



# GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

## FINAL REPORT

**Working Draft**

**FINAL REPORT**  
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# GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

## FINAL REPORT

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### CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT: MISSION

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The Grand Excursion 2004 will: Celebrate the Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of the Grand Excursion by developing and implementing a series of events focusing on the Grand Flotilla, and through these celebrations bring recognition and awareness to the world.

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The Grand Flotilla, Grand Excursion's capstone celebration event was the largest riverboat and steamboat flotilla on the Mississippi in more than a century. It began June 25, 2004 in the Chicago, IL and the Quad Cities of Iowa and Illinois and ended in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul for the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. The flotilla was complemented by on-shore festivals, programs, tours and educational events in more than 50 ports of call along the 400-mile route, authentic steam locomotive train rides and a 400-mile bike ride.

#### **The Grand Flotilla**

The Official Grand Flotilla was comprised of seven to ten spectacular paddlewheeler boats (varied by river location), five official escort boats, a number of spud and deck barges, two large towboats, and a crane barge. Public cruise options included port-to-port day cruises, breakfast, lunch and dinner cruises, fireworks, moonlight and even parade cruises. River focused entertainment, education and music programming was provided on every boat. For those who wanted to experience all of the Grand Excursion, 3 to 11 night all-inclusive cruises were available aboard the Delta Queen and Mississippi Queen.

Ports of call included the Quad Cities, Clinton, Savanna, Dubuque, Guttenberg, Marquette, Prairie du Chien, La Crosse, Winona, Wabasha, Lake City, Pepin, Red Wing, Hastings, Prescott, Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Participating boats included the Anson Northrup, Betsey Northrup, Delta Queen, Celebration Belle, Harriet Bishop, Julia Belle Swain, Jonathan Padelford, LaCrosse Queen, Mississippi Queen and Spirit of Peoria.

#### **Grand Excursion Steam Locomotive Trips**

The historic train trips began in Chicago on June 25th and journeyed to Rock Island, Illinois, and then traveled upriver through four states, arriving in the Twin Cities for the July 4th weekend, in historic train cars pulled by the Milwaukee Road 261, a coal-burning steam locomotive. The Smithsonian Institution called the 261 one of the finest restored historic locomotives operating anywhere in the world. Premier and first class coaches included parlor and lounge car seating, and food and beverage service. Coach class offered light fare available for purchase.

Grand Excursion offered nine locomotive trips between communities all along the river route. The circle tours originating in Rock Island on June 26-27 offered trips visiting Clinton IA, and Geneseo IL, while the circle tours originating in the Twin Cities July 2-4 offered options traveling through Trempealeau WI, La Crosse WI and Winona MN as well as various shuttle rides from both Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Point-to-point rail excursions were offered from Davenport to Dubuque on June 26, from Dubuque to La Crosse on June 29 and from La Crosse to Saint Paul on June 30.

### **Upper Mississippi Bike Ride**

The Grand Excursion Bike Ride departed Rock Island, Illinois, on June 27th, 2004, following the Grand Flotilla steamboats and arriving in the Twin Cities for the 4th of July weekend. Cyclists for this 400-mile trip had excellent views of the paddlewheelers while riding alongside the beautiful vistas of the bluffs of the upper Mississippi River. The ride covered approximately 35 to 70 miles each day over somewhat hilly terrain. Overnight stops coincided with the excursion boats' docking schedules to allow cyclists to enjoy the entertainment and events that were staged at each port of call -- music festivals, reenactment programs, fireworks displays, hot air balloons and much more.

The \$225 registration fee included a tee-shirt, breakfast in La Crosse, overnight camp sites and transportation of rider's luggage and tents from each campsite to Saint Paul, Minnesota. Riders were responsible for providing their own camping gear, fees for meals and any admission charges to local events in which they chose to participate.

Overnight campground sites were arranged in Rock Island, Savanna and East Dubuque, Illinois; Prairie du Chien, La Crosse and Prescott, Wisconsin; and Wabasha, Red Wing and Saint Paul, Minnesota. Much of the route of the Grand Excursion Bike Ride followed the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), one of 16 National Millennium Trails. Mississippi River Trail, Inc. was one of the major supporters of the Grand Excursion Bike Ride.

