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Congress to Reconvene on December 3 *Unfinished Appropriations Bills Top Agenda*

Both the Senate and the House of Representatives will reconvene the week of December 3, following the two-week recess for the Thanksgiving holiday. The Senate will convene on Monday, December 3, and the House of Representatives returns on Tuesday, December 4.

Topping the agenda for the December session will be the remaining appropriations bills for the 2008 Fiscal Year (FY). Although the FY 2008 began on October 1, only one of the 12 appropriations bills, the Defense appropriations measure, has been enacted. The government has been funded through a series of "continuing resolutions" providing funding at last year's levels and is currently operating under such a measure which provides funding through December 14.

The President and Congress have disagreed on funding levels in the appropriations bills, which are \$23 billion above the amounts requested by the President. Before adjourning for Thanksgiving, the House of Representatives sustained the President's veto of the appropriations bill for the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services. President Bush had vetoed that measure because it was \$9.6 billion more than he had requested.

Prior to the Thanksgiving adjournment, Senate Democratic leaders floated a

proposal to "split the difference" with the President by reducing by half the \$23 billion in additional funding. Although the proposal was rejected, it signals that both sides may attempt to negotiate their differences when Congress returns in December.

House Coast Guard Subcommittee Holds Hearing on San Francisco Oil Spill

On November 19, the Coast Guard Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a field hearing in San Francisco, CA, on the container ship *Cosco Busan* hitting the Bay Bridge and spilling 58,000 gallons of oil into the bay. The hearing focused on the Coast Guard's response to the oil spill. Many, including San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, criticized the Coast Guard for not reacting quickly or aggressively enough, and for not notifying the appropriate parties about the details of the spill in a timely manner. However, VADM Craig Bone, Commander, Eleventh District, said that, while there was a "mistake in communications," the Coast Guard's response "exceeded expectations" and was "one of the most successful cleanups I've ever experienced." Speaker of the

(continued on page 2)



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TWIC Enrollment Process Gets Underway to Mixed Reviews *Stakeholders Share Concerns with TSA, Coast Guard*

The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Stakeholder Communications Committee (TSCC) met November 9 to discuss early industry experience with the TWIC enrollment process, which began October 16 in the port of Wilmington, DE. At the meeting, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) presented preliminary statistics from Wilmington and Corpus Christi, TX, and stakeholders shared feedback and concerns about their early experiences with the enrollment process.

At the time of the TSCC meeting, TWIC enrollment had begun in seven ports, and fewer than 2,000 enrollments had taken place. (The estimated number of transportation workers who will be required to enroll by September 25, 2008, is 1.5 million.) TSA reported that the average enrollment time was less than 13 minutes, with an average wait time for pre-enrolled applicants of 3 minutes in Wilmington and 18 minutes in Corpus Christi. The agency said that TWIC processing time for a “clean” application was running approximately one week, but acknowledged that that interval could increase as more enrollment centers become operational and the number of cards being processed increases.

TSA and Lockheed Martin officials told stakeholders that early challenges have included a learning curve for trusted agents (contract personnel staffing the enrollment centers), including remembering computer passwords, etc.; maintaining connectivity with a secure central database from remote locations; and, fingerprint matching at the time of card issuance. A mitigation plan to deal with these challenges is underway, including increased support resources, refresher training and technical notes for trusted agents; adjustments to computer parameters; and, improvement of fingerprint matching capabilities.



AWO Senior Vice President - National Advocacy Jennifer Carpenter reported that while preliminary member feedback from Wilmington was generally positive, AWO members enrolling at the Baton Rouge and Corpus Christi centers reported numerous concerns. In addition to the issues already raised by TSA and Lockheed, AWO members expressed concern about:

- Privacy at enrollment centers during the transmission of biographic information such as Social Security numbers;
- Disclosure forms that require applicants to verify that they have not been convicted of certain crimes, but include only statutory or regulatory citations and not plain-language lists of the offenses in question; and,
- The qualifications of enrollment center personnel.


In response, TSA and Lockheed said that:

- Proper procedure for taking applicants’ personal information, including Social Security number, is not verbal transmission but keypad entry so as to avoid the risk of sensitive information being overheard by other applicants. Officials agreed to reinforce this procedure with enrollment center personnel. (Any AWO member who is asked to provide such information verbally should request that he or she be allowed to enter the information via keypad.)
- TSA and Lockheed officials would work to ensure that a list of cited offenses was available at each enrollment station so applicants could review it before signing the disclosure form.

