

President's Message:
Why Rapid City, South Dakota?



It all started when our very own, Jill Turman, ventured out to Rapid City, South Dakota to do a demo for the School of Mines representing ABANA. What she came back with was excitement and a commitment from the School and Rapid City to help ABANA put on a great conference. We were also very lucky to gain a great board member and conference Co-Chair Jack Parks who is a Rapid City local! So, Thank You Jill Turman!

Rapid City holds a lot of hidden gems that will make this conference one of ABANA's best. How about we take a look at a few of them that aided in the board's selection of this site:

1. Rapid City and the School of Mines are excited to have ABANA in town and are working to make special arrangements to make the attendees feel right at home. The School of Mines has been around for over 100 years and has one of the top metallurgy departments in the country. They are opening the doors to their dorms, cafeteria, classrooms, and lecture halls for us. Creating yet another option for saving money on eats and sheets! The Rapid City Visitor's Bureau has from the beginning gone above and beyond to assist us in any way possible. I cannot give too much away yet on this but expect some really cool things to be announced soon...
2. The membership has spoken! The Memphis conference was catered to the suggestions of the membership on what you were looking for. The post conference survey gave us honest info on what worked and what still needs work. We have taken it to heart and are making improvements based on your feedback. There will still be on site camping, affordable ticket prices, better food vendors, happening later in the summer, teaching tent, more variation in demonstrations, campus involvement for eats and sheets options, and more.
3. Being in Rapid City means the whole family will get something out of the trip. Moving the conference dates into mid to late July allows for grade school and college to be out on summer break and before they start back up. This means the whole family can take a vacation to one of the most historic places in the country. Mount Rushmore is nearby along with Crazy Horse Mountain, and the experience of the Black Hills creates a pioneer spirit deep in your being that cannot be matched anywhere. Now the ABANA 2012 Conference can become one part of the memories and experiences you can have with your whole family in one of the most beautiful and meaningful places in the United States.

4. Being in the Dakotas also gets us closer to our Upper Midwest and Canadian members. The beauty and challenge in moving our conference around is to reach the multifaceted regions of our North American membership!
5. "Reunion on the Plains" is the theme. And the idea is to create a conference that brings back together all the members of our blacksmithing family. The knife makers, traditionalists, artists, hobbyists, professionals, and everything in between. This is certainly going to be a family reunion of sorts...just without that crazy uncle who always tells the awkward stories of when you were a kid (okay maybe that is just my family reunions!)

There is a lot more that can be listed out here. But, I think you get the picture! We wanted to give you a conference that has more than blacksmithing at the core. July 18-21, 2012 will bring a sense of unity to our amazing craft while inspiring a renewed sense of wonder into the possibilities within it and within your potential behind the anvil. It will also bring a perfect opportunity for your family or you alone to see some of the great wonders, both natural and man-made. It will also allow us to build life long memories with the lingering smell of coal smoke in such an inspirational place in North America. Allowing us all to forge ahead into the true potential of our craft and our own imagination, no matter the skill level or interest!

Yours in Service,

Peyton Anderson

Something to think about: The nearby town of Belle Fourche was designated in 1959 as the geographic center of the United States. So, see...Rapid City isn't that far away from you after all!!!