### **Community Events**

Grand Excursion communities were invited to embrace the opportunity provided by the Grand Flotilla and plan, produce and provide an appropriate local celebration with a flavor and flair unique to their community. Examples included boat welcoming events, exhibits, fireworks displays, parades, American Indian programs, Grand Excursion dinners, local Grand Excursion 2004 publications, local river educational programs, Discovery Marker dedications and more. Participating communities also helped collaborate with the regional organization on river logistics, security, parking and transportation. Qualifying local programs and events were promoted as part of the official Grand Excursion 2004 calendar of events.

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## **RESULTS**

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### **1. An Event of Historic Proportions... for Everyone**

Grand Excursion produced the Grand Flotilla, a singular event of significant scale and spectacle. Anyone who wished to participate did so by watching the flotilla from riverbanks, spending an afternoon on a train or paddleboat, or riding ten days on an adventurous bike ride or luxurious, authentic river boat.

## **2. 36,955 People Experienced the River First-Hand**

All told, 36,955 passengers were aboard the boats, trains and bike ride. Breakdowns were 31,577 people on same-day cruise boats, 4,505 on trains and 253 on bikes. Additionally, more than 600 people booked passage on-board the all-inclusive overnight paddlewheelers, the Mississippi Queen and Delta Queen, to be part of the Grand Excursion.

## **3. 25 U.S. States, Canada, Europe, Asia Send Visitors**

People from 22 of the United States, and as far away as Asia and Europe were attracted to the Grand Excursion and purchased tickets for the boats and trains. Bike riders traveled from 25 states and Ontario Canada. It is estimated many more states and countries were represented by visitors at the 300 local events.

## **4. Flotilla Satisfaction Rate 99.99%**

The vast majority of boat and train passengers were overwhelmingly pleased with their ticketed boat or train experiences. The small numbers of complaints were largely due to technical issues causing changes to scheduled trips. Appropriate reparations were provided after the event.

## **5. 300 New River Events Attract a Million People**

More than a million people are estimated to have attended the 300 Grand Excursion local events in 30 participating communities during the ten days of the Grand Flotilla. Diverse programs included historical reenactments, special events, river performances, tours, exhibits, and recreational activities.

## **6. Local Event Attendance Numbers Higher than Expected**

Many community planners were thrilled with higher than expected local attendance numbers. Examples of local attendance estimates include 320,000 attendees in Saint Paul (population 287,000), 60,000 attendees in Dubuque (population 62,000) and 12,000 attendees in Savanna (population 3,400).

## **7. Hundreds of Pleasure Craft Join the Flotilla**

Hundreds of recreational boaters followed all or some of the Grand Excursion. Everything from canoes to sizeable yachts took part in the exciting river journey.

## **8. Hundreds of Bike Riders Introduced to the Mississippi River Trail**

Many of the 253 cyclists experienced the beautiful vistas and the bluffs of the upper Mississippi River for the first time while riding alongside the Grand Flotilla. The board members of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) organization were so pleased with the attention this ride attracted to the MRT, they are considering producing more Mississippi River bicycle rides in the future. Additionally, leaders of the Mississippi river Parkway Commission have requested results of the forthcoming Bike Rider Survey be sent to the Commissioners of Transportation of the 10 states bordering the Mississippi River as well as their State Offices of Tourism.

## **9. Thousands of Volunteers Pitched In**

More than 1,200 volunteers stepped up as official Grand Flotilla volunteer ticketing agents and ambassadors for the Grand Flotilla passengers. An additional 4,000 people volunteered for local events throughout the region.

**10. 92% of Boat Passengers to Return to the upper Mississippi**

In a survey of boat passengers, 92% indicate that the Grand Excursion experience will motivate them to visit the cities of the upper Mississippi River again. A full 97% are in favor of ongoing Grand Excursion-like activities on the river.



GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

## FINAL REPORT

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### COMMEMORATING THE LEGACY: MISSION

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The Grand Excursion 2004 will: Commemorate the historic occasion of the original Grand Excursion by establishing a permanent legacy and by serving as a catalyst for lasting regional initiatives and improvements along the upper Mississippi River.

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The Grand Excursion 2004 Commemorate Program created a bridge between the past and the future in each community by honoring the past relationship to the river and building on that relationship to create a better future. The Commemorate Program consists of two separate, but complementary, efforts.

#### **Legacy Projects**

A volunteer Commemorate Committee developed the Legacy Project program to encourage, record and publicize improvement projects along the 400 miles of the upper Mississippi River. Both as stand-alone projects and as a combined whole, these projects will provide significant benefits for future generations.

All Grand Excursion communities and participating organizations were contacted and invited to identify one or more local Legacy Projects to accomplish in conjunction with the Grand Excursion. Qualified projects met any of these criteria:

- Had a relationship to and/or benefit to the Mississippi River (e.g., natural resource protection or enhancement, historic preservation, river-related recreation improvements, river access, etc.).
- Provided long-term value.
- Was of significant scale, with some level of public physical and/or visual access.
- Was to be funded and completed by local municipalities, volunteers and organizations.

Legacy projects were catalogued, promoted and tracked throughout the planning of the Grand Excursion 2004.

#### **Discovery Markers**

The Commemorate Committee also developed a Discovery Marker project to install permanent visual symbols recognizing the Legacy Projects and to tell their community story to future generations.

A multi-state design competition was held in 2002 attracting design and installation proposals. Proposals were to evoke a sense of connectedness – between past, present and future; and between water and land. Discovery Markers needed to be durable – designed to last many years with minimal maintenance. Markers were to be attractive, outdoor, permanent educational displays. A diverse panel of art, architecture, media and educational experts selected the final design.

The winning entry designed by Tom Grimm and constructed by Winona Lighting includes an illuminated lantern at the top of the marker comprised of two panels of colorful, faceted 2” thick stained glass representing the bends and twists of the river as well as the geographic features of the river valley. Lower engraved panels tell the story of the Grand Excursion, past and present, a description of the community and its Grand Excursion legacies and a topographic map of the river and surrounding region relative to the marker’s position.

Grand Excursion communities were invited to order their own Discovery Marker. A portion of the cost for a marker was set aside to support the programs of the Grand Excursion initiative.

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## RESULTS

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### **1. More than 42 Communities and River Organizations Pledged Hundreds of Projects**

Getting ready for the Grand Excursion served as the catalyst for new and accelerated capital improvements in many communities. For example, it was named as the primary motive for the development of the Riverwalk in Galena, the restoration of Levee Park in Red Wing, and the accelerated completion of Shepard Road in Saint Paul. A wide range of projects came to life in the categories of environmental, educational, recreational, beautification, housing and transportation.

### **2. \$5 billion in river revitalization**

Of the initial Legacy Project applications that identified cost figures, the total exceeded \$636 million. Because figures were collected early in the process and many plans grew and projects were added later, it is estimated that the Legacy Projects represent well in excess of a billion dollars of new investment in the upper Mississippi River. This, coupled with river investments in the past decade, yield a total of more than \$5 billion of revitalization of the Mississippi River.

### **3. Establishing a Lasting Tribute for Future Generations**

Two Discovery Markers have already been installed in premier riverfront park locations in Winona and Red Wing, Minnesota.

### **4. Revitalization Efforts Become Newsworthy**

Media outlets were drawn to the revitalization story behind the Grand Excursion and thoroughly covered the story of the capital reinvestment in the Mississippi River region. Newspapers such as the Red Wing Republican Eagle and the Winona Daily News also covered the fundraising and installation of the Discovery Markers.

**5. 86% to be Better River Stewards**

In a survey of boat passengers, 86% of those surveyed felt their community has been inspired by the Grand Excursion to be better stewards of the river and its assets.



GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

## FINAL REPORT

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### EDUCATING FOR TOMORROW: MISSION

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The Grand Excursion 2004 will: Educate throughout the region about the significance of the Mississippi River through initiatives, curricula and special events.

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The Grand Excursion 2004 Educate Program helps both school-age children and adults to deepen the understanding and appreciation of the upper Mississippi River. Children were served by a system of “River Exploration Trunks” designed to build a new generation of Mississippi River Stewards while enriching the education of K-12 students throughout the upper Mississippi region. Grand Excursion reached adult learners through presenters aboard the Grand Flotilla paddleboats, numerous community education classes, special exhibits, television specials and scholarly books.

#### **River Exploration Trunks**

The centerpiece of the Educate program was the River Exploration Trunks filled with resources that enhance teaching and learning in all subject areas. This program was designed by educators for educators with leadership from staff and faculty of Hamline University’s renowned Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE). The trunks contained two distinct layers of materials – one regional in nature and one local in focus. Trunks contain grade-specific and location-specific curricular materials regarding how we live in relationship to the river. The contents were geared for 4 different grade groups, K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 and ranged from eagle, catfish and tadpole-to-frog transformer puppets for kindergarteners to water monitoring kits for high-schoolers. Teachers were supported with teacher training and internet access to the Educators Guide during 2003 – 2004 school year. Through the generosity of and commitment to education by numerous foundations, corporations, educational institutions and individuals, Grand Excursion 2004 provided a Trunk to schools free of charge. Schools wishing to order more than one Trunk were charged a nominal fee.

#### **Grand Flotilla Educational Presenters**

Grand Excursion provided educational presentations on board 89 of the Grand Flotilla Cruises. Authors, River agencies, museums, historians, naturalists, musicians, and re-enactors all donated their time and talent to enlighten passengers about the rich history and environment of the river. Additionally, all cruises were also hosted by volunteer costumed grade school teachers, “Boat Hostesses”, who helped bring the original story of the Grand Excursion of 1854, and contemporary facts about the Mississippi to life for over 30,000 ticketed passengers.

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## RESULTS

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### **1. 50,000 Children Embracing the River**

During 2004, 50,000 kids learned about the river through the 825 Grand Excursion River Exploration Trunks given to 788 schools along the upper Mississippi River Corridor. 50 more Trunks were placed in museums, federal agencies with education centers and universities. This signature program was endorsed by the U.S. Secretary of Education and President George Bush. Specially trained educators will reach more than 250,000 students in the next five years; a lasting legacy of the Grand Excursion 2004. Many school districts had 100% or near 100% school participation rates including Minneapolis, Saint Paul and the Quad Cities.

### **2. Trunks Inspired River Focused Expanded Learning Projects**

A sample of projects generated by teachers and students in schools receiving Trunks include:

- An opera at Ramsey Elementary Fine Arts Magnet, Minneapolis, MN
- The Mississippi River Fair, May 13, 2004, This fair provided Twin Cities public and private Schools over 600 students with the opportunity to develop projects and explore ideas inspired by the Mississippi River and the resources of the Trunks. Saint Paul, MN
- Traveling student production of “Tom Sawyer” by Chestnut Park Elementary students, Savanna, IL
- A storm drain mapping GIS project at Como High School, Saint Paul, MN
- Yearlong integrated study of the Mississippi River at Trempealeau Elementary School in Trempealeau, WI
- An “Immigrant’s Story” by ESL students at Highland Park Middle School, Saint Paul, MN
- An integrated water quality research/technology project by elementary environmental magnet school students at Battle Creek Elementary Environmental Magnet School, Saint Paul, MN
- Comparative studies of the cultural and biological diversity of the river at World Cultures Elementary, Saint Paul, MN
- A school-wide math literacy project using the river as a context at Cleveland Quality Middle School, Saint Paul, MN

### **3. 86% of Boat Passengers Now Feel Better Educated on the River**

In a survey of random boat passengers, 86% felt they knew more about the upper Mississippi river due to their experiences on board the boats, written Grand Excursion materials and local programs.

### **4. The River Teaches the Teachers**

To-date Hamline’s Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE) has spearheaded 45 River Exploration Trunk training sessions for 560 educators in four states. An online graduate level course that walks teachers through a curriculum integration and project planning process in using the trunks was offered in February 2004. A summer Rivers Institute was offered in the summer of 2004.

## **5. 32,000 River Learning Resources Reach Classrooms**

65 teachers in 4 states participated in the evaluation and selection of over 250 individual resources. Eventually, 85 different resources were purchased or donated, with 25 to 40 items placed in each trunk. Together, these represent approximately 32,000 individual pieces. Items were packed into trunks by 450 of community volunteers, many from 3m and Xcel Energy.

## **6. Future Plans**

Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE) is committed to sustaining the Trunks as a legacy program of Grand Excursion through 2009. Plans are underway not only to continue the program but to deepen it: through ongoing professional development for educators; direct school support for new and upgraded trunk materials; continuing the Mississippi River Fair; and creating a Mississippi River Resource and Education Network whose website will house Mississippi River encyclopedic information, a directory of river-related community resources, a project database; a Places Bureau for field experiences and a place to post/host student work, among other features.

## **7. Grand Excursion Books Reach Thousands**

Grand Excursion has spawned the creation of at least five books including "River of Conflict, River of Dreams: Three Hundred Years on the Upper Mississippi" by Biloine Young; "Mississippi Escapade, Reliving the Grand Excursion of 1854" by Paul Clifford Larson and Pamela Allen Larson; "Paddlewheels on the Upper Mississippi 1823-1854" by Nancy and Robert Goodman; "The Grand Excursion of 1854, Antebellum America Visits the Mississippi River" by Steven J. Keillor; and "Grand Excursions on the Upper Mississippi River" edited by Dr. Curtis and Elizabeth Roseman.

## **8. New Exhibits and Classes Honor the Mississippi, Native Americans, History, Art, and Science**

Dozens of exhibits inspired by the Grand Excursion have been installed in museums, historical societies, interpretive centers and public spaces in all four participating states. Combined, these exhibits are introducing hundreds of thousands of people to the profound impact of the Mississippi River's past, present and future. Additionally, organizations and communities throughout the region were inspired to hold many adult education classes, walking tours, living history sessions and talks about the Mississippi River, its history and cultures.

## **9. Inspiring Millions through Television Specials**

Three separate television specials inspired by the Grand Excursion and about the Mississippi River will air this spring. Included are a documentary by KCRG TV in Cedar Rapids, IA; a KSTP TV special in Saint Paul, MN; and an independently produced video airing on public television stations.



GRAND EXCURSION 2004™

## FINAL REPORT

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### CULTIVATE AWARENESS: VISION

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The Grand Excursion 2004 will Cultivate awareness of this beautiful region.

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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Together with its partnering communities and organizations, Grand Excursion 2004 staff, Board members and many volunteers executed a comprehensive, multi-faceted, marketing and media relations campaign.

In its early stages, programs were directed to first acclimate the public about the idea of the Grand Excursion 2004, an unknown event celebrating a fairly unknown part of U.S. history. Marketing efforts profiled the Grand Excursion as a unique, one-time experience encompassing a full year of celebration with a focus on the Grand Flotilla and its 10 days of high-profile activities. Additionally, Grand Excursion positioned the upper Mississippi River region as robust with options for guests and residents before, during and after Grand Excursion 2004

Starting in early 2003, more directed marketing and public relations efforts were developed to promote the ways the public could experience the Grand Excursion: by purchasing tickets for the boats (same day cruises as well as multi-day all inclusive trips); by purchasing tickets for the historic train ride; by registering for the bike ride; and by participating in community celebrations. Additional marketing and public relations efforts were developed around the Educational River Exploration Trunk program to reach teachers, educational leaders and students.

The bulk of Grand Excursion's resources were allocated in markets loosely described as within 100 miles of the river (Quad Cities to Twin Cities) with additional emphasis on key feeder markets outside of this 100 mile radius. National and international markets were reached primarily through earned media efforts.

The success of the marketing campaign was greatly enhanced by the recruitment of print, TV and radio sponsors/partners along the entire river region. These partners provided considerable advertising space, video/audio production and air time.

#### **Earned Media/Media Relations**

Pro-active public relations efforts began two years prior to the event, with story pitching efforts focused on the freelance writer market, national and regional travel, consumer magazines and the group and travel trade publications. About a year out, staff began to focus on national travel editors of the major daily newspapers, while continuing to follow up with magazines.

The regional newspapers (dailies and weeklies), magazines, radio and TV stations were targeted in the four participating states, especially media outlets closest to the river. Relationships with editors, reporters and producers were forged in these markets a year before the event. Press conferences were held in conjunction with quarterly community meetings, which triggered story opportunities along the river.

Local PR contacts were recruited in each port of call to tell their stories on a local level. This helped to publicize community events, logistics information such as parking and shuttle services, as well as to instill a sense of civic pride in each community. Some communities appointed staff from Chambers or CVBs to spearhead the local PR efforts, while others such as the Quad Cities and Red Wing hired professionals to take on this responsibility.

### **Print Advertising**

Starting in early 2003, the print creative strategy included copy and graphics featuring fun and amusing headlines, engaging river photos and copy promoting participation in Grand Excursion 2004. A unique grid design allowed for new copy and graphics to be dropped in as the separate ticketed products rolled out. Ads were placed in over 40 tourism publications, group tour trade journals, regional/national magazines and regional newspapers.

### **Radio Advertising**

Radio spots were developed and produced for public radio stations and partnering radio stations such as ClearChannel and the Quad City Radio Group.

### **Television Advertising**

Partnering Television stations such as KARE 11 and KCRG-TV produced and aired television spots promoting ticket sales specific to their coverage areas.

### **Direct Mail**

Direct mail marketing was utilized to reach very specific markets. For instance, the Delta Queen and Mississippi Queen's target market is an older buyer in a higher income bracket. Lists were purchased to reach these potential buyers. Direct mail was also used to promote sales to the group travel industry, meeting planners and corporations.

### **Videos**

Two videos were produced promoting the Grand Excursion. The first in 1999 was designed to encourage cities and organizations to "Get on Board" with the Grand Excursion. The 40 minutes of this video were narrated by WCCO TV's anchor Don Shelby and covered the history of the original 1854 Grand Excursion, as well as a vision for 2004. The second video was produced in 2002 and its seven minutes were geared to promote the Grand Excursion to a wider and more public audience. It was shown at meetings, events and was available to download from the web site.

### **Whistle Stop Tours**

Three highly successful "Whistle Stop" motorcoach tours were produced in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The first tour introduced 50 potential funders, media representatives and regional stakeholders to the Grand Excursion region (Quad Cities to Twin Cities) and its grand vision. A second "Jingle Bell Tour" familiarization tour in 2002 was organized for 20 travel writers. The third "Governor's Tour" in 2003 was spearheaded by Minnesota cities. Governor Tim Pawlenty, along with state commissioners and Grand Excursion supporters, toured some of the Minnesota

communities participating in Grand Excursion 2004. As a media hook, the Governor issued a boat race challenge to Governor Doyle of Wisconsin to take place during the Grand Flotilla event.

### **List Serves**

Grand Excursion was well publicized in several weekly List Serve e-mails produced by other organizations which expanded the outreach efforts considerably. Examples include the University of Minnesota Mississippi list serve and another produced by the Minneapolis Community Development Agency.

### **Online Memberships**

Grand Excursion developed the Navigator online membership program in April of 2003. The free program was developed as an exclusive way for individuals to connect with the Grand Excursion. Interested individuals signed up on the Grand Excursion web site and received monthly e-mails with an insider's view of the history, the plans and the excitement evolving along the river route during the upcoming year, enhancing their loyalty and advocacy and their enjoyment of the event. Members received first chance options on boat and train tickets and other merchandise specials. Members were recruited through outreach by participating organizations, through other existing marketing campaigns and public relations efforts.

### **Conferences and Tradeshows**

Grand Excursion was represented at numerous national tourism conferences and tradeshows by staff and participating CVBs.

### **Miscellaneous Collateral & Signage**

A variety of miscellaneous collateral and promotional materials were developed to complement the traditional advertising. Examples include: rack brochures (general, bike ride, train); a newspaper "Special Edition" for passengers; counter cards; a giant banner used on the Army Corp of Engineers MV Mississippi boat; several versions of event posters; static cling stickers; lapel pins and more. Most of these items were given to the participating communities for local distribution.

### **Web Site**

The web site was developed in stages over 3 years. In its early iterations, the [www.grandexcursion.com](http://www.grandexcursion.com) site was used primarily as a tool to provide information to participating cities and organizations. By mid-2002, it started to evolve into the place for the public to learn about how they could participate in the Grand Excursion. In 2003, it was re-designed and re-written to specifically promote and facilitate ticket sales for the boats, trains and to allow for online bike ride registration. Merchandise was also made available online.

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## **RESULTS**

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### **1. More than 2000 Print New Articles Reach 74 Million People**

More than 2000 news articles appeared from July 2003 to July 2004 extolling the virtues and value of the Mississippi River., as well as the 10 days of the Grand Flotilla.

**2. 500 Television and Radio Stories Touch 37 Million**

Nearly 9 hours of favorable coverage from more than 500 TV and radio stories reached an excess of 30 million media impressions.

**3. 7,000 People Join Up to Learn More**

Thousands signed up to become "Grand Excursion Navigators", a free online program offering members information on Grand Excursion history, spotlights on participating river communities and special offers.

**4. \$1.7 Million in Donated Television, Radio and Print**

It is estimated that the donated airtime, production charges, air time, ad space from all the television, radio and print partners equaled more than \$1.7 million in value.

**5. 38 States and 4 Countries Cover Grand Excursion**

Broadcast media and print publications from New York to Hawaii covered the Grand Excursion. The London News Service, Chicago Tribune, USA Travel Channel and Australia's Discovery Channel also send reporters and camera crews to cover this historic event. Media outlets in Canada and Germany also picked up the story. Nationally, CSPAN and FOX National cable broadcasted news about Grand Excursion.

**6. 41 Million Web Hits**

Traffic to the Grand Excursion web site grew exponentially leading up to the Grand Flotilla, with more than 41 million hits by the end of July. Over 50% of all tickets sales were completed over the web site.

**7. 97% of Passengers Feel More Aware of Region's Beauty**

In a survey of boat passengers, 97% felt the Grand Excursion 2004 helped to cultivate awareness of this beautiful region.



**GRAND EXCURSION 2004™**

**FINAL REPORT**

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**FORGE AND RENEW ENDURING PARTNERSHIPS: VISION**

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The Grand Excursion 2004 will forge and renew enduring partnerships.

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**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

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During the planning and production stages of the Grand Excursion 2004 initiative, thousands of people and hundreds of organizations were inspired to achieve a set of common ambitions: to celebrate the dramatic transformation of the most magnificent river in the United States; to teach the world about the history of the Mississippi River and its current value to our river economy, environment and heritage; and to set the stage for a healthier future along its banks. Each phase of the Grand Excursion attracted more people to this new “community of communities”.

**Cities Invited to Sign On**

Using the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grand Excursion of 1854 to celebrate the renaissance of the upper Mississippi River was the topic of conversation and meetings since 1994. But, in early 2000 a concerted effort was launched by the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation to reach out to the other river communities to test the waters for interest in joining together to define, and then plan, the Grand Excursion 2004 initiative. Leaders in Minneapolis, MN were the first to pass a formal City Council resolution of participation on February 18, 2000. This soon became the official signal for a community’s intention to be a partner in the Grand Excursion. Outreach efforts continued to every city from Rock Island to Minneapolis, the historical Grand Excursion route. Agencies such as convention and visitors bureaus, city councils, city departments, historical societies, local environmental groups, learning institutions, and private businesses were contacted. Grand Excursion soon became a buzz along the river.

**Organizations Welcomed Aboard**

Grand Excursion leaders invited the participation of regional and national organizations to endorse, plan, participate in and help enrich the Grand Excursion initiative. Similar outreach efforts were made to states offices, land use groups, river trail organizations, river road groups, marketing groups, counties, national environmental groups and waterway associations.

**Regional and Local Leadership Groups Formed**

An Ad Hoc advisory group met monthly from 2000 to 2001 to start to define the initiative. This group included leaders from participating cities, regional organizations, possible funders and other agencies. They launched Grand Excursion Inc., a new non-profit organization in 2001. This new organization was led by a board of directors including some of the original ad hoc

committee members and other regional leaders. A number of committees were formed including one each for Commemorate, Educate, Celebrate, Fund-Raising and Marketing. A distinguished Honorary Board of Directors was recruited who shared an interest in the health and vitality of the Mississippi River. Locally, Host Committees were formed in every city to plan and execute local events or projects and to interact with Grand Excursion, Inc. And, a full-time staff and several part-time consultants were recruited to professionally execute the programs of the Grand Excursion.

### **Agencies Invited to Join the Effort**

During the planning of the complicated logistics surrounding the Grand Flotilla events, many federal, state, county and local agencies joined in the efforts to ensure a successful and safe event. The Grand Excursion became a positive first test for newly enacted homeland security laws surrounding waterways and rivers.

### **Communication Outreach**

Outreach, planning and collaborative efforts were cemented through quarterly Community Meetings attracting up to 250 people at host city locations up and down the river; a monthly newsletter; an online intranet web site that enabled local planners and regional staff to share ideas and information; and attendance by staff at many local planning meetings throughout the region. Additionally, a comprehensive Grand Excursion 2004 Planning Guide for Communities was developed to assist cities in their local efforts. Starting in early in 2004, an additional set of logistics planning meetings were held in every port of call. These meetings involved local law enforcement officials, marina owners, host committee members and others.

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## **RESULTS**

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### **1. 55 Communities Join Together**

By June 2004, 55 communities had signed declared their official support and participation in the Grand Excursion. The most recent addition was the Prairie Island Indian Community in Minnesota. Dozens more cities rolled up their sleeves and hosted train passengers and bike riders.

### **2. Local Host Committee Attract 700 Members**

Members of local host committees included mayors, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, city council members, local boosters, river enthusiasts and a diverse range of other individuals. Many have credited the Grand Excursion with creating stronger local and regional relationships with one another.

### **3. A Powerful Regional Leadership Team Established**

Grand Excursion established a dedicated board of directors comprised of 24 civic and community leaders from throughout the region, as well as an honorary board of directors, actively chaired by former Vice President Walter F. Mondale and Joan Mondale. Members of both boards have significant ties to local government, environmental causes, academia, politics and the arts and helped share the story of Grand Excursion 2004 on a national level.

**4. Unprecedented Federal, State, County and Local Collaboration**

The planning of Grand Excursion 2004 involved complicated collaborations between many diverse agencies: More than 9 Federal agencies, 17 state agencies, dozens of county agencies and local law enforcement departments contributed to the effort.

**5. First-time Multi-State Tourism Campaign Launched**

The four participating Grand Excursion states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin pooled significant state tourism dollars to collectively promote the Grand Excursion through a Midwest Living Magazine special insert, travel publications, state travel consultants, web sites and highway installations.

**6. New Mississippi Investors Adopt the River**

\$3.5 million has been raised to date from foundations, corporations, municipalities and individuals to support Grand Excursion's regional Program of Work. Many of the funders never before considered the Mississippi River their focus.

**7. Raising the Importance of the River with National Lawmakers**

Grand Excursion has raised awareness of the upper Mississippi River and its river and community revitalization efforts in Washington, DC with the passage of separate Resolutions of Support from the U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate.



**GRAND EXCURSION 2004™**

**FINAL REPORT**

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**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

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The Grand Excursion 2004 organization and its programs were developed to be self-supporting.

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**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

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The Grand Excursion 2004 financial model relied on a combination of earned income, from sources such as boat and train tickets, bike registration, merchandise and other revenue, and contributed income from grants, private philanthropy, and corporate sponsorships. Two financial feasibility studies were completed, to determine the level of philanthropic support and the likelihood of corporate sponsorships. In addition, a market analysis of ticket pricing was completed.

Significant downward adjustments to the budget were made at two stages, once in 2002 and again in 2003, reflecting market conditions.

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**RESULTS**

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**1. \$4 Million Raised to Support the Regional Grand Excursion Programs**

A total of nearly \$4 million was secured in amounts ranging from \$1000 to \$900,000.

**2. 95 Donors or Corporate Sponsors Come On-Board**

Investments in the Grand Excursion came from organizations in all four of the states involved, from private individuals, corporate foundations and marketing departments, and charitable foundations.

**3. \$2.8 Million in Earned Income**

Total ticket sales and other earned income exceed \$2.8 million, with more than 50% of that figure coming from flotilla passengers.

**4. Expenses Come in Below Budget**

Recognizing a challenging fund raising environment and cautious ticket buying mood in the market, adjustments were made to reduce expenses commensurately.