

Daven Anderson paintings reflect on living life along Midwest waters

By Kayla Gaffney

Daven Anderson's "The Rivers: A Celebration of Life and Work on our Inland Waterways" will be the featured exhibition at the Rosemary Berkel and Harry L. Crisp II Museum at Southeast Missouri State University's River Campus May 6 through June 19.

"The Rivers" exhibition includes 50 paintings that portray life on or near the Midwest's rivers and bays and the industry that depends on navigable waters.

Anderson is a self-taught artist, spending only one year in open painting sessions at the American Academy of Art in Chicago. He also is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, where he was a sailor.

"Everything I've been involved with has had to do with the water, so the series is a perfect blend of my love of the water and my passion for art and painting," Anderson said. "Nobody has ever done it before, a series on the rivers like this, it's the first."

Anderson said the purpose behind the series is to educate the public about what life is really like on the river and why it's important.

"Its purpose is to inform the viewers what goes on on the rivers. Most Americans don't have a clue how important they are for commerce," Anderson said. "So this is my way of showing some of the life and work on the rivers' inland waterways from coast to coast."

Peter Nguyen, director of the museum, said Anderson's watercolor paintings are quite large, which is unique, since most watercolor paintings are done on a much smaller scale.

"He's a very good watercolorist," Nguyen said. "We haven't done an exhibition of someone who does very large watercolors and someone who does them very well."

Anderson said there is a clear reason why he chose to do large paintings.

"There is a bit of a reason, I'm portraying landscapes with big ships, towboats, big barges, a lot of large equipment, shipyards, so to paint big impressive scenes in small paintings doesn't make much sense. If you want to have an impact, the painting needs to be big to portray a big scene," Anderson said.

In addition to having his work featured, Anderson also will give an artist talk at 6 p.m. May 5 and will teach a watercolor workshop from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 6 and 7 in the Crisp Museum. At the artist talk, Anderson will discuss the importance behind his work on the rivers.

"I really want to tell people, give them an idea of the importance of the inland waterways, but I really want to elicit a lot of questions from those that are there and I hope we have a good crowd," Anderson said.