



Alton Mayor Tom Hoechst's February Report

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(Alton, IL -February 2, 2010) – In April of this year, the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) will be dedicated. The impact and importance of this project to the vitality and future of Alton cannot be imagined at this time. This is an opportune time to position Alton as a major player in the water resource sector.

Also in April, the Horinko Group will be hosting a Water Summit in Washington, DC. This will present another opportunity to showcase the efforts of involving water outputs situated in the confluence of the great rivers. This summit will hopefully showcase the collaborative work that has Alton and local educational institutions reconnecting the public to our water resources in lasting and sustainable ways.

The January issue of St. Louis Magazine features the eagle viewing season which encourages people from St. Louis to visit Alton. The programs offered by the Alton Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Corps of Engineers at their museum are also highlighted. This is just one more link to the river and its wildlife that Alton has taken advantage of for nature based tourism. In one weekend last year, the Master of the Sky program brought in over 4,000 visitors. This year, the Corps of Engineers will welcome their 500,000th visitor at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam and the Migratory Bird Sanctuary will receive its 2 millionth guest. These are amazing numbers. Coupled with Argosy, the Marina's success, Riverfront Park improvements, the Amphitheater, the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway, and the new NGRECC Field Station, Alton is becoming a unique nautical community with strong ties to the iconic Mississippi River.

Lewis and Clark Community College's commitment to developing green job training opportunities, particularly the effort to train water treatment plant operators for

certification, and Illinois American Water Company's investment in Alton, at the national call center and the state of the art water plant, are helping to establish ourselves as a major water based employment center.

Water is truly the most valuable resource in the world. We have been given a natural asset and must cherish it from an ecological and economical aspect.