



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

Membership Meetings

- February 17, 2026
Tuesday 7:00 PM
Hauberg Civic Center - Dining Room, 1300 24th St., Rock Island
Regular business meeting with election of officers
- March 17, 2026
Tuesday 7:00 PM
Hauberg Civic Center - Dining Room, 1300 24th St., Rock Island
Regular business meeting.
- April 21, 2026
Tuesday 7:00 PM
Hauberg Civic Center - Dining Room, 1300 24th St., Rock Island
Regular business meeting

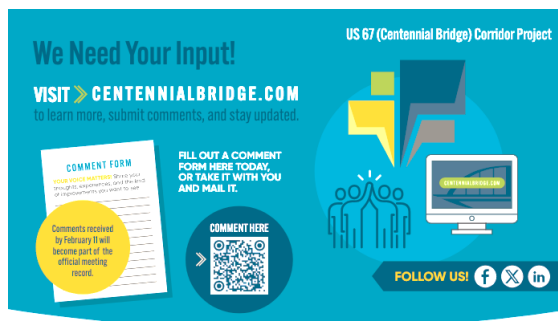
If you have requested, an email reminder with the Meeting Agenda will be sent prior to each meeting with confirmation of time and location of each meeting.

Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities

CENTENNIAL BRIDGE AT RISK

The Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation are continuing the US-67 (Centennial Bridge) Corridor Study to explore long-term solutions to improve safety and traffic flow. The second public meeting was held in late January and provided the study update, details on alternatives considered, and a refined list of alternatives which will advance for further study. Representatives were present to explain the display boards and answer questions.

The entire presentation is available at www.CentennialBridge.com. It also offers you the chance to comment and make your concerns and preferences known. Comments received by February 11th will become part of the official meeting record.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's time to renew your RIPS membership.

If you receive a mailed copy of this newsletter, check your mail label for the expiration date of your membership. Our membership year begins on February 1 each year. When you renew, your label will show "Membership Expires 2/1/2027." An email reminder with instructions will be sent to everyone who receives the newsletter by email.

Overall, we are in good financial shape, which is why we keep our dues very affordable at \$15 for an individual or \$25 for family membership. Since we are a 501c3 organization, dues are deductible as a charity donation as allowed by law. If you don't have a membership form, just send your name, address, email, and phone to RIPS, P.O. Box 3261, Rock Island IL 61204-3261.

If you want to receive monthly agendas and minutes, and occasional email news, let us know. We can send your quarterly newsletter by mail or we can send you an online link when we post it. Let us know your preference

ROCK ISLAND BRICK YARDS 1850-1900

Early Brick Making

Rock Island Brickyards

- Energy Brick Yard on the bluff at 30th Street and 10th Avenue was founded by Christopher Atkinson in 1855. The small white brick house on the corner, now a local landmark, was the home of Christopher and his wife Ann. Adjacent yards on the bluff were worked by Thomas Atkinson, William Atkinson, John Oloff and John Young.
- Christopher Atkinson's first brick yard opened in 1850 on the east side of 12th Street near Chippiannock cemetery.
- Henry Case owned land at the top of the hill at 17th street. A Sanborn map from 1901 indicates the area had been a brickyard prior to being subdivided into lots.
- H. Paulson made bricks in the 1870's east of 12th Street between 23rd and 25th Avenues.

Bricks are made by mixing ground clay with water, forming it into the desired shape, then drying and firing. Brickyards would locate where there was a high content of clay in the soil...then disappear when the clay supply was exhausted.

The process sounds easy, but it was hard work. An assistant brick molder would work a lump of clay in his hands until it was malleable, then hand it to the molder who would roll it in sand, "dash" it into a sanded mold, press it firm with his hands, then remove any excess with a flat water-soaked stick called a strike.



Early brick making crew, date and brickyard unknown

The next person on the team would take the filled mold to a drying yard and turn out the brick on a level bed of sand. He then returned the mold to the table where he would wet and resand it, making it ready for the next brick. The team would stand at their table for 12 to 14 hours a day and were expected make 3500 to 5000 bricks a day.

Brick molds came in single, double or 6 brick sizes. The top edges were covered with iron to prevent wear. While a 6-brick mold was most efficient, a child could carry a single mold to the drying yard and child labor was not uncommon at the time.

At the drying yard the bricks were laid out to dry in the air and sun. During this time tools called dressers were used by edgers to straighten the bricks and make a clean surface. After 4 days of dry hot sun the bricks were firm enough to be stacked but they still contained 9-15% water and needed to be burned.

