



THE AMERICAN WATERWAYS OPERATORS
Washington Executive Offices

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AWO MARKS NATIONAL MARITIME DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Waterways Operators (AWO), the trade association for the U.S. tugboat, towboat and barge industry, commemorates National Maritime Day on Friday, May 22. National Maritime Day was first declared by Congress in 1933 to honor the sacrifices of U.S. merchant mariners. Furthermore, as the U.S. Maritime Administration declares, “Observance of National Maritime Day also honors the maritime industry and the benefits it brings Americans in terms of transportation, jobs, goods, and recreational opportunities.”

Barge transportation is the most energy-efficient, economical and environmentally friendly way to transport commodities that are the building blocks of the American economy, including 60% of U.S. export grain, coal for electricity, petroleum products to heat homes, and chemicals for industrial use. The tugboat, towboat and barge industry offers attractive career opportunities, providing good paying, family-wage jobs for tens of thousands of Americans.

This year, the Smithsonian Institution will open its new exhibit, “On the Water: Stories from Maritime America,” at the National Museum of American History in Washington on National Maritime Day. The exhibit is the newest addition to the museum’s transportation exhibit, “America on the Move.” U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has been invited as the keynote speaker for the opening ceremony.

National Maritime Day has also been declared a Day of Remembrance and Prayer for Mariners and People of the Sea by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Apostleship of the Sea has celebrated a Mass on this day each year since 2005 for people who earn their living on the water. This Day of Remembrance and Prayer will be observed nationwide on May 22 and celebrated in Washington at St. Dominic Church, a church with historic ties to Washington’s waterfront.

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