House Coast Guard Subcommittee Holds Hearing on San Francisco Oil Spill

(continued from page 1)

House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), whose district includes San Francisco, joined the hearing. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) has called for another congressional hearing to be held on oil spill prevention in mid-December.

Testifying at the hearing were Gavin Newsom, Mayor, City of San Francisco; VADM Craig E. Bone, Commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District; William G. Conner Ph.D., Chief, HAZMAT Emergency Response Division, NOAA Office of Response and Restoration; Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California Resources Agency; David Lewis, Executive Director, Save the Bay; Zeke Grader, Executive Director, Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman’s Associations; and, Capt. Thomas Hand, Bar Pilot, San Francisco Bar Pilots Association. 

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TWIC Enrollment Process Gets Underway to Mixed Reviews

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- Contract personnel staffing enrollment centers must apply for and receive a TWIC; pass the same background check as required for TSA employees (which is more extensive than the background check required to receive a TWIC); and, complete a 40-hour training course covering privacy issues, customer service and other topics.

In a change from previously-reported information, TSA also told stakeholders that the agency now has no plans to close any of the 147 fixed enrollment centers after the initial enrollment surge period, although the

hours of some centers may be shortened. The agency had previously said that some enrollment centers would be closed after September 2008.

The next TSCC meeting will take place on December 5. To share your TWIC enrollment experience (positive or negative), please contact Jennifer Carpenter at (703) 841-9300, extension 260, or via email at jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com. Member concerns will be shared (anonymously) with TSA, Coast Guard and Lockheed Martin officials, and agency responses will be reported in future editions of the *AWO Letter*. 

TWIC enrollment will begin at the following ports:

- November 28:** Port of Charleston
- November 29:** Ports of Cleveland, Detroit and Port Fourchon
- November 30:** Port of Boston
- December 5:** Ports of Brownsville and Mobile
- December 12:** Ports of Brunswick and Milwaukee
- December 13:** Port of Philadelphia

For the complete up-to-date TWIC Quarterly Deployment Plan, please click [here](#).



Important Dates and Reminders

..... at a glance

For more information, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, unless otherwise noted.

January 17-18, 2008:
Southern Region Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

January 24-25, 2008:
Atlantic Region Annual Meeting, Miami, FL.

January 30-31, 2008:
Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN.

February 6-7, 2008:
Pacific Region Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.

Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement Program Extended

On November 7, a notice announcing the extension of the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) program until October 1, 2008, was printed in the *Federal Register*. The VISA was designed to make intermodal shipping services and systems available to the Department of Defense (DOD) to supplement DOD's sealift capabilities in order to provide an easy transition from peacetime to wartime.

The VISA program is open to any U.S.-flagged vessel operator operating under the laws of a state or the District of Columbia



who enters into a VISA Enrollment Contract with DOD. Included in the above definition are "all United States subsidiaries and affiliates of the entity which own, operate, charter or lease ships and intermodal equipment in the regular course of their business and in which the entity holds a controlling interest." This may also include, at the applicant's request, non-domestic subsidiaries and affiliates controlled by the applicant, provided that the Maritime Administrator, in coordination with the United States Transportation Command, approves their inclusion.

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Coast Guard Issues Voluntary Disclosure Policy for Environmental Violations



The Coast Guard has adopted a Voluntary Disclosure Policy that encourages regulated entities, including vessel owners or operators, to “voluntarily discover, disclose, correct, and prevent violations of Federal environmental requirements.” The Coast Guard will recommend that criminal charges not be brought against the disclosing entity as long as the Coast Guard determines that the violation does not fit a pattern of concealing or condoning environmental violations and the entity meets the following outlined conditions:

1. The violation was discovered voluntarily. This excludes violations discovered through legally-mandated monitoring or a compliance audit required by a consent order or settlement agreement. A violation that is voluntarily discovered, regardless of whether reporting of the violation was required, is generally eligible for Disclosure Policy credit.
2. The violation is disclosed to the Coast Guard, in writing, within 21 calendar days of discovery. Though a complete investigation is not required at the time of disclosure, the known particulars of the incident must be identified.
3. The violation must be discovered before the Coast Guard, or other government agency, would have identified the problem through its own investigation or from information received by a third party.
4. The entity must correct the violation within 60 calendar days from the date of discovery, or as quickly as possible.
5. The entity must consent to take the necessary precautions to prevent a recurrence of the disclosed violation.
6. Repeat offenders are barred from receipt of Disclosure Policy Credit. The violation must not have occurred previously within the past three years involving the same vessels, or within the past five years involving multiple vessel owned or operated by the same entity.
7. The entity must cooperate with the Coast Guard and not hide, destroy or tamper with evidence pursuant to the disclosure of a potential environmental violation. Those responsible for the disclosure of possible criminal violations may expect a review by the Coast Guard and must be prepared to allow access to all documents, employees and information relevant to the violations disclosed.

