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Oral Arguments Heard in Ballast Water Appeal

On August 14, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the appeal by the federal government and the Shipping Industry Ballast Water Coalition of the district court decision in *Northwest Environmental Advocates vs. EPA*. The lower court had ruled that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) illegally excluded ballast water and other discharges incidental to normal vessel operations from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program pursuant to the Clean Water Act, and issued an order vacating the agency’s exemption as of September 30, 2008.

The federal government and the Coalition, of which AWO is a funding member, argued that the district court should have deferred to EPA’s interpretation of the Clean Water Act, noting that Congress was aware of and had acquiesced to EPA’s decision to exclude ballast water and other vessel discharges from the NPDES program. The Coalition pointed out that Congress has enacted an extensive statutory framework for vessel discharges outside of, and subsequent to, the Clean Water Act. The coalition also argued that the district court did not have subject-matter jurisdiction and that the Court of Appeals has exclusive jurisdiction over regulations governing the scope and applicability of the NPDES permitting process.

During the hearing, the judges asked several questions that appeared to imply receptiveness to the government/Coalition arguments and suggested concern about the September 2008 deadline for EPA regulation of vessel discharges pursuant to the NPDES program. However, it is impossible to predict with certainty the outcome of an appeal based on oral argument, so AWO, in concert with the Coalition, is also working to support legislative action that would remove vessel discharges from the scope of the NPDES program.

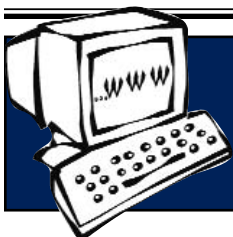
For an audio transcript of the hearing, click [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Carpenter at (703) 841-9300, extension 260, or via email at jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com



AWO Urges Coast Guard to Continue HF Weather Broadcasts

On August 24, AWO submitted comments urging the Coast Guard to continue providing high frequency (HF) radio broadcasts of weather forecasts and warnings, calling the broadcasts “crucial for the safe operation of smaller vessels that travel offshore.” AWO stressed that termination of the HF radio weather

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AWO Urges Coast Guard to Continue HF Weather Broadcasts

(continued from page 1)

broadcasts would have a substantial impact on vessel operators that do not have high-speed Internet access and strongly urged the Coast Guard to continue providing these services until a more efficient and cost-effective method of delivering weather information can be developed.

AWO filed its comments in response to an April 26 Notice and Request for Comment aimed at assisting the Coast Guard in determining the demand for continuation of the broadcasts in radiofax, voice and Simplex Teletype over Radio (SITOR) formats. According to the Coast Guard, the infrastructure necessary to continue providing these services has exceeded its life expectancy and repairs are extremely difficult and costly. The Coast Guard's goal was to determine which of these services are still widely used by vessel operators.

For a copy of AWO's comments, click [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Angela Madden at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or via email at amadden@vesselalliance.com.



If you receive a hard copy of the *AWO Letter* and need to know the exact Web addresses of the hyperlinks in any articles, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or via email at mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com.



NMC Announces New Procedure to Speed up License Evaluation

In an effort to reduce delays in the issuance of merchant mariner licenses and documents and increase the number of fully complete applications submitted to the National Maritime Center (NMC), the Coast Guard has implemented new procedures to be used by the Regional Exam Centers (RECs) for forwarding application packages to the NMC for approval.

REC staff will now use a standard form (the "Mariner File Organization and Mariner Application Submittal Checklist," MLD-FM-NMC1-01) to ensure that an application is complete and ready to be evaluated prior to forwarding it to the NMC. The checklist also provides important reminders regarding database entries and file mailing procedures to ease the file movement to the NMC. Initially, the new procedures will be implemented only at those RECs that are currently forwarding applications to the NMC (New Orleans, Anchorage, Juneau and Baltimore). By December 2008, all 17 RECs will function as "storefronts" that will provide preliminary review of applications before forwarding them to the NMC for approval and credential issuance.

The NMC has also begun testing a new online version of form CG-719, the Application for License and for Merchant Mariner's Documents. The new form will allow mariners to fill out the information electronically and will ensure that all essential information is completed before the form can be submitted to the Coast Guard. The new form should be ready for public use before the end of the year.

For more information on the restructuring of the licensing and documentation process, please contact Jennifer Carpenter or Angela Madden at (703) 841-9300, extensions 260 and 262, respectively, or via email at jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com or amadden@vesselalliance.com.

