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Happy Anniversary To Table Rock Dam

BRANSON, Mo. – A celebration marking the 50th anniversary of Table Rock Dam and its hydroelectric power facility will be held on Sunday, June 14, with a ceremony at 2 p.m. on the overlook across from the Dewey Short Visitors Center on Mo. 165.

The Springfield National Guard Band will kick-off the event. Dignitaries and people who were involved with the dam's construction will be on hand. It was at 2:45 p.m. on June 14, 1959, when the switch was thrown on the dam's power facility, said Rodney Raley of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Following the ceremony, activities will move across the highway to the Dewey Short Visitors Center where a film on the development of Table Rock Dam will be shown in the auditorium. There also will be entertainment on the lakeside patio by the Missouri Boatride Bluegrass Band from Branson West.

The dam has created boating, swimming and fishing opportunities for area residents and the millions of visitors who come to Branson each year, said Branson Mayor Raeanne Presley.

"It enhances our quality of life," Presley said.

The dam was built as a flood control measure. In 1941, Congress approved a series of dams on the White River to prevent devastating damage to thousands of acres of cotton, corn and other crops downstream.

That helped locally, too. Flood control "has allowed additional investments in areas that would never have seen any growth if it didn't exist," Presley said.

Raley invites anyone who was involved with the project to attend. Call Raley at 417-334-4101, ex. 3019.

Also, on Saturday and Sunday, June 13 and 14, free 30-minute tours of the Table Rock Dam Powerhouse will be offered. Visitors must get tickets at the Dewey Short Visitors Center and will be required to sign a statement that they are a United States citizen.

Also, Moonshine Beach is now open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. The day use fee is \$4 per vehicle. A season pass is available for \$30.

Who Was Dewey Short?

Dewey Short grew up in Galena, and served 24 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. Galena was a float-fishing center then, and as a young man, Short worked arranging float trips down the James River.

He graduated as valedictorian of Galena High School in 1915, and continued his education. Short was elected to Congress in 1928. In 1929, Empire District Electric Co. announced plans to build a hydroelectric project known as Table Rock. The 1930's depression derailed the plans. Then World War II delayed funding. But Short kept pushing the project. In 1954, Pres. Dwight Eisenhower signed the bill authorizing the funding, and praised Short for his efforts.

Additional information about Branson, its live entertainment, theme parks, lakes, golf courses, family attractions, shopping and other features is offered at www.explorebranson.com or 800-296-0463.