The Disclosure Policy is not a final agency action and intended only as a means of guidance. The Disclosure Policy can be found by clicking [here](#).

Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement Program Extended

(continued from page 3)

The VISA is divided into three stages to be activated when DOD contingency requirements are not met by requests for voluntary capacity. A participant’s capacity commitment to Stages I and II of the VISA program is one of the considerations in determining the level of DOD peacetime contracts awarded to the company, with the exception of Jones Act capacity. Participants operating vessels strictly engaged in domestic trade are required to commit 50 percent of that capacity to Stage III. These participants may voluntarily agree to commit capacity to Stages I and/or II; however, this will not be required as a



consideration of domestic peacetime contract. In cases where the activation of this agreement dispossesses a participant of some or all of its Jones Act vessels and creates a shortage of Jones Act vessels, the Maritime Administrator may request that the Secretary of Homeland Security grant a waiver of the Jones Act provisions to temporarily allow a participant to utilize non-Jones Act vessels.


The VISA Application and Agreement form can be accessed on the Maritime Administration’s Web site by clicking [here](#).

NMSAC to Meet in California, Discuss TWIC

The National Maritime Security Advisory Committee (NMSAC) will hold a meeting in San Ramon, CA, on December 6, during which it will hear an update from its Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Work Group. NMSAC advises the U.S. Coast Guard on matters of marine security, and the agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Welcome and opening remarks; introduction of new Executive Assistant
2. Old Committee Action Items
3. Update from the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Work Group


4. Miscellaneous Updates on: the Maritime Sector Coordinating Council; USCG/CBP Joint Recovery Protocols for the Resumption of Trade; USCG NVIC 9-02 Ch 3, revisions to Area Maritime Security Committee guidance and planning requirements per the SAFE Port Act; USCG's Container Inspection program; and, Status of the TWIC program
5. Public Comments
6. New Committee Action Items
7. Closing Remarks

For a copy of the meeting notice, please click [here](#). 

Sign Up for NMC and MLD Email Updates

The National Maritime Center (NMC) and the Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MLD) program are now on the Coast Guard's List Server and are providing email updates on the following topics:

- NMC Updates
- NMC Performance Reports
- MLD Program Policy Updates
- Regional Exam Center News/Announcements
- Merchant Mariner Document Information/News
- Coast Guard Approved Courses


To subscribe to a list, please click [here](#). For more information, please contact LT Hilary Stickle at (304) 724-9557 or via email at Hilary.Stickle@uscg.mil. 

2008 AWO Safety Calendar Orders Now Being Accepted

The 2008 AWO Safety Calendar was unveiled at the Fall Convention in Houston, TX, revealing the winners of the seventh annual Photo Contest. The theme of this year's calendar is "Crew Endurance



Management" and each page contains an important safety message. It is also a tool that AWO uses to promote the industry's commitment to safe operations by distributing the calendar to members of Congress, regulators in the Coast Guard and other federal agencies, state legislators and the media. Each AWO member company will receive a calendar as a gift soon, and additional calendars are on sale for \$12 each. If you would like to order calendars, please fill out the attached form and mail it with a check, or fax it and be invoiced, to:

Mary McCarthy
 The American Waterways Operators
 801 North Quincy Street
 Suite 200
 Arlington, VA 22203
 (703) 841-0389 (fax) 

Welcome,
 New Carrier Member!

Luedtke Engineering Company
 P.O. Box 111
 Frankfort, MI 49635-0111
 Rep: Mr. Paul Luedtke
 Secretary/Treasurer



"Elizabeth M Towboat Survivor Recalls Tragic Day; Doesn't Blame Captain"

On November 14, the U.S. Coast Guard held an awards ceremony in Pittsburgh for the heroes of the *Elizabeth M* tragedy. The following story was printed on the Web site of WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh, www.ThePittsburghChannel.com. To watch the WTAE-TV video report of the awards ceremony, please go to the link provided at the end of the story.

The *Elizabeth M* towboat tragedy was one of the worst the Pittsburgh area has seen, but for the men who survived, it was bravery like they've never seen it before.

The *Elizabeth M* went over the Montgomery dam in January 2005, killing four of the seven men onboard.

John Thomas tearfully thanked the men who rescued him moments after he abandoned the towboat.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Coast Guard credited the humble deckhand for his heroism. Thomas held on to the boat's captain, Capt. George "Toby" Zappone, in freezing water while awaiting rescue crews.

"If I wasn't going to die that day, he wasn't," Thomas said.

Thomas, 39, even gave Zappone some of the clothing off his back and provided medical attention for him.

"I'm giving him my coat, toboggan, my gloves, anything I could do to try to stop the bleeding," said Thomas.

"Because he didn't even want to be saved. He was hurt so bad that he lost his crew members that he kept saying, 'Just let me go.'"

But Thomas said he wasn't about to let go. Just as he started to black out, a light emerged downriver, he said.

Men from the nearby "Rocket" towboat tossed life rings into the water.

"Thank you guys with all my heart," said Thomas. "Every one of you."

Wednesday's ceremony honored the heroes and comes within a week of the Coast Guard's report, which partially blames Zappone for "human error" in the crash.

"Toby Zappone was an excellent pilot," said Thomas. "He's the hero in my book. Who says that you or I could make the right decision given that situation, trying to take care of the crew and the boat when the boat was already in a bad situation? I respect that man with all my heart for what he did, and I'll stand by his side."

Thomas said he had no intentions of going back on the river, but his wife encouraged him to go back to work on the river he's known all of his life. Now, he works mostly in the bottom part of the boat in the engine room. Going back out on the deck brings up too many tragic memories of the night he lost his friends, he said.

www.thepittsburghchannel.com/video/14597942/index.html 

Campbell Transportation Company Employees Awarded


The Coast Guard presented the following Campbell Transportation Company employees with award citations for their efforts during the *Elizabeth M* incident:

1) **John A. Thomas**, Silver Lifesaving Medal, January 9, 2005. The *M/V Elizabeth M* collided with the Montgomery Lock and went over the dam and sank. Mr. Thomas held on to his Captain for over an hour in freezing water that was traveling past them at a rate of eleven knots.

2) **Robert F. Cornman**, Certificate Of Valor, January 9, 2005. Mr. Cornman, a crew member of the *M/V Rocket*, assisted in the rescue by throwing a life saving ring to the two survivors, then pulling them onto his vessel and treating them for shock and hypothermia until medical help arrived.

3) **Charles L. Montgomery**, Certificate Of Valor, January 9, 2005. Captain Montgomery piloted the *M/V Rocket*, keeping it in position to complete the rescue on the raging dam waters.

4) **Donald L. Brown**, Certificate Of Valor, January 9, 2005. Mr. Brown, a crew member of the *M/V Rocket*, assisted in the rescue by throwing a life saving ring to two survivors, then pulling them onto his vessel and treating them for shock and hypothermia until medical help arrived.

5) **Thomas W. Siegler**, Certificate Of Valor, January 9, 2005. Mr. Siegler, a crew member of the *M/V Rocket*, assisted in the rescue by throwing a life saving ring to two survivors, then pulling them onto his vessel and treating them for shock and hypothermia until medical help arrived. 

Six More Members Certify RCP Compliance

Since October 24, six AWO member companies have certified or recertified their commitment to the Responsible Carrier Program® (RCP). Congratulations to these companies on their successful participation in the program! The RCP is the award-winning safety management program of the tugboat, towboat and barge industry. AWO members are required to undergo a certification audit by an AWO-certified third-party auditor within one year of joining AWO and to recertify every three years to verify their compliance with the RCP.

For these companies, this achievement is tangible proof of their commitment to improved safety and environmental protection, and is concrete evidence of their dedication to the continuous journey toward this goal. AWO is proud of their accomplishment. For information on the RCP or the audit, please contact Bob Clinton at (703) 841-9300, extension 253, or via email at bclinton@vesselalliance.com.



The following companies have achieved audited certification:

B & H Towing, Inc.
Paducah, KY

Bray Marine
Florence, KY

C & P Tug and Barge Company
Portsmouth, VA

L & L Marine Transportation
Harvey, LA

Penn Maritime Inc.
Stamford, CT

The Vane Brothers Company
Baltimore, MD

RCP Accreditation Board to Consider New Auditor Qualifications

The AWO Responsible Carrier Program® (RCP) Accreditation Board will be meeting at Ingram Barge Company headquarters on December 11 to review the qualifications for becoming an AWO-certified RCP auditor. The Accreditation Board has decided to undertake this review after several AWO members noted that most of the current qualifications were developed in 1998 and may need to be reconsidered to ensure that RCP auditors remain highly qualified. The Board will be looking at factors like the need for, and value of, hands-on management and operational experience, time and familiarity with the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry, length of experience and the possibility of accepting formal education for some combination of the requirements.

The Board will also consider three new auditor applications, provide feedback to the Towing Safety Steering Committee on the future of the RCP Audit, and make final arrangements for the 2008 auditor training class to be held in the Arlington, VA area on January 29-31, details of which will be published in the *AWO Letter* during December.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Clinton at (703) 841-9300, extension 253, or via email at bclinton@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
December 18-19	Salyers Solutions, LLC New Orleans, LA	Ms. Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) salyers_solutions@hughes.net (504) 236-4962
December 20-21	Kirby Corporation Houston, TX	Ms. Kelly Parker (Contact) kelly.parker@kirbycorp.com (713) 435-1775

Pacific Region

Port of Seattle Releases Revised Emissions Reduction Strategy

The Port of Seattle has released its latest strategy to reduce air emissions from maritime vessels. Working in cooperation with the Port of Tacoma, the Port of Vancouver in British Columbia and the State Department of Ecology, the Port of Seattle has developed a set of voluntary guidelines to reduce emissions and achieve the following goals:

1. Reducing maritime and port-related air quality impacts on human health, the environment and the economy;
2. Reducing contributions to climate change through co-benefits associated with reducing air quality impacts; and,
3. Helping the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed continue to meet air quality standards and objectives.

The Port has stated that its strategy is to reduce emissions in advance of and complimentary to applicable regulations, and to suggest a range of practical actions that stakeholders may choose to do to achieve the goal of reducing emissions. AWO will circulate comments on the proposed draft strategy to members. The comments to the draft will be due by December 15.

The Port has indicated in its strategy that it has little or no control over harbor craft vessels and will work with air agencies to take the lead on an outreach strategy to the industry. The outreach and strategy focus on the following key provisions:

Short Term: By 2010

Tugs

1. Investigate use of ultra-low sulfur diesel and/or biofuel blends
2. Support efforts to increase fuel efficiency
3. Pilot hybridization
4. Raise awareness about reducing emissions and influence new purchases up to the highest emissions standards
5. Evaluate alternative docking locations to reduce unnecessary transiting
6. Perform a demonstration project on converting from mechanical to electronically injected engines

Long-Term: By 2015

1. Implement dockside electrification or hybridization, where feasible
2. Implement engine retrofits, where feasible
3. Pilot post combustion control/after treatment technologies

For additional information, please contact Jason Lewis, Vice President - Pacific Region, at (206) 262-8019, or via email at jlewis@vesselalliance.com.

CARB Holds Hearing, Amends Harbor Craft Regulation



On November 15, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) held a hearing on the draft of its proposed harbor craft regulation.

The Board adopted two amendments, the first setting a more aggressive compliance timeline for ferries, and the second setting a compliance timeline extension for engines with the model years 2009 and 2010. The Board then asked CARB staff to distribute the revised regulatory proposal to the public. Once it is distributed, the public will have 15 days to comment on those sections of the draft that have been amended from the previous draft, published in October. (See November 9 AWO Letter.)

Unfortunately, AWO's request that CARB extend the voluntary compliance date from January 2008 to July 2009 was not adopted. CARB staff indicated that they are willing to amend the extension section of the draft but are not willing to do anything that erodes the reduction calculations. AWO will continue to work with CARB to try and lessen the impact of the regulation to the industry, and will circulate the latest draft of the regulation when it is available.

For more information, please contact Jason Lewis at (206) 262-8019, or via email at jlewis@vesselalliance.com.

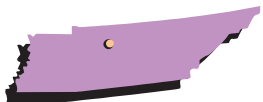
Midcontinent Office

Important Regional Updates to Be Discussed at Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Annual Meeting

On January 31, AWO will host the Midwest and Ohio Valley Joint Annual Meeting at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville, TN from 8:00

a.m. to 12:30

p.m. Agenda items include the election of Board



members for both regions, as well as reports on both regional and national industry issues. Focus discussions will be held on the Crew Endurance Management System (CEMS) and the relationship between the Coast Guard and industry in the Eighth and Ninth Districts. Invited speakers CAPT Timothy M. Close, CAPT Lorne Thomas, CAPT Michael Blair and CAPT David Stalfort will discuss regulations, licensing and give updates on the Coast Guard districts. On the evening before the meeting, January 30, AWO will host a reception from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 pm.

AWO has reserved a block of rooms at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel for \$179 per night. **To receive the AWO rate, you must reserve a room by December 28.** To make a reservation, please call the hotel directly at 800-327-6618 and mention that you are with AWO. The hotel is located at 611 Commerce Street, Nashville, TN 37203-3725.

Information on registering for the meeting and agenda topics will be emailed shortly. For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at awo_midcontinent@msn.com. ☘

Southern Region

AWO Works with TCEQ to Voluntarily Reduce Benzene Emissions

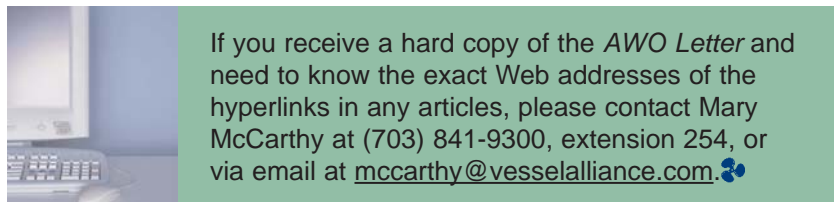
AWO members, as part of their ongoing effort to reduce emissions from barges, continue to work collaboratively with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to determine the potential impact of benzene emissions from barges transiting the Houston Ship Channel on air quality. Benzene emissions will be measured by a monitoring station located in the vicinity of the Lynchburg Ferry in Harris County, TX, where the Houston Ship Canal and San Jacinto River meet.

When the TCEQ monitors station records high benzene levels, it will contact the Coast Guard to identify towboats in area. The Coast Guard will use Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) to identify towboats in the vicinity. A member of the TCEQ pollution prevention team will then contact the company or companies in the area and ask the company or companies to respond to a short, informational questionnaire.



The TCEQ has made it clear that they want this process to help both the industry and the state work in a collaborative way to improve air quality. To further make the process a collaborative one, the TCEQ will not use its investigative and enforcement division to contact towboat companies. Companies will be contacted by the TCEQ prevention staff. TCEQ envisions that this voluntary process between barge operators and TCEQ will reduce emissions quickly and effectively without developing regulations. A sample questionnaire can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

In 2006, AWO worked with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee and TCEQ to create a "Best Management Practices" guide for operators to use as a comprehensive program to reduce inadvertent emissions from tank barges. This document was sent to all AWO tank barge operators, and can be downloaded by clicking [here](#). For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at awo_midcontinent@msn.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 mccarthy@vesselalliance.com. ☘

Southern Region

**Mark Your Calendar:
Southern Region
Annual Meeting**

On January 18, AWO will host the Southern Region Annual Meeting at the InterContinental Hotel in New Orleans, LA, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Agenda items include reports on both regional and national



industry issues and the election of Board members. Focus discussions will be held on the relationship between the Coast Guard and industry in the Eighth and Ninth Districts and the Crew Endurance Management System (CEMS). Invited speakers CAPT Timothy M. Close, CAPT Lorne Thomas, CAPT Michael Blair and CAPT David Stalfort will discuss regulations, licensing and give updates on the Coast Guard districts. On the evening before the meeting, January 17, AWO will host a reception from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 pm.

AWO has reserved a block of rooms at the InterContinental New Orleans hotel for \$159 per night. **To receive the AWO rate, you must reserve a room by December 28.** To make a reservation, please call the hotel directly at 800-445-6563 and mention that you are with AWO. The hotel is located at 444 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70130.

