

### Sturgis on the River '09

It's hard to believe that 15 years have flown by already. Looking back to 1995, when a new rally kicked off its first year in the Village of East Davenport, where just hundreds of people crowded into a 2 block section on the Village, is quite a contrast to this year's rally. Since '95, the event has moved around a few different points in downtown Davenport, Iowa for numerous reasons. Main concern, being the Mighty Mississippi River, and the fact that Davenport has no permanent flood protection. So as one might guess, hosting a rally right on the river's banks can be a touchy deal.

It's no doubt that the scenery along the river is definitely an ideal location for a bike rally, but with major flooding, again, for the 2008 event, just 2 days before opening day, the rally was moved to higher grounds in Davenport. Just west of the Centennial Bridge, sits an open lot along Biederbeck Drive, that was host of the event for a number of years. There was even a couple of occasions, where the water's edge was literally inches from washing out the rally, but in '08, the water took out all of the grounds, and invaded a large portion of downtown. So at last minute, the event was moved to the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds on Locust Street, where things were just a bit drier. Although not as scenic as sitting on the river, the fairgrounds are more accommodating for a biker party, so event organizers decided that the fairgrounds would now be the permanent location.

Sturgis on the River, which is also known as the Mississippi River Motorcycle Rally, might not be sitting right on the river anymore, but the weekend's entertainment and good times are even more inviting. The rally features 3 different beer tents, each with bands playing all afternoon and into the evening, but the Scooter tent tends to be a hot spot around 9PM each night, when the Scooter Girl contest are being held. For weeks before the event, many different bars around the area host preliminary Scooter Girl contest, with all the winners from the Illinois side of the river dancing into the semi-finals on Thursday night, and the girls from the Iowa side on Friday night of the event. Then Saturday night, all semi-finalists compete for the crown, with this year's winner being a lovely tattooed brunette named Stephanie, from Wide Open Bar and Grill, in Moline, Illinois.

This year also featured a killer bike show on Saturday afternoon, along with local morning show icons Dwyer and Michaels from 97X hosting their classic car show. Tattoo shows were new for this year's event, and since the 1/2 mile Davenport Speedway is also on site, flat track motorcycle races were also new this year. The Budweiser Clydesdales were seen all weekend long, and Brett "The Big Schwag" Wagner was also seen strolling around the grounds.

This little rally started off with roughly 100 people in 1995, and has grown to tens of thousands who make the trip from all over the Midwest. With all the action now at the fairgrounds, on site camping is now available, so things are likely to only keep growing. The event is always held on Father's Day weekend, and for more info, check out [www.sturgisontheriver.com](http://www.sturgisontheriver.com) or call 1-800-563-5263.

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