THE CITY OF
DUBUQUE

Masterpiece on the Mississippi

Michael C. Van Milligen
City Manager
Dubuque, Iowa
Where is Dubuque, Iowa?

250 miles from Chicago, IL, on the Mississippi River where Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin meet.
“Dubuque’s plight is becoming desperate. It suffered more severely during the recent recession, and has for the past three years had the highest unemployment rate of Iowa’s SMSA’s (largest cities). That unfortunate fact is no surprise to Dubuquers. It has been losing both industry and retail business consistently for the past decade.”

“Dubuque is losing its people. Recent estimates show 10% of the housing stock vacant or available for sale.”

The Dubuque Connection, 1983
Chamber of Commerce Publication
The Port of Dubuque was awarded the 2005 Phoenix Award for Excellence in Brownfield Redevelopment for EPA Region 7, which includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.
PORT OF DUBUQUE
America’s River
“Will the last person to leave please turn out the lights?”
“Few Iowa cities were hit harder in the ‘80s. Few have a better outlook now.”

Des Moines Register
December 2002
Upper Mississippi River

Place in America

USA Weekend
May 2003
America’s River Project
Achievement in Economic Development
2004
Dubuque: Dozen Distinctive Destination 2005
“The face of the river, in time, became a wonderful book . . . And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day.”

*Life on the Mississippi*
PORT OF DUBUQUE
America’s River
$188 million project
90-acre campus
Opened in November 2003
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

- $58 million
- Smithsonian Affiliate
- Owned by Dubuque County Historical Society
- 600,000 visitors in first two years
Grand River Center

- City-owned conference and event center
- $39 million
- 174,000 sq. ft.
Grand Harbor Resort & WaterPark

- $30 million
- Platinum Hospitality Group
- 200 rooms
- 25,000 sq. ft. Indoor WaterPark
Star Brewer & Alliant Amphitheater

- $8 million
- City-owned, private developer
• $600,000 planned rehabilitation of 150-year old historic structure

• Educational and interpretive project with alternative high school
Mississippi Riverwalk & Amenities

- $2 million City Project
Heritage Trail Expansion

- 35 miles of trails connect the Field of Dreams with the Mines of Spain through the Port of Dubuque
How did a town of 60,000 make this happen?
**Vision 2000 Process**

- Initiated in 1990 by the Long-Range Planning Commission
- 5,000 citizens participated
- 3-year process
- Vision 2000 Plan adopted by City Council in 1993
Comprehensive Plan

- Adopted in 1995, replaced 1936 plan
- Revised in 2000
- Based on elements in the Comprehensive Plan, 23 separate implementation plans were developed including the Riverfront Plan
Riverfront Development Plan

The Port of Dubuque Master Plan
Individual components of each plan are prioritized each year in an annual City Council Strategic Planning Process

- Long-Term Vision Statement
- Five-Year Goals
- Annual Priorities
America’s River Founding Partners

• City of Dubuque
• Dubuque County Historical Society
• Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
• Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
• State of Iowa
• Dubuque Racing Association
• Federal Government
• Private Developer (Platinum Hospitality Group)
• Dubuque County
Funding Sources

- City of Dubuque - $51 million
- Dubuque County Historical Society Fundraising - $50 million
- State of Iowa/Vision Iowa - $46 million
- Platinum Hospitality Group - $30 million
- Federal Government - $11 million
  - HUD, EPA, EDA
National & Multi-State Partners

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Tulane University, New Orleans
- Great River Road
- National Scenic Byway
- American Heritage Rivers Project
National & Multi-State Partners continued

• Grand Excursion of 2004
• Millennium Mississippi River Bicycle Trail
• National Maritime Alliance
• Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
• Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
• Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
• Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
• Missouri Dept. of Conservation
• Silos and Smokestacks
Local Partners

• Dubuque Yacht Club
• Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge
• Dubuque Area Labor Management Council
• Dubuque Community School District
• Sac and Fox Tribal Council
• Clarke College
• Loras College
• University of Dubuque
• Northeast Iowa Community College
• University of Iowa Hydrology Department
• Graceland College, Lamoni
Local Partners continued

• Dubuque Area Jaycees
• Key City Rotary Club
• River Discovery Consortium
• Catfish Creek Coalition
• Storm Drain Stenciling Initiative
• Riprow Valley Citizens Group
• Senior High School Key Club
Community Focus Groups

- Hundreds of focus group meetings were held, including some in people’s homes to help design America’s River Project and to do fundraising.
City Tools for Implementation

- Designated Urban Renewal District
- Use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Property Acquisition
- Negotiated Sales
- Eminent Domain
Port of Dubuque Property Acquisitions

- Logging Company: Negotiated Purchase
- Trucking Company: Negotiated Purchase
- Grain Company: Negotiated Purchase
- Lumber Processor: Negotiated Purchase
- Riverwalk/Amphitheatre: Negotiated Purchases
- Cold Storage Facility: Negotiated Purchase
- Brewery Facility: Slum and Blight Condemnation Award
Community support was enhanced by the City NOT ignoring other priority issues

- Implemented Neighborhood Reinvestment Strategy
- Created 1,150 acres in 6 industrial parks, now home to 5,075 jobs
- Developed 14 new City parks since 1994 and 7 more are planned
What’s Next?
• America’s River Phase II
• Bilingual Education Curriculum
• Community-wide Wireless
• Community Health Center
• Indoor/Outdoor Performing Arts Center
• Integrated Walking/Biking/Hiking Trail System
• Library Services Expansion
• Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
• Passenger Train Service
• Warehouse District Revitalization
America’s River Phase II
$254 million

• National River Research and Conservation Center
  To address the need to reduce nutrient loading, understand sediment flow, increase understanding of habitat preservation, and address other nationally significant issues.

• RiverMax Theater
  A large screen theater building will be constructed and films will be created to tell the story of the rivers of America and how those rivers and the people of those rivers have shaped America.

• Children's Splash Zone Museum
  Interactive play exhibits with educational emphasis will provide a hands-on children's museum with a water theme.

• Rivers to the Sea Galleries
  This exhibit space will accommodate 3 or 4 different exhibits that are changeable on a rotating basis: The Rivers of America, their watersheds, their cultural and ecological stories, the people, and their connection to the sea.
Remember One Thing: No one is going to do this for you.
Masterpiece on the Mississippi

www.cityofdubuque.org
www.americasriver.com
www.greaterdubuque.org

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