Information on registering for the meeting and agenda topics will be emailed shortly. For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474, or via email at awo_midcontinent@msn.com. 🌐

Atlantic Region

**Atlantic Region Members Alert:
Buzzards Bay**

Members are reminded that the U.S. Coast Guard Buzzards Bay Navigation Safety Regulations are effective as of this week on Wednesday, November 28. In addition to the navigation safety measures currently required by the Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) for navigable waters within the First Coast Guard District (33 CFR 165.100), there are additional special regulations for Buzzards Bay that require:

1. A tug escort for single hull barges carrying 5,000 or more barrels of oil or other hazardous material
2. A federally-licensed pilot for single hull barges carrying 5,000 or more barrels of oil or other hazardous material
3. Participation in the Buzzards Bay Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS) by all vessels subject to the Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act

The VMRS Buzzards Bay User Manual can be found at by clicking [here](#), and it includes excerpts from the applicable federal regulations that discuss the RNA for navigable waters within the First Coast Guard District (including the special regulations for Buzzards Bay), and the Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act. For questions regarding the regulations in Buzzards Bay, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or via email to ccoakley@vesselalliance.com. 🌐

ALL-REGION UPDATE

**Annual Meetings of the Regions
Scheduled for Early 2008**

Mark your calendars for the upcoming AWO Annual Regional Meetings, to be held in January 2008. Issues that are critical to both the regional and national tugboat, towboat and barge industry will be discussed, and members will vote on which issues should be included on the 2008 Regional Priorities lists that direct the work of AWO staff. In addition, attendees will nominate and elect members to the AWO Board of Directors. Below is a list of the 2008 Annual Regional Meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Hermoine Wellman at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or via email at hwellman@vesselalliance.com. 🌐

Southern Region Meeting
January 17-18, 2008
InterContinental New Orleans
New Orleans, LA

Atlantic Region Meeting
January 24-25, 2008
Marriott Miami Biscayne Bay
Miami, FL

**Midwest & Ohio Valley
Regions Joint Meeting**
January 30-31, 2008
Renaissance Hotel
Nashville, TN

Pacific Region Meeting
February 6-7, 2008
Salty's on Alki
Seattle, WA

Atlantic Region

Atlantic RQSC Meets, Discusses Hurricane Policy and Incident Data

The Atlantic Region Quality Steering Committee (RQSC) met on November 6 in Portsmouth, VA, with strong turnout from both the Coast Guard and AWO. The Atlantic RQSC addressed several action items, including the implementation of regulations that would codify aspects of the Atlantic Area Port Operations Hurricane Policy and solutions to the increase of pier encroachments into navigational channels in the Coast Guard's Fifth and Seventh District. The RQSC also agreed on a revised methodology for the Casualty and Fatality Data Analysis Quality Action Team (QAT).

Following introductory remarks by Co-Chairmen CAPT Rick Kaser, Atlantic Area Chief of Prevention, and Chris Coakley, AWO Vice President - Atlantic Region, the RQSC discussed codifying the nomenclature of port conditions (i.e. Port Condition Whiskey, X-Ray, Yankee, Zulu) prescribed in the 2006 Atlantic Area Port Operations Hurricane Guidance into a regulatory scheme that mirrors the language and intent of the original guidance but also adheres to the public information collection requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act. In addition to using the rulemaking process as a communication mechanism for the requirements related to each port condition, the RQSC suggested including the definition of port conditions and standard heavy weather procedures into the Coast Pilot. The Coast Guard suggested that AWO and other maritime transportation system (MTS) stakeholders utilize the new automated email alert system on Homeport that forwards Coast Guard information bulletins directly to Homeport users for each Sector.

The committee discussed the two pending QATs, one addressing data analysis of medium and high severity incidents and the other addressing improvements to port communication and coordination. The RQSC addressed at length the methodology used to analyze incidents and agreed on a way forward. A thorough presentation by LCDR Scott Higman, Vessel Activities Section of LANTAREA Inspections and Investigations Staff (Api), provided the RQSC with a step-by-step process that will improve the causal analysis of data to determine patterns that lead to incidents. LCDR Higman proposed procedures which will increase the cooperative approach between Coast Guard and AWO QAT members in reviewing incident data. CDR Brian Dunn, Fifth District Prevention Division, gave an update on the Port Coordination QAT

which is developing a template for District-level Web pages that will be populated with essential information for MTS stakeholders.

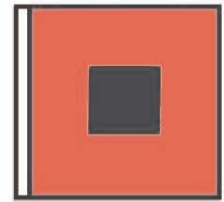
Regarding items of new business for the RQSC, under the guidance of CAPT David Lersch, Chief of Prevention for the Coast Guard Fifth District, the committee agreed to reach out to the Atlantic region commanders of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss a unified, non-regulatory agency/industry approach to solving the emerging problem of dock and pier encroachments into navigational channels. The RQSC also addressed the communication issues related to ice season and the possibility of synthesizing all Sector-level Area Maritime Security Committee contacts to assist in coordinating security exercises.

In keeping with the RQSC plan to have bi-annual meetings that bookend the hurricane season, the committee agreed to meet again on April 22, 2008. For more information on this meeting, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or via email at ccoakley@vesselalliance.com.

Coast Guard Studying Vessel Routes and Right Whales Habitats, Soliciting for Comments

The Coast Guard is conducting a Port Access Route Study (PARS) in Cape Cod, MA, to analyze possible vessel routing measures to reduce ship strikes with the endangered North Atlantic right whale. The PARS will include the northern right whale habitat, mandatory ship reporting system area, and the Great South Channel including Georges Bank out to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) boundary. The recommendations of the study could lead the Coast Guard to institute navigation regulations.

The Coast Guard is soliciting for comments on the PARS to be submitted by January 18, 2008. If you would like to submit comments, please do so at www.regulations.gov. If you would like more information, view the Federal Register notice by clicking [here](#) or contact Chris Coakley at (703) 941-9300, extension 297, or via email at ccoakley@vesselalliance.com.



Atlantic Region

Army Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard Address AWO Concerns with Cape Cod Canal

On November 20, AWO members met with COL Curtis Thalken, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District Engineer, and CAPT Liam Slein, Coast Guard First District Chief of Prevention, to resolve navigational issues in Cape Cod Canal related to the controlling depth in the canal, distribution of updated navigational data and upcoming implementation of the Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS). The AWO members in attendance included Stash Pelkowski, Roehrig Maritime, LLC; Alan Bish, Reinauer Transportation Company; and, Patrick Kinnier, McAllister Towing & Transportation Company.



The Corps of Engineers opened the meeting by addressing the current maximum draft depth in the canal, which had been set at 28 feet since June 2007. The new Canal Manager, Frank Fedele, implemented an immediate increase of controlling clearance in the canal to 30 feet as a result of a reduction in sand shoaling. The controlling clearances bulletin was posted to the Corps of Engineers's Web site following the meeting. COL Thalken discussed short-term and long-term approaches to keeping the canal dredged to its congressionally-authorized depth of 32 feet, including the use of his discretionary budget authority and the reprogramming of funding (subject to congressional approval) to expedite maintenance dredging of the canal. AWO stressed to the Corps of Engineers that keeping Cape Cod Canal at 32 feet is essential to ensuring that the towing industry can meet the requirements of the Coast Guard's final rule for Buzzards Bay by utilizing double hull tank barges, with their deeper keels, in Cape Cod Canal, while not having to risk winter transits in the Atlantic Ocean around Cape Cod. The Coast Guard understands that the risk profile for tank barges in the Coast Guard's First District changes if deep-draft tank barges must transit around Cape Cod instead of through the canal.

In order to address industry concerns with safety, transparency and consistency of canal operations, the Corps of Engineers agreed to widely distribute current navigational data to AWO and other canal stakeholders.

Corps of Engineers Project Manager Bill Kavanaugh presented to AWO the most recent survey data for the complete canal and agreed to post it to the Corps of Engineers's Web site. Mr. Fedele agreed to update the Corps of Engineers's email distribution list to include AWO members who are frequent customers of the canal to ensure that the AWO members receive updated information directly from the canal operators. The Corps of Engineers also provided AWO with current tonnage and transit data to augment the economic case for maintaining Cape Cod Canal. Going forward, AWO and Mr. Fedele agreed to work closely to ensure that current canal survey, navigation data and best available information relating to shoaling and ice is shared with vessel operators who transit the canal.

CAPT Slein discussed the general issues surrounding the implementation of the VMRS as part of the Coast Guard's final rule for the Buzzards Bay Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) which is effective November 28. Ron Beck, Coast Guard Energy/Facilities Branch Chief, presented a draft of the VMRS Buzzards Bay Users Manual and encouraged industry to provide input to the document as the VMRS gets up and running. Mr. Beck insisted that the manual is a living document and the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers welcome feedback from VMRS stakeholders. The VMRS Users Manual can be found at the following link by clicking [here](#). As it becomes updated, it can be found on the Coast Guard's Homport Web site.

For more information on Cape Cod Canal or the Coast Guard RNA for Buzzards Bay, please contact Chris Coakley at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or via email at cCoakley@vesselalliance.com. 

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