

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2016 -- CLINTON HERALD

EDITOR'S PICK FEATURED

Clinton officials accept River Town of the Year award

By Bethany Dykes Herald Staff Writer 5 hrs ago



Mayor Mark Vulich (left) accepts the River Town of the Year award on behalf of Clinton on Friday at the Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce. Bethany Dykes/Clinton Herald

Carrie Donaire, director of the Clinton Convention and Visitors Bureau, gives a speech at the ceremony on Friday at the Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce. Bethany

Dykes/Clinton Herald [this photo not included.]

CLINTON — The city of Clinton was named River Town of the Year and accepted an award Friday morning.

A large group of people piled into the Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce conference room at 10:30 a.m. for a chance to hear about the award presented to Clinton by Iowa Rivers Revival.

The group has chosen Clinton as this year's recipient because of the city's efforts to tackle difficult water-quality challenges all while promoting river recreation, boating and fishing, recreational trails, wildlife watching, river history sites and other river-centered activities.

Iowa Rivers Revival Chairman Jerry Peckumn was pleased with the way Clinton is overcoming the challenges of being a city along the Mississippi River.

"Clinton celebrates its past as a river town, enjoys the present and prepares for the future. We are especially impressed with Clinton's forward-looking efforts to protect the environment, improve wastewater going into the Mississippi, and reduce stormwater and pollutants discharging to the river," Peckumn said.

Robin Fortney spoke on behalf of Iowa Rivers Revival and said the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is impressed with the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility in Clinton.

"Clinton is the poster child. You go above and beyond," Fortney said.

Fortney also said the Main Avenue Green Infrastructure project is another reason Clinton was given this award. The project resulted in a reduction of discharged waste into the Mississippi River.

Other reasons Clinton won the award was for cultural and historic preservation efforts, connecting with the mighty Mississippi, celebrating nature, encouraging volunteers and community involvement.

"All these efforts in Clinton are characterized by a rich mix of public and private

cooperation and partnerships between city, county, state and U.S. governments, other public agencies, businesses, organizations and volunteers. That's how communities embrace their rivers and become River Town of the Year," Peckumn said.

Clinton Mayor Mark Vulich accepted the award at the reception on behalf of the city of Clinton. Vulich also gave a speech and said he is thankful the city has been able to make these water-quality improvements.

"We have to learn to live with the river. It can be our friend but it can be our enemy," Vulich said.

Vulich also said Clinton has learned to use the river to benefit the economy and now has to continue to protect the river. He said people come from miles just to see the river.

"No longer can we put out solid waste in our water, so we were proactive," Vulich said.

Collaboration with neighboring towns has helped Clinton make these improvements, according to Vulich and Jessica Kinser, Clinton city administrator.

"We can't survive by ourselves," Vulich said.

Kinser said the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility wouldn't have been possible without the help of towns like Camanche and Low Moor.

More projects are in store for Clinton. Kinser said water-quality projects will help connect residents with the river and its importance.

State Sen. Rita Hart, D-Wheatland, also was present at the award reception. She said she is proud of the hard work Clinton and its staff, along with residents, have done to win the award.

"Great things will come because of this award," Hart said.

Vulich said he is proud of Clinton and honored to accept the award for the city.

"I am passionate and proud of Clinton. This is a place I call home and I always will," Vulich said.

Herald Staff Writer Bethany Dykes can be reached at bdykes@clintonherald.com.