THE AWO FALL CONVENTION IS ALMOST HERE...

Have you made your reservations yet?

The AWO Fall Convention is being held in Houston, TX this year at the Four Seasons Hotel. Meetings will begin on the morning of Thursday, October 4 and conclude at noon on Friday, October 5. New Directors should plan to attend the Board orientation session to be held the day before the Convention, on Wednesday, October 3 at noon. To register for the event, please click [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at hwellman@vesselalliance.com.



Congress to Reconvene Following Labor Day

WRDA Conference Report, Coast Guard Authorization on the Agenda

The Senate and the House of Representatives will both reconvene on September 4 after taking their summer recess during the month of August. Appropriations bills to fund the federal government for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 will be a major item on the congressional agenda. With less than a month to go before FY 2008 begins on October 1, none of the regular appropriations bills have been signed into law.



Also on the Senate's agenda will be consideration of the conference report on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The WRDA legislation has not been renewed since 2000. House and Senate conferees earlier this year agreed upon a final version of the bill that authorizes \$20 billion worth of water projects, including the seven new locks and dams in the Upper Mississippi River/Illinois Waterway project. The House of Representatives approved the conference report by a vote of 380-41 just before Congress adjourned for the August recess. (See August 17 *AWO Letter*.)

Consideration of the conference report in the Senate had been held up by Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) because of disagreements that he had with so-called "Corps reform" provisions in the bill. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is expected to bring the WRDA conference report before the full Senate soon after the Senate reconvenes. The Senate is expected to approve the measure by a vote similar to the "veto-proof" majority that the bill received in the House of Representatives.

Once the Senate approves the conference report, the bill will be presented to President Bush to be signed into law. President Bush has threatened to veto the bill because of its

high cost. However, passage of the bill by "veto-proof" majorities in both the House and Senate makes the prospect of a veto uncertain. If President Bush does veto the WRDA bill, it will be sent back to the Congress for a vote on overriding the veto. In that case, AWO will urge its members to contact their Senators and Representatives to ask that they vote to override the veto so that this important legislation can be enacted.

Another item on the congressional agenda for the fall is the Coast Guard authorization bill for FY 2008. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee have both reported out versions of this legislation. The House and Senate are expected to consider the Coast Guard bill sometime after Congress reconvenes. An important issue for AWO in both bills is "fixing the TWIC" by securing interim work authority for newly-hired vessel crewmembers before they are required to complete the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) enrollment process. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) and committee member Richard Baker (R-LA) are working together to include interim work authority language in a "manager's amendment" to the Coast Guard bill when it is considered on the House floor. AWO continues to work to include an interim work authority provision in the Senate version of the Coast Guard authorization bill as well.

For more information, please contact Boyd Hollingsworth at (703) 841-9300, extension 258, or via email at bhollingsworth@vesselalliance.com.

Important Dates and Reminders

..... at a glance

All contact persons can be reached by calling AWO's Arlington, VA office at (703) 841-9300 unless otherwise noted.

October 3-5: Fall Convention and Board Meeting. For more information, contact Hermoine Wellman.

October 31-November 1: Joint Safety Committees Meeting, Baltimore, MD. For more information, contact Bob Clinton.

“Lock and Dam System Getting Attention”

The following article, written by Anne Cook, was published in the *Illinois News-Gazette* on August 19.

PEORIA – Rick Granados describes the river he tends as a “one-lane highway,” carrying Illinois resources to the world. Granados, a navigation manager for the Army Corps of Engineers based at Rock Island, said his corps office is in charge of maintenance of locks and dams on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers to make barge traffic possible, an infrastructure he said is in need of attention.

Sponsors of three barge tours to take a look at that infrastructure say Congress finally seems to be addressing that issue because it’s in the process of passing the Water Resources Development Act. But Washington needs to go a step further and back that with appropriations, they said.

“We’re talking about more than \$2 billion for seven locks and dams on the upper Illinois River and the Mississippi River,” said Barry Palmer, Waterways Inc. president. “The bill passed the House and the Senate, it went to conference committee, the House passed the conferenced bill, and the Senate passed the bill 91 to 4, which is almost unheard of.”

“We’ve been trying to get this done for seven years,” Palmer said. “It looks like we’ve finally worn them down.”

Former U.S. Rep. Tom Ewing, who now works on energy issues from his Pontiac home and in Washington, said Congress needs to take action on the proposals now to keep the country competitive. Ewing said he has traveled in Brazil and Argentina to see the “new and very competitive” river transportation systems there.

