

Annual Farnam Dinner

Planning & Redevelopment Division

January 21, 2009



Seventy-five years ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed Locks and Dam 15, submerging the treacherous Rock Island Rapids. This engineering feat heralded a new era in river commerce, and transformed the Upper Mississippi River. **The Quad Cities Sixth Annual Henry Farnam Dinner**, combined with the Quad City Engineering and Science Council's 47th Engineering Week Banquet, will celebrate this anniversary on **Friday, February 20**. The public is invited to attend an evening filled with engineering wonder, historical commentary and contemplation of the river's future.

Featured speaker is John O. Anfinson of the National Park Service presenting "A River Transformed: The Upper Mississippi Before and After Locks and Dams."

Dr. Anfinson will give an illustrated presentation about how much the Upper

Mississippi River has changed since 1854 and how much it may change in the future.

Locks and Dam 15 were the first of 23 locks and dams that would transform the Upper Mississippi into the river we know today. Whereas previous navigation projects had failed to keep river commerce alive, the locks and dams succeeded far beyond the hopes of their boosters. These same structures, however, have brought consequences they did not anticipate. The Quad Cities sit at an important junction, not just because of the role the Rock Island Rapids played historically, but because there are key differences facing the Mississippi's future above and below this area.

Dr. Anfinson is the Historian with the National Park Service, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Previously he was District Historian with the St. Paul District of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. He is author of the 2003 book: *The River We Have Wrought: The Upper Mississippi River to 1940*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Dr. Anfinson received B. A., M. A., and Ph. D. degrees from the University of Minnesota.

The evening's program will also include original film footage showing the construction of Locks and Dam 15 between 1932 and 1934 and the traditional Henry Farnam Dinner toasts.

The dinner will be held at the Radisson Quad City Plaza in Davenport. The celebration begins at 5 p.m. with displays, silent auctions, raffle and cash bar followed by the keynote program and dinner. Cost is \$40 per person or \$375 for a table of ten. For more information or to receive an invitation, contact Libby or Curt Roseman at 309.764.6122 or libby@qconline.com. You can also register at www.riveraction.org.

The Quad City Engineering and Science Council is a co-host for the dinner. Sponsors include Friends of the Henry Farnam Dinner; River Action, Inc.; Chippiannock Cemetery Heritage Foundation; Moline Dispatch Publishing Company; City of Rock Island and Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau.