

VOLUME 65, No. 9 • MAY 9, 2008

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DHS Extends TWIC Compliance Date

As reported to all AWO members in an email alert on May 2, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has postponed the September 25, 2008, deadline for mariners to possess a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) to April 15, 2009. Certain port facilities will be required to implement TWIC as early as October 15, 2008.

As provided for in the January 2007 final rule on TWIC, DHS will establish compliance dates for facilities affected by the TWIC program based on the progress of TWIC issuance within Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) zones. DHS announced that three COTP zones – Boston, Northern New England, and Southeastern New England – will be required to comply with the TWIC regulations by October 15, 2008. This means that owners and operators of facilities within those COTP zones must require TWIC cards for individuals seeking unescorted access to the secure areas of those facilities by that date. The Coast Guard will provide at least 90 days advance notice before requiring implementation of the TWIC requirements at facilities in other COTP zones.

AWO and other maritime organizations have been urging DHS to extend the TWIC implementation deadline in order to avoid major disruptions of maritime commerce. Extension of the compliance date has been a central point raised by AWO in meetings with Congressional offices and regulatory agencies on the TWIC program.

Even though the compliance date has been extended for seven months, the TWIC enrollment process has been plagued by numerous delays and technical glitches. Consequently, AWO urges members to have their mariners enroll as soon as possible to avoid ending up without a TWIC by the April 2009 deadline. Mariners who have a disqualifying offense in their background that will require a DHS waiver are encouraged to apply immediately as this will add time to the card issuance process.

AWO members with questions about the TWIC program or the extension of the deadline should contact Krista Reddington at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or kreddington@vesselalliance.com.

House of Representatives Passes Coast Guard Bill Without TWIC Interim Work Authority Provision

On April 24, the House of Representatives passed the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2008 (H.R. 2830) by an overwhelming vote of 395-7. The President has threatened to veto the legislation if passed by the full Congress because it would require the Coast Guard to enforce security around liquefied natural gas terminals. Despite the late inclusion of an

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House of Representatives Passes Coast Guard Bill Without TWIC Interim Work Authority Provision

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amendment allowing the Coast Guard to count already-present state and local security measures in its enforcement plan, the President has not withdrawn the veto threat.

As reported in the April 25 AWO Letter, AWO worked diligently to secure an amendment to the bill that would provide a workable interim work authority provision in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program. Unfortunately, interim work authority amendments offered by Congressman Gene Taylor (D-MS) and Congressman Charles Boustany (R-LA) were not made in order by the House Rules Committee, and therefore were not included in the bill that was passed.

The amendments were not made in order because both the Administration and some members of Congress were prepared to argue that the provision lessens security, despite the fact that it provides for the same employee background check as required under the existing Transportation Security Administration rule on TWIC. The Administration issued a formal Statement of Administration Policy that not only contained the veto threat over the LNG issue mentioned above, but also made a specific objection to the proposed interim work authority provision, calling it a “dangerous loophole” in maritime security.

Because the interim work authority provision will face the same Administration opposition and other obstacles when the Coast Guard bill is considered in the Senate, the AWO Executive Committee met by



conference call on May 1 to discuss AWO’s options going forward in relation to the TWIC interim work authority provision. The results of that conference call are the subject of a “Passing the Word” by AWO Chairman Merritt Lane that appears in the Members Only section of this newsletter.

The bill does contain a number of provisions that affect AWO members. Below is a list of the sections that appear to have the most impact on the tugboat, towboat and barge industry.

TWIC

There are a number of provisions in the bill addressing the TWIC issue:

- Mariners who hold a license, certificate of registry or Merchant Mariners Document (MMD), or mariners who are employed on a towing vessel that pushes, pulls or hauls alongside a tank vessel, will be required to have a TWIC **only if** they are allowed unescorted access to a secure area designated in a vessel security plan. In other words, this provision modifies the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2004 requirement that all credentialed mariners possess a TWIC regardless of whether they have unescorted access to secure areas;
- The Coast Guard must submit a report to Congress outlining progress of the TWIC implementation effort to date;
- The Coast Guard must conduct a study on the effect of the TWIC program on companies that

employ seasonal workers and examine alternative methods for security for these workers;

- The Coast Guard must establish procedures to provide a mariner who is required to be fingerprinted for purposes of obtaining a TWIC the option of being fingerprinted at any Department of Homeland Security (DHS) facility that fingerprints the public;
- