

Waterways

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Maybe it's time to think outside the locks

While some Minnesota decision makers are involved in a [“knee-jerk”](#) plan to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls locks, environmentalists, researchers and policymakers down-river are considering more innovative, less job destroying ways of dealing with invasive Asian Carp.

The [Chicago Tribune](#) reports that the Director of the Fisheries and Illinois Aquaculture Center at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, James Garvey, says the fish now dominate that state's waterways, but are an ideal, high-protein food. An existing Illinois DNR program

gives Asian Carp meals to needy families and the state is helping private efforts to harvest and sell the fish to China.

Businesses are also using the carp to make fertilizer and some zoo animals are getting the fish as part of their diet.

At the Brookfield Zoo, keepers fed some of their birds Asian Carp for 10 days and gave the dropping to U.S. Geological Survey researchers as a way to determine if the droppings contained carp DNA. Results of the study haven't been released, but if researchers discover that carp DNA stays in the bird's

digestive system, it may explain why water tests show carp DNA in areas in which no fish have been found.

Of more immediate concern to UMWA members is the short-sighted effort to speed the closing of the Upper Harbor Terminal above the St. Anthony Locks.

What the decision makers seem not to consider is what happens to the more than 60,000 tons of fertilizer and 140,000 tons of coal that come through the terminal each year. Or how those commodities would be moved and stored

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New proposal on lock and dam and harbor financing

Amid all the election news and worries about the upcoming “fiscal cliff” a prominent senator has quietly brought forward a bill to dramatically change the way water infrastructure is funded.

Called [The American Waterworks Act](#), the bill will be introduced in the

new session of Congress next year by Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN).

Alexander says his bill, if passed, would remove the requirement that the Olmsted Lock be funded out of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. He also wants faster permit approval at all levels.

Other provisions would dictate that Inland Waterways construction projects follow the plan agreed to by Inland Waterways users and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Alexander says he and Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC) will seek additional co

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From the Executive Director...

Mike Zipko is Vice President of Strategic Development and Principal of Goff Public in St. Paul, MN. Mike works with us on a variety of projects and made the following presentation at one of our recent events.

The Media and the Internet

Since the advent of the Internet, old-school traditional media now has competition. Digital media has taken control of news and events because it can deliver it faster, cheaper and more spontaneously.

At first, traditional media was slow to react to digital, asking why worry about what was perceived to be a couple of guys in their basement with a website. After all, pre-internet media had all the power.

The internet's ability to give everyone access to information instantly leveled the playing field by eliminating central control over information. The evolution of the internet is the most significant change since the printing press, telegraph and Marconi to forever transform how we communicate. Newspaper editors no longer have the power to say 'these are the five things everyone needs to know today' and those were the five things that got published.

Also, to its detriment, the newspaper industry was saddled with a lot of overhead. For a while, these expenses were offset with cash flow from help-wanted and for-sale ads.

More Internet

As the first wave of change driven by the internet pushed through, the second wave of innovation brought even more dramatic results: social media. Craig's List offered free ads for just about anything; and making it impossible for traditional media to compete with 'free'. Likewise, CarSoup.com offered free auto ads, taking more money from newspapers.

As how we communicate evolved, the way we connect has also changed, challenging the traditional marketplace to again adapt. What used to be a simple device to let us talk to each other is now a computer, a camera, a music player wrapped inside our "smart phones." Desktop computers and laptops are no longer required; tablets and smartphones make it pos-

sible to get and send messages at any time and from anywhere.

Change – Good and Bad

The immediate benefit is that we now all have access to more information than we had before; the challenge is we now also have a greater responsibility as a consumer to figure out what is important and what is not. Trade associations, for example, have more responsibility to determine what information is important to key audiences and then to decide how it should be presented. You can no longer depend upon old-school media to determine what story is good or what's true and what isn't; you now can and must make that determination yourself.

Reporters

Traditional media now has fewer reporters and editors. As the newsrooms have changed through layoffs and the buying out of experienced media veterans, a knowledge gap has been created. It creates a new challenge for UMWA and other groups to not only educate the current reporters and editors, but to realize this is a process that will need to be repeated on a regular basis.

Challenges

The challenge and the opportunity is that organizations like UWA and others must take more control. There is no single plan for this because it's really a work-in-progress challenge as the market keeps changing. You need to become comfortable talking to reporters not just when you need something from them, but to educate them on your issue. It is important to make critical decisions to decide which reporters and publications are more important than another. Organizations need to make sure the media has easy to understand background information they can use. If you are not proactive doing this you face the risk of a reporter using wrong or incomplete information that might not always be true or favorable.

As the roles and responsibilities have changed, it's now even more important to become a valuable resource for the media. UMWA has a specific area of focus on issues related to the river and the economy it supports. This allows the association to monitor

“Newspaper editors no longer have the power to say, ‘these are the five things everyone needs to know today...’”

(Exec. Dir. Con't)

issues around the country that could have an impact here. As UMWA follows policy in Washington, D.C., events up and down river, and other industry changes, the association has the chance to help reporters stay connected to these same issues. Reaching out to share news about a hearing in Congress or an upcoming decision by the Army Corp of Engineers helps a reporter or editor understand what is happening.

For a long time it often felt better for groups like UMWA to not engage directly with the media unless it was absolutely necessary. Reporters would contact you when they needed something and from time to time news releases were sent out. It was safe to assume the media understood the issue, UMWA's role, and their perspective on river issues.

Today this is no longer true within the mainstream media. Web-only outlets like Patch.com and other interest groups who publish content on issues important to UMWA may have never even heard of the organization. Yet someone searching for information about invasive species and lock and dam issues has access to all of this content and more.

An opportunity

UMWA has a unique opportunity at an important time in our recent history. The current economic challenges make every job more important to the region. The Mississippi River is more than just an amenity for tourism and visitors. It is an economic powerhouse that supports thousands of jobs and is the transportation backbone for agriculture and a number of other industries. UMWA can be an important effective resource for the media to not only help them

understand how economically significant the river is, it can connect reporters and editors with the people and companies who are directly connected to the Mississippi River.

A key challenge will be to organize the information UMWA has and to find the most effective way to share it with different audiences. For UMWA's voice to be stronger and more effective, media and key audience outreach needs to be an ongoing activity. It's changing the mindset from just being a consumer of information that had traditionally been created by the media to being a group that creates and distributes its own stories, images, videos and messages. In the process UMWA has the chance to help people understand how fortunate we are to have a working Mississippi River in our region.

“The Mississippi River is more than just an amenity for tourism and visitors. It is an economic powerhouse that supports thousands of jobs...”

Other items of Interest

- Although there are several videos of the Highway 61 bridge construction posted on YouTube, one of the best, if not the best is [a recent addition from MNDOT](#). The two minute documentary shows the incredible teamwork required to float the new arch span into place.
- In his “*American Patriot's Daily Almanac*” last month, Bill Bennett reminded readers that the Mississippi and its commerce have been vital to the country ever since President Thomas Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase. “It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market,” Jefferson wrote.
- UMWA congratulates the Corps of Engineers St. Paul District Small Business Program which earned national first-place honors for fiscal 2012 for doing business with small businesses. More than 94.2% of the district's total contract dollars went to small businesses.

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if the terminal is closed.

[The Finance & Commerce newsletter](#) recently pointed to a Metropolitan Council report which said that there is very little warehouse space elsewhere in the Twin Cities to take the commodities that are now stored at the terminal. The report says very little warehousing is available in St. Paul and a coal storage facility in Winona is 135 miles to the south.

Louis Jambois, president of the St. Paul Port Authority, told the newsletter that companies who already lease space from the St. Paul Authority might be able to consolidate their operations, but, he says, there is little space for new companies.

Without river access, shipments may move to area roads, which Jambois said would have a

noticeable impact on traffic.

“If goods are not shipped by barge, that means they will have to get on the freeway system, which already suffers from congestion,” Jambois said.

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-sponsors and maybe try to get the act added to legislation being considered in the lame duck session or, if that fails, added to the next Senate Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which is also in the planning and input stages.

Alexander says the bill will also bring changes to harbor maintenance and funding, including full federal funding for maintaining harbors up to 50-feet deep. Under present law, funding is available

only for 45-foot harbor maintenance.

But Alexander says the imminent completion of the Panama Canal expansion will require that harbors be able to accommodate ships with 50-foot drafts.

The legislation would further fund Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund projects to authorized widths and depths as part of a five-year construction program.

The Act would also increase revenue to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund to make funding consistent with the agreement between waterway users and the Army Corps of Engineers.

One other provision says that landside infrastructure projects could also be funded under the Waterworks Act.

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