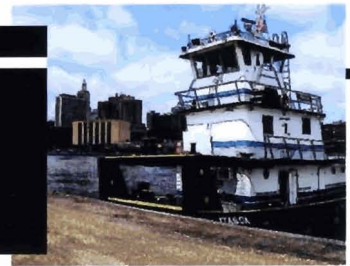


# WATERWAYS



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Gerry Brown says despite progress

## UMWA still fighting for channel

Since the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) was formed in 1932, its members have witnessed the transition from steam to diesel and from paddlewheel to propeller. And Gerry Brown, speaker at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, told the group that it's ironic that UMWA was organized to work for an economically viable 9-foot channel and despite the positive economic impact of the system, members are still having to fight for the channel.

Brown served as both president and chairman of UMWA and has been a leader in other areas as well. He is the retired president of Cargill Marine and Terminal, Inc., at one time chaired the Waterway Users Board, has been a board member for the American Waterway Operators, and was on the MARC 2000 board.

### **\$150 M a bargain**

The 1930s price tag of \$150 million for the 27 locks and dams in the system seems remarkable today, he said. But what was even more amazing, said Brown, was the speed with which the system was built.

"Some were built in 14 months from the date an engineer walked to a spot and said,

'Let's build one here.'"

Most important for the Midwest, Brown said, was the economic stimulus from the



hundreds of construction jobs created between 1932 and 1939. Add to that all the money shippers have saved over the years, he said, and the system can be seen for the bargain that it was and is. Now he said the challenge is to maintain and improve that system.

"Congress created the Inland Waterways Corporation after World War I because railroads hadn't able to keep up with shipping demand," Brown said. "That company became the Upper Mississippi Barge Line Company and its directors and officers were the ones who created UMWA and pushed for the 9-foot channel."

### **River history online**

Brown said the best repository for river history that he knows of is the Herman Pott Library at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. (<http://www.umsl.edu/pott/pmores/pottlib/pottlib.htm>).

### **No rain delay**

Despite a surprise deluge that dropped up to two inches of rain in some areas of the Twin Cities, the Sept. 20, meeting was a well attended success.

Among the guests was Commander Mark Cunningham, representing the St. Louis District of the Coast Guard. In short remarks, he told the audience that Coast

Guard has returned its focus to traditional missions and clients such as river users.

Al Christopherson, chairman of the River Resource Alliance (RRA) attended the meeting to demonstrate his support for a proposed consolidation of UMWA and RRA. He said that despite passage of the Water Resources Development Act, (RRA's main goal), its members want to continue to push for needed infrastructure investment.

# Executive Director's Report...

By now, much of the nation has seen AARP's purple silhouette of two political mascots with the admonishment "Divided WeFail."

Could it be someone has finally gotten the message? That banner along with little kids and pleading eyes reminds us that affordable health care, social security and health wellness are important issues, and that if they were old enough, those kids would vote for candidates who understood and supported those issues.

## Issue has 'legs'

Divided WeFail appears to have what it takes to be a successful attitude-shaping enterprise: topical issues, easy-to-understand messages, and a soft-sell gentleness totally missing in today's political discourse – in a word, it has legs.

But perhaps its most important attribute isn't in the message or even the messengers; it is in us – an audience searching desperately for someone, or something to define a great nation's sense of direction.

Sadly, our political institutions, by defining themselves as ineffective and something far short of professional, do little to offer that direction. Democratic Governors blame the Republican administration for foul-ups in hurricane disaster relief; a Democratic congress balks at providing interstate-bridge replacement construction funds to a Republican governor; and let's not forget a western state Senator's affront on an already embattled Congress by his recent activities at the Minneapolis airport; if you need more examples, add a few from today's news coverage.

## Political utilities

According to Edwin Newman, an award-winning NBC-TV journalist, a notion was advanced in the 1980s that both Republicans and Democrats are public utilities in that they have been around for so long that they have little control over what goes on in their names.

Newman recounts that Professor L.D. Epstein of the University of Wisconsin wrote that

each party "is regularly entered in by individuals and groups who want its electoral label," who do not have to pay dues or do party work of any kind, who are not bound by the party platform, and who do not have to tie themselves to the national leadership."

So, as the argument was advanced at the time (this was during President Regan's tour of duty), "...we have a Republican administration but not a Republican party government."

This makes it difficult for third parties to get anywhere in this country, Newman continues, because "...each major party is so loosely defined that one or the other absorbs electoral protests that might otherwise find outlets in a new party. For the Republicans and Democrats, this means survival."

## Morphing symbols

To some, AARP's representation of the morphed political mascots as ill-defined may be in this public utilities mode: the forward half appears to have elephant legs, head and trunk, with the ears of a donkey, while the rear half appears to have the hindquarters of a donkey, with a high-set tail that may be from either one.

Card carrying Democrats may be incensed because they are seen as the west end of an east-facing "donkey-fant" and Republicans will probably find something wrong with the color.

Understandably, no group, regardless of size or funding, has a mandate to cover all issues, no matter how noble.

## Not clearly defined

And while Divided WeFail does not address UMWA issues, it appears to address the more fundamental point that since neither mascot is fully defined, the parties they represent aren't clearly defined either. It may well make a second point as well: lacking clear party definition, loyal opposition, while necessary to clarify and facilitate different opinions, can be tempered to carry the day, helping to ensure that others will have the opportunity to continue the quest tomorrow.

We wish them well, those little kids with their pleading eyes.

## Channel from I

Earlier, members and directors of UMWA voted to continue with the planning and consolidation of the two groups.

## Dohmen says 'thanks'

Scott Dohmen, who organized this year's meeting was a bit overwhelmed at the number of door prizes donated by members.

"I only had to send out one little email to the membership and we got more prizes than I could keep track of," Dohmen says. "But I do want to say a big 'thank you' to all the member companies for their generosity."

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## WRDA facing veto and override vote

President George Bush has vetoed five bills in his seven years in office, but has threatened to make the WRDA bill his sixth. However most leaders in the broad coalition of business and environmental groups that worked for WRDA passage think that the lop-sided margins in both houses of congress make a veto override a strong likelihood.

In the House members voted for the conference committee version of WRDA by 381 to 40 and the Senate vote was 81 to 12 to pass. Commodity groups and others in the WRDA coalition have urged their members to contact congressional representatives to urge an override.

Two sure votes for override will come from South Dakota Senators John Thune (R) and Tim Johnson (D), who say that WRDA will help reduce sediment in Missouri River reservoirs.

"The water management initiatives in the bill will do a great deal to improve the ecology of the Missouri River in South Dakota," Johnson said. "It will also strengthen public investment in managing and protecting significant programs that the state and federal government rely on to enhance the river."

Thune said, "This legislation will help our state harness, protect and improve the Missouri River for future generations."