“Some of the financial numbers are overwhelming, but if we can find the

money to fight the war in Iraq, I would think we could find the money to keep our infrastructure modern,” Ewing said.

The Illinois Corn Growers Association helped plan the barge tours at Peoria and Pekin on the Illinois River and at Alton and Bettendorf, Iowa, on the Mississippi River.

Garry Niemeyer of Glenarm, a National Corn Growers Association board member and a host for the Peoria tour, said farmers shipped 11 million tons of corn on the Illinois River and 23 million tons of corn on the Mississippi in 2004.

“It’s time to rebuild our river,” Niemeyer said. “Specifically, we want to rebuild five locks on the Mississippi and two on the Illinois.”

John Jansen of CF Industries, which has a fertilizer terminal on the Illinois River south of Pekin, said the river brings farmers other economic benefits. “Without the locks and dams, we wouldn’t be in this area, and farmers’ cost of fertilizer would be higher,” Jansen said.

Corn is the No. 1 commodity shipped on both rivers, but coal for electrical power is No. 2 on the Mississippi. Iron, steel and chemicals for manufacturing are among the top 10 commodities shipped on the rivers and so are construction materials.

Soybeans also move on the rivers, 5 million tons on the Mississippi in 2004 and 3 million tons on the Illinois

The Peoria lock is one of two targeted for rebuilding on the Illinois with the Lragrange Lock south of it.

The *Mary Evelyn*, a tugboat built in 1981, pushed the bargeload of farmers into the lock and another tugboat pushed water retention doors closed behind it because the lock’s hydraulic system wasn’t working.

Workers flooded the 110-foot-wide lock with water to raise the level – and the barge – 9 feet to continue the trip upriver to the Peoria dock. Gary Loss, the corps’ deputy for programs and project management, said the Illinois drops 160 feet from the first lock at Chicago to the last lock at Lragrange.

“Our challenge is to look ahead 20 years,” Loss said. “We look at what ethanol production will mean for the rivers. We need \$24 million to get the first lock under construction by 2010.”

He said it will take about 18 years to complete the reconstruction and maintenance work on the lock sites on both rivers under Rock Island’s jurisdiction.

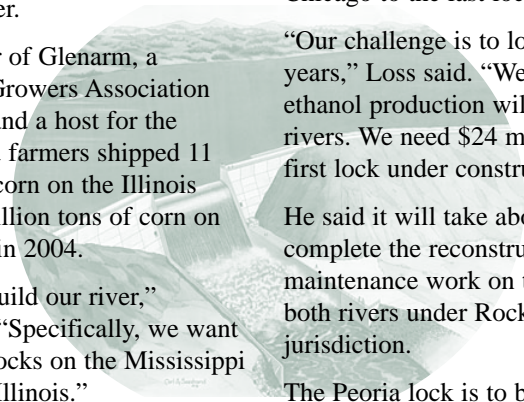
The Peoria lock is to be rebuilt because it’s not big enough for a full tow – 15 barges stacked three abreast and five deep – to move through together. Workers break the tow apart to move it through in two parts, a process that takes twice the time, about two hours.

A 15-barge tow holds as much corn as 870 trucks or 225 rail cars.

Other groups with interest in the future of the locks include The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon society, because money to work locks will be accompanied by about \$1.7 billion for habitat restoration if Congress comes up with that appropriation.

“We take the land behind flood control and use it for the benefit of fish and wildlife,” said Dan McGuinness, director of Audubon’s Upper Mississippi River Initiative.

“Eagle habitat on the river in Illinois is a big success story. They’re back. And we have ducks, swans and even white pelicans from wetlands in Minnesota flying the river.”



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH! AWO Part of Homeland Security Preparedness Coalition

AWO has once again joined a national coalition of businesses and associations as part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) READY campaign. The campaign, which is promoting September as National Preparedness Month, is a nationwide effort designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. DHS is leveraging the outreach of national organizations like AWO to inform their members of the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action in order to increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation.

In 2007, National Preparedness Month will have four themed weeks that focus on different areas of emergency

preparedness, including:

- back-to-school (Ready Kids)
- business preparedness (Ready Business)
- multicultural preparedness (Listo Campaign); and,
- home and family preparedness (Ready America).

Throughout the month of September, DHS asks all Americans to take some simple steps to prepare their families for emergencies, including assembling a family emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, being informed about different threats and getting involved in preparing their communities. National Preparedness Month is also

aimed at businesses. All companies should have an emergency plan and a business continuity plan. Ready Business helps owners and managers of small- to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency. The campaign's messages are being delivered through a Web site, brochures, radio, print and Internet public service announcements and through key partnerships with organizations like AWO.



For more information on how your family and business can be prepared, go to www.ready.gov.

Watch for more information on preparedness planning in upcoming September issues of the *AWO Letter*. ❁

WELCOME, HERMOINE WELLMAN!

AWO is excited to welcome Hermoine J. Wellman as the new Coordinator - Meetings & Membership. With 20 years of experience in meetings management and membership services for a number of trade associations, most recently with Women in Community Service, she will undoubtedly bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to AWO. Ms. Wellman hails from Maryland and is an avid Washington Redskins fan. She is already devoting most of her time to planning AWO's Fall Convention in Houston on October 3-5, so if you attend the meeting, be sure to welcome her to the industry. Ms. Wellman can be reached at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at hwellman@vesselalliance.com. ❁



CEMS Training Opportunities

The Crew Endurance Management System (CEMS) is a system for managing risk factors in maritime work environments that can lead to human error and performance slumps. The Coast Guard and AWO have been working together to help companies implement the principles of CEMS. In this space, AWO will publish details of CEMS training opportunities around the country. For further information on CEMS training opportunities, please contact LCDR Vivianne Louie, U.S. Coast Guard, at (202) 372-1358. ❁

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
September 6-7	Kirby Corporation Baton Rouge, LA	Ms. Kelly Parker (Contact) kelly.parker@kirbycorp.com (713) 435-1775
September 6-7	Inland Waterways Academy Huntington, WV	Ms. Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) salyers_solutions@hughes.net (504) 236-4962

Internal Audits: A Key Part of the RCP

Internal audits have been a requirement of the Responsible Carrier Program[®] (RCP) since the program was first introduced in December 1994 and are expected to be an integral part of the new rules on towing vessel inspection. Internal audits, arguably one of the most important elements of the RCP or any quality system, require all levels of management to regularly look at their operations from within to determine how well they are complying with their own policies and procedures and what effect these actions are having on the company's overall safety performance.

In an effort to provide information to assist our members with this important process, a series of articles will run in this space to familiarize AWO members with auditing basics. To begin, here are some important definitions:

- An **Audit** is a documented means to verify by examination and objective evidence that all applicable elements of the quality system have been developed, documented for measurement and verification, and effectively implemented.
 - o A **First-Party Audit (Internal)** is performed by a company on itself using its own people or a subcontractor.

- o A **Second-Party Audit (External)** is performed by, or on behalf of, the company on a subcontractor or potential subcontractor.
- o A **Third-Party Audit (External)** is performed by an auditor who:
 - 1) Has no commercial interest in the organization being audited or its customer(s), and
 - 2) Is recognized by some certification body, statutory body or suitably independent body (such as AWO).

- A **Survey** is a documented, systematic examination to determine the condition, situation, or value of a physical place, structure, machine or piece of equipment.
- **Objective** means not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings; based on real facts.
- **Certification** means official verification, usually in writing, that something is true or correct.

The Management and Administration and Human Factors sections of the RCP require companies to develop policies



and procedures that establish processes to improve safety. These are best checked through an internal audit process that verifies their existence through objective documentary evidence to ensure that they are in place and effectively implemented. The Vessel Equipment Sections are most suited to verification through a survey-type process that uses objective physical examination to determine the existence and condition of various items of required equipment.

The next article in this series will explain techniques for conducting internal audits, factors to consider when assigning individuals to perform internal audits, and how best to develop employee support for this process. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Clinton at (703) 841-9300, extension 253, or via email at bclinton@vesselalliance.com.

New Lesson Plans Available on AWO Web Site

Three new lesson plans developed and endorsed by the Interregion Safety Committee are now available on the AWO Web site, www.americanwaterways.com, in the Safety Tools/Documents Library under "Commitment to Safety."

The first one, Lesson Plan for Working on the Head of a Tow, highlights potential fall overboard risks during

operations at the head of a tow. Building on the foundation of other lesson plans aimed at fall overboard prevention awareness, this new lesson plan can help companies educate their crewmembers about specific risks encountered in their operations and how to mitigate them. Fall overboard prevention awareness has



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New Lesson Plans Available on AWO Web Site

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been a priority for the Interregion Safety Committee for several years, and continues to remain on its list of 2007 priorities.



The next two lesson plans, Galley Safety and Safe Food Handling, contain basic information that crewmembers should know, whether or not they have responsibility for food handling. Proper sanitation and food handling practices are important to follow, whether aboard a vessel or in one's home kitchen. These lesson plans support a policy on sanitation and safe food handling required in the Responsible Carrier Program®. This new requirement became effective January 1, 2007.

Like all other lesson plans developed by the Interregion Safety Committee, they are intended to be tailored for a company's unique operations, and contain basic information that can be used by all companies.

There are now over 25 lesson plans in the AWO Safety Tools/Documents Library. There are also "lessons learned" available in the Members Only section of the AWO Web site. These safety tools are a valuable resource for AWO members and can help refresh a company's safety messages as well as reinforce a company's commitment to being a Responsible Carrier.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Clinton at (703) 841-9300, extension 253, or via email at bclinton@vesselalliance.com.

Atlantic Region

Massachusetts Reinstates Three Provisions of Its Unconstitutional Oil Spill Act

According to a recent posting on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Web site, three provisions of the Oil Spill Prevention Act are in effect as

of Monday, August 20, for vessels transiting Buzzards Bay. The three provisions include escort tug requirements, manning requirements and certificate of financial assurance requirements to dock in Massachusetts. There were no formal notices given to AWO or its attorney that the provisions would be in effect on August 20, but an August 22 article from *The Cape Cod Times* indicates that "the state Department of Environmental Protection and state Attorney General Martha Coakley have decided to enforce the state Oil Spill Prevention Act while the U.S. Justice Department and the oil shipping industry fight the law in court." It is still unclear whether Massachusetts has begun actively enforcing the three provisions.

As AWO reported to affected members in a memorandum last

week, this action by the state is unexpected because it is inconsistent with the federal appeals court remand decision in the case of *U.S. v. Massachusetts*

that states the "parties should address the question of an interim agreement to stay [the Massachusetts Oil Spill Act's] provisions..." pending the outcome of litigation. AWO is consulting with its attorney to review options available to members, including the option of asking the district court to enjoin enforcement. AWO is also working to obtain further information on the intentions of the state to enforce these three provisions and will



"The state Department of Environmental Protection and state Attorney General Martha Coakley have decided to enforce the state Oil Spill Prevention Act while the U.S. Justice Department and the oil shipping industry fight the law in court."

- The Cape Cod Times

email members with updates as they become available.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Coakley or Boyd Hollingsworth at (703) 841-9300, extensions 297 and 258, respectively, or via email at ccoakley@vesselalliance.com or bhollingsworth@vesselalliance.com.

Atlantic Region

AWO Submits Comments Rejecting Amendments to Massachusetts Oil Spill Act



On August 27, AWO submitted comments to the Massachusetts Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture in opposition to Senate Bill S.517, Preventing Oil Spills in Buzzards Bay, introduced by Sen. Mark Montigny (D-Second Bristol and Plymouth). The bill proposes the adoption of amendments to the Massachusetts State Oil Spill Act, which is currently being litigated in the case *U.S. v. Massachusetts*; AWO is one of the maritime intervenors in the case. (See July 6 *AWO Letter*.) The amendments would establish reporting requirements for tank vessels transiting Buzzards Bay, increase the fee for deliveries to Massachusetts terminals, and enforce the placement and manning of “rescue tugs” in Buzzards Bay. Additionally, the bill mandates the promulgation of regulations to implement the provisions of S.517.

AWO’s comments maintain that several of the proposed amendments of S.517 touch areas of regulation reserved to the federal government, as established and supported by several U.S. Supreme Court decisions. AWO recommended that the committee suspend consideration of the bill because the United States is currently involved in litigation with the commonwealth of Massachusetts over provisions in the Oil Spill Act that are similar in subject matter to the amendments proposed in S.517 which are likely to be deemed unconstitutional by the U.S. District Court. Another reason the committee should not pursue amendments to the contested Oil Spill Act is that the U.S. Coast Guard is developing federal regulations to implement increased protections for Buzzards Bay in the form of a regulated navigation area for these waters. It is AWO’s position that the Joint Committee should not

consider S.517 until the Coast Guard’s final rule for the regulated navigation area is published and the issues raised in the federal litigation are resolved. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or via email at ccoakley@vesselalliance.com.

An advertisement for The American Waterways Operators (AWO). The top half features the text "DID YOU KNOW" in large, bold, serif font, with a large question mark in the center. Below this, a photograph shows a Coast Guard officer in uniform standing on a boat, looking out at the sea. In the background, two large tugboats are visible on the water. To the right of the photograph, text reads: "The U.S. Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership, the first industry-Coast Guard partnership of its kind, has launched more than 20 quality action teams that are improving safety and training throughout the tug and barge industry's operations." Below the photograph, the AWO logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized 'A' and 'W' with a compass rose. The text "THE AMERICAN WATERWAYS OPERATORS" and "AMERICA'S TUG & BARGE INDUSTRY" is printed below the logo. At the bottom, the slogan "OUR COMPASS ALWAYS POINTS TO SAFETY." is written in a bold, sans-serif font. A small URL "www.americanwaterways.com" is visible near the bottom right of the advertisement.

Midcontinent Office

Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Hold Joint Meeting

The Midwest and Ohio Valley regions met for the joint summer regional meeting on August 16 in St. Louis, MO. The meeting was preceded by two special sessions and a reception.

On August 15, over 80 individuals met to learn how comply with the new District Eight Policy Letter on Limited Geographic Licenses and to discuss ways to improve the use of technology with BargeEx™ and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). The two sessions were generously sponsored by George Foster, JB Marine Service, Inc. During the first session CAPT Tim Close, LCDR Jim Stewart and Mr. James “Goat” Patterson, Osage Marine Services Inc., highlighted the intent and specifics of the Policy Letter. CAPT Lorne Thomas of the Ninth Coast Guard District announced that the Ninth District would embrace the use of the Eighth District’s policy letter. CAPT Thomas did encourage companies to work with Regional Exam Centers (REC) in the Eighth District in the near future until the Toledo REC can come up to speed on the new policy. The second session on technology was presented by Mr. Bob Murgatroy of American Commercial Lines. All presentations are available on the AWO web site.

The reception featured short presentations by Congressman Kenny Hulshof (R-MO), RADM Joel Whitehead, Eighth Coast Guard District Commander, and COL Lewis “Skip” Setliff, St. Louis District Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The reception was graciously sponsored by Royce Wilken, American River Transportation Co. and Steve Isaacson, GE Commercial Finance.

The meeting included presentations by Midwest Region Chairman Bill Arnold, MEMCO Barge Line, and Ohio Valley Region Chairman Ted Waxler, SCF Waxler Marine LLC, on public policy issues facing AWO and association business. RADM Whitehead and Ninth District Commander RADM John Crowley discussed activities within each of their areas of responsibility. One disappointing announcement was that the Eighth and Ninth District boundary will probably not move. However, the admirals did recommit to improving consistency across district lines. Government partners also making brief presentations included CAPT Sharon

Richey, Sector Upper Mississippi Commander; COL Skip Setliff; Des Goyal, USACE Omaha District (which includes the Missouri River),; and Bill Harder, USACE Great Lakes and River Division. Anne Burns, AWO Vice President – Public Affairs, provided information to the membership on how members could be most effective with Congress, regulators and the media. AWO President Tom Allegretti provided some stark news on the state of advocacy challenges for the industry. The continental breakfast was kindly sponsored by Norb Whitlock of American Commercial Lines and the beverages were generously sponsored by Goat Patterson of Osage Marine Services, Inc.



The regional meeting included two focus discussions that provided an opportunity for the membership to discuss how to approach key issues and provide input to the AWO staff. The group discussed the possible removal of the safety mission from the Coast Guard and possible changes to Coast

Guard policy on crew travel time. During the session, members of the Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership Quality Action Team (QAT), including co-chairman Craig Philip, Ingram Barge Line, answered questions about the group’s work.

The meeting concluded with a regional report by Lynn M. Muench, Senior Vice President – Regional Affairs. She updated the membership on the key areas of work for all regional offices as directed by the Board-approved strategic plan, *AWO 21*.

The meeting was followed by a Midwest and Ohio Valley Board members luncheon. The Board members provided feedback to the staff on the regional meeting, the upcoming Board member orientation during the Fall Convention and suggestions on how to better use the Board members for advocacy.

Future Midwest and Ohio Valley meetings are scheduled for January 30-31, 2008, in Nashville, TN and August 13-14, 2008, in Chicago, IL.

All Power Point presentations are available on the AWO web site. For more information, contact Lynn M. Muench at (314) 446-6474 or awo_midcontinent@msn.com. ☺