



# Headlines



June 24, 2004

## Rock Island Prepares for Grand Excursion Events

The Quad Cities has it all as the kick-off location to Grand Excursion 2004 – a four state adventure highlighting the Mississippi River and commemorating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the West to railroad travel. **Events will begin on June 25th** and last through July 5th as the steamboat parade winds its way up the Mississippi River to St. Paul, Minnesota.



For information on Grand Excursion events in Rock Island, click on the event listed below. All of the Quad Cities are hosting activities for Grand Excursion. To learn more about them, please visit [www.visitquadcities.com](http://www.visitquadcities.com). For more information about the Grand Excursion **2004**, click [here](#).

To get authentic steam locomotive tickets or steamboat tickets, go to [www.grandexcursion.com](http://www.grandexcursion.com). Various communities, packages, times and locations are listed. Calendars of events for all participating communities in the four states are also available by date and by city.

### ROCK ISLAND GRAND EXCURSION EVENTS

- 🕒 **Grand Arrival – Welcome the Train**, The District, Friday, June 25, 5:30 p.m.
- 🕒 **Fusion: The Art & Soul of the District** – The District, Friday, June 25, 5 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
- 🕒 **Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse presents “Showboat”**, June 9 –July 11
- 🕒 **Garden Walk – Quad City Botanical Center**, Saturday, June 26, 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- 🕒 **Grand Flotilla Ceremony in the Park**, LeClaire Park, Davenport, June 26, 4:45 p.m.-5:15 p.m.
- 🕒 **Grand Epitaphs, Chippiannock Cemetery**, 2901 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Saturday, June 26, 1 p.m. -3:30 p.m.
- 🕒 **Arsenal Island History**, June 25 & 26, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 🕒 **Fireworks** – Friday, June 25 – Dusk (Rain date June 26)

View the latest  
Grand Excursion  
Media Release



**Grand Arrival – Welcome the Train, The District, Friday, June 25, 5:30 p.m.**

Join Modern Woodmen of America in welcoming the authentic steam locomotive bound for the Quad Cities from Chicago. A grand arrival ceremony will take place in The District to welcome the train and passengers on this historic journey. This is a must see for all Grand Excursion participants. Admission is free. Enjoy additional train trips to Savanna, Geneseo and Dubuque from June 26-28. Train tickets can be purchased at [www.grandexcursion.com](http://www.grandexcursion.com) or by calling 866-GEX-2004.

**Fusion: The Art & Soul of the District – The District, Friday, June 25, 5 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.**

Arts and entertainment transform downtown Rock Island into a lively, cutting edge street party. Celebrate the arrival of Grand Excursion and discover why The District is known as the place for fun! With its jam-packed festival lineup, great entertainment, outstanding art galleries and distinctive dining options, The District is the region's place to play. Call 788-6311 for more information.

**Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse presents “Showboat”, June 9 –July 11**

This Tony-Award winning production still captivates audiences 75 years after its maiden stage voyage. Rich in romance, comedy and history, SHOWBOAT is a vivid spectacle of America's glorious riverboat days. Show and Dinner ticket prices \$22.25 - \$38.81. For more information, [www.circa21.com](http://www.circa21.com) or call 786-7733, ext #2 to make reservations.

**Garden Walk – Quad City Botanical Center, Saturday, June 26, 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Join the Grand Excursion version of the annual Garden Walk. Tour the gorgeous gardens at the Botanical Center and bus to six of the Quad Cities most beautifully landscaped private gardens. Highlights of the tour include an eco-flower garden around a peaceful lake at a private monastery, Japanese inspired gardens, Broadway Historic Garden featuring glass art works, Backyard water gardens set against an oak forest, Sunset Marina's river inspired garden, and an education station hosted by the US Fish & Wildlife Department. Buses run continuously from the Botanical Center. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 day of event. For tickets or more information, call 794-0991.

**Grand Flotilla Ceremony in the Park, LeClaire Park, Davenport, June 26, 4:45 p.m.- 5:15 p.m.**

The five Flotilla riverboats in Bettendorf will lock through to the lower pool to meet the arriving Delta Queen and Mississippi Queen. A ceremony including a parade with all seven boats, dignitaries and official ribbon cutting will kick off the Grand Flotilla in Davenport, but the flotilla viewing will also be great from the Rock Island levee. There will be a special appearance of the Golden Knights paratrooper team. Free admission.

**Grand Epitaphs, Chippiannock Cemetery, 2901 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Saturday, June 26, 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Grand Excursion exhibit will have actors in period costumes portraying some of the early citizens involved in the Grand Excursion of 1854. Continuous performances of Grand Excursion vignettes will be performed throughout the afternoon. Attendees will receive a walking tour guide detailing directions to their specially landscaped graves



with biographies of the featured individuals and descriptions of plantings. Music by O'Malley's Luck. Call 788-6622 for more information. Free admission.

**Arsenal Island History, June 25 & 26, 9 a.m. –5 p.m.**

Guided bus tours will operate daily from the Hospitality Landing in Bettendorf to Arsenal Island's historic and amazing attractions. Guided tours will be taken to the Colonel Davenport House, The Mississippi River Visitor Center at Lock and Dam 15, and the Rock Island Arsenal Museum, the second oldest U.S. Army museum. Tours are free. Contact the Grand Excursion Information office at 762-0707 for detailed times of tours. Admission Fees for the Colonel Davenport House. See [www.davenporthouse.org](http://www.davenporthouse.org) for details.

The Arsenal Island can be accessed with private vehicles during normal operating hours, June 25-26 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and June 27 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Colonel Davenport House located on Arsenal Island will be open for guided tours during these hours. Costumed guides will tell the story of George Davenport and his family including the planning for bringing the railroad to the Rock Island-Davenport area. The tour includes the early 1800's history and features a fur trade exhibit. Call Marcia at 764-6471 for more information.

**Fireworks – Friday, June 25 – Dusk (Rain date June 26)**

Fireworks over the Mississippi River between Rock Island and Davenport. Viewing areas include the District of Rock Island, LeClaire Park in Davenport, Taste of the Quad Cities on the John Deere Commons, Ben Butterworth Park, Moline; and the Hospitality Landing in Bettendorf.



## **More About the Grand Excursion**

The original Grand Excursion of 1854 was a celebration by the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company. It hosted more than 1,200 dignitaries, politicians, journalists, and business leaders, including the 13<sup>th</sup> United States President Millard Fillmore, on a rail and steamboat journey to celebrate the first continuous railroad connection from the East Coast to the Mississippi River – Chicago to Rock Island. Participants boarded rail cars in Chicago and traveled to Rock Island. From there the group transferred to a fleet of steamboats for the trip up the Mississippi River to Saint Paul, Minn., and on to the Falls of Saint Anthony in Minneapolis. The publicity that followed attracted millions of investment dollars and thousands of new residents to the area.

The events surrounding Grand Excursion 2004 will tie the communities together in a common bond while showing the world the new face of the upper Mississippi River – a reclaimed treasure for tourism, housing, and recreation. Over 50 communities and dozens of organizations in the 400-mile upper Mississippi River region will be holding hundreds of events. The largest steamboat flotilla in more than a century will be complemented with trains powered by authentic steam locomotives traveling overland.

On June 25, 2004, a vintage train will leave Chicago and travel to Rock Island. On June 26 seven steamboats, including the Mississippi Queen and Delta Queen, will assemble for the Grand Flotilla. These steamboats will travel up the Mississippi in Grand style, visiting historic communities in four states along the way. It promises to be a Grand Event.