

20th Anniversary Commemoration Event Planned For The National Great Rivers Museum

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ALTON - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rivers Project Office, will be celebrating 20 years since the opening of its National Great Rivers Museum. The celebration will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, November 4 and will include informational tables and children's activities at more than 20 stations, as well as several food trucks.

The commemoration of the National Great Rivers Museum will occur at 12 p.m. on a stage behind the museum, overlooking the Mississippi River and the Melvin Price Locks and Dam. Alton Mayor David Goins and St. Louis District Commander Colonel Andy Pannier, along with others, will be speaking at the commemoration about the importance of on-going cooperation along our Nation's rivers.

"This is truly a great day where we get to highlight the importance of the river and its many stakeholders, from the barge and agricultural industries, to recreation and tourism enthusiasts, to those interested in history and culture," said St. Louis District Commander Colonel Andy Pannier. "There are so many perspectives, with the river at the center of them all, and it's our pleasure to host a day of family fun that can highlight everyone's dedication in making the river work for everyone."

Melvin Price Locks and Dam will feature open tours for the duration of the six-hour event. U.S. Army Corps Rangers and volunteers will be stationed along the dam to answer any questions.

"Open tours allows the public to take the elevator to the top of Melvin Price whenever is convenient for them and spend as little or as much time on top of the structure as they'd like, rather than needing to sign up for a specific tour time," said Allison Rhanor, Director of the National Great Rivers Museum.

Also available at this event are behind-the-scenes "engineering-level" tours. "This is something new," said Rhanor. "We are offering 90-minute tours that take groups inside Melvin Price Locks and Dam. Groups will go through control rooms, machinery rooms, gallery tunnels, and more. These are areas that are not typically open for public viewing, so even if you've lived in Alton your whole life, this is going to be something you've not seen before."

While the public tours offered all day are accessible and open to all, the engineering tours are not ADA accessible, and are only available to U.S. citizens, due to military regulations. The engineering tours will be at 10 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. and require advance registration. To register for one of the behind-the-scenes engineering tours, please register at <https://bitly.ws/YCgK> . Spots are limited.

Preceding the commemoration will be a recognition ceremony for the museum's long-standing group of volunteers, who staff the museum, help to run educational programming alongside Army Corps Park Rangers, and lead tours of Melvin Price Locks and Dam. The event will also include a public panel on river recreation at 1:30pm, in which panel members will answer questions regarding recreational opportunities and obstacles along the rivers of the region, answering moderated questions as well as questions from the

public. Panel members will include Pere Marquette Site Supervisor Nate Goetten, President of the Illinois Federation of Outdoor Recreation Scott Bryant, Army Corps staff and more. Anyone invested in outdoor recreation, looking to hear more about recreation options, or who want a chance to ask questions regarding the future of access to outdoor activities in the area are encouraged to attend.

“This will be a great day for the entire family, no matter if you’re looking for a tour, some activities for the kids, or want to hear from local leaders about your river” said Rhanor. “With food trucks and things to do both indoors and outdoors, it will be a great day to visit the National Great Rivers Museum.”

The National Great Rivers Museum is located at 2 Locks and Dam Way, Alton IL and is open from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The National Great Rivers Museum is a congressionally approved Class-A Regional Visitor’s Center, one of only about a dozen such facilities owned and operated by the U. S. Corps of Engineers across the country. Since opening its doors 20 years ago, this Alton staple has seen more than one million visitors, with an additional 300,000 community members reached by museum staff at off-site locations across the region. With its offering of free, daily tours of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam and its location along the Great River Road and the Meeting of the Rivers National Scenic Byway, the National Great Rivers Museum has become an international tourism draw as well as a local favorite for school groups or friends and families looking to spend a day together.