of the year.

The flood protection system was recently installed to see how easily and quickly it could be put in place and to assure that it meets Corps of Engineers requirements. It will remain in place until the 2010 flood risks have passed. One of the features of the park design extends the normal height of the flood wall providing an additional 3 feet of flood protection without the demountable flood wall.

Construction of Schwiebert Riverfront Park

This project has been broken into several construction phases.

Williams / Valley Construction Management LLC was hired in June 2008 to assist the City in the overall construction management of the park. They are handling all the bids and managing all the sub-contractors on the project.

An environmental evaluation for asbestos and lead-based paint was completed in November 2008 by EnviroNET at a cost of \$5,110 in 2008.

An environmental Abatement was completed by Advance Environmental Testing and Abatement, Inc. in January 2009 at a cost of \$61,818.

Temporary flood protection barriers were purchased in January 2009 from Centennial Contractors of the Quad Cities at a cost of \$52,000.

Bid Release 1: Williams / Valley Construction Management LLC, the construction managers for the project awarded the bids in January 2009. The work is now underway. The total cost of Bid Release 1 is \$2,137,302, which is 24% below estimates.

- Demolition bid (Armory demolition and site clearance) was awarded to Valley Construction at a cost of \$414,620.
- Interceptor sewer bid (part of the City's \$60+ million Long Term Control Plan) was awarded to Foley Construction, Inc. at a cost of \$1,068,525.
- Fencing bid (site security) was awarded to Lovewell Fencing at a cost of \$75,370.
- Sheet piling bid (provides underground support for permanent flood protection) was awarded to General Constructors, Inc. at a cost of \$324,750.
- Construction Management (overall management of park construction) was awarded to Williams / Valley Construction Management LLC at a cost of \$254,037.

Bid release 1 was completed in September 2009.

Bid Release 2: Williams / Valley Construction Management LLC opened the bids on April 7, 2009. City Council awarded the bids on April 20, 2009 in the amount of \$7.2 million. Work includes a performance stage, small pavilion, two playgrounds, benches, fountain, landscaping, restrooms, and other amenities.

All underground utility, grading, and mechanical work is complete. The entry building, main stage, water feature, secondary stage, eastern parking lot, and riverfront promenade are underway. The Modern Woodmen parking lot is nearly complete and the floodwall system is in place.

- Earthwork and concrete – Treiber Construction – \$1,564,900
- Site utilities – McCleary Excavating Co., Inc. – \$175,288
- Asphalt paving – Tri-City Blacktop, Inc. – \$101,612
- Landscaping – Miller Trucking and Excavating – \$774,700.00
- Fencing – Lovewell Fencing, Inc. - \$20,836
- Demountable floodwall – Langman Construction, Inc. – \$218,888
- Playground equipment – Valley Construction – \$218,000
- Masonry and Stone Veneer – Bob White Masonry – \$537,000
- Structural and Miscellaneous Steel – Design Build Structures – \$404,325
- General Trades – Valley Construction – \$153,200
- Roofing and Sheet Metal – Sterling Commercial Roofing – \$144,900
- Aluminum Framed Light Tops and Skylights- Crawford Company – \$177,500
- Water Feature Piping and Equipment – Greenscape Pump Services – \$674,584
- HVAC and Plumbing – Ragan Mechanical, Inc. – \$127,343
- Electrical and Sound Equipment – Rock River Electric, Inc. – \$692,143
- Construction Management – Williams / Valley – \$492,000
- Modern Woodmen parking lot, landscaping and fixtures – \$259,240

The project is being paid for from the Downtown Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District funds, a source that can only be spent in the downtown area. Bonds have been issued for \$11.1 million, plus TIF revenues of \$1.25 million totaling \$12.35 million, covering design, engineering architectural, and construction costs. TIF funds will be used to retire the bonds.



Schwiebert Riverfront Park