The earliest brickyards would not yet have a kiln. If fired bricks were available they were arranged into an arch or dome shape. The bricks themselves became the kiln. The walls and top were plastered with a mixture of sand, clay and water to retain heat. Vents were left at the top to pull the heat up through the bricks. Wood fires inside the small structures were kept low for 24-48 hours to allow any remaining water in the bricks to be released as "water smoke". Once the smoke cleared, it was time to increase the intensity of the fires. The fires needed to be kept burning around the clock for a week or so until the temperature reached 1,800 degrees F. Once the bricks came to temperature the fire was extinguished and you had made some bricks.



Turning the brick

Courtesy of Jeff Adams, The Brick Guy

RIPS PRESERVATION AWARDS

This is your chance to submit ideas for potential awards to RIPS. Awards and Certificates of Recognition will be given for work completed in 2025 (or earlier if we overlooked an eligible candidate). Candidates will be reviewed at the March membership meeting. We hope to present our awards at the May City Council meeting in honor of National Preservation Month. Please send award suggestions (address and description of work completed) to Diane Oestreich, 788-1845, blueskies78900@yahoo.com, or to Linda Anderson at lwickerrph@aol.com.

Nominations can be an individual, group, or business that has made special efforts to preserve or restore historic structures, or whose actions have served to support historic preservation in Rock Island. When awards are for structures, they are given primarily for exterior work that can be enjoyed from the public right-of-way. Generally, a building must be 50 years old or more and lie within the city limits of Rock Island.

When reviewing a project for an award, RIPS uses the following definitions:

- **Restoration** : An improvement project to an historic structure that endeavors to preserve, restore, and/or reconstruct historic architectural detail, building materials, and craftsmanship.
- **Renovation** : An improvement project to an historic structure that is properly respectful of the historic detail but has had modifications made that were necessary to make the structure more useable, comply with building codes, or make the project economically feasible.
- **Remodeling** : Alterations made to a structure that is not respectful of historic detail. This includes modifications that mimic restoration, when genuine renovations or restoration could have been done.

Only projects that meet the criteria of restoration or renovation will be eligible for consideration. Normal maintenance projects such as painting or reroofing alone will not be eligible.

STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISE

City of Rock Island has partnered with the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University to help guide the city in a strategic planning exercise. A community survey was developed and circulated by the team at NIU-CGS, to help the city understand resident and business satisfaction with existing services. You may have taken that survey last year, as it was widely advertised.



In February, the City Council and staff leadership will be interviewed by the consultants, and focus group meetings of various civic, resident, and business communities will be held in March. All of these efforts build towards a Strategic Planning Leadership Workshop in April, where the strategic assets and priorities of the city will be identified.



As preservationists, we understand that historic properties are a unique asset for the City of Rock Island and preservation should be a strategic priority for our city. Why? The vast majority of our buildings, residential and commercial, are more than 50 years old

and therefore considered historic.

Now is the time to reach out to your representative on City Council to express your support for increased prioritization of historic preservation in upcoming city strategic planning efforts! It's ok to contact other council members as well.

Upper photo, Former Tri City Jewish Center, now the Watts-Midtown Rock Island Public Library and Two Rivers YMCA. Lower photo, Schwiebert Riverfront Park on the site of the former Rock Island Armory with a bandshell designed in homage to the Armory

Summary provided by City of Rock Island 5th Ward Alderman Dylan Parker

RIPS ELECTIONS

Every February, we are scheduled to have elections of officers – President, VP, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. Because we don't have many people expressing an interest in serving, our officers rarely change. But that doesn't mean that new people cannot run for office. If you are interested in serving, please let us know before the February meeting. For more information about the positions and duties, contact Diane at 309 788-1845 or blueskies78900@yahoo.com

BROADWAY MOTHER'S DAY TOUR OF HOMES



Wagner House c.1904 904 23rd St.

Broadway Mother's Day Tour is Back!

Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10
Noon to 4:00 PM

After last year's success, the Broadway Historic District Association decided to bring back a new tour for 2026.

Tickets will be available at each home on the day of the tour for \$20. It will feature five homes on 23rd Street, most in the 800 block so there's very little walking. Of the five, two are Landmarks.

The street now called 23rd gave the Broadway neighborhood its name. From the earliest days of Rock Island, what we know as 23rd Street was called Broadway Street, until Rock Island went to a numbering system in 1876. The name survived in Broadway Presbyterian Church, which still stands but with a different denomination there.

Much of what was Broadway Street belonged to George Mixter, a pioneer settler, who often described his occupation as "capitalist." His home, whose address he listed as "head of Broadway," was in the middle of today's 9th Avenue and 23rd Streets.



McFarlane House c.1896 837 23rd St.

Rock Island Preservation Society
P.O. Box 3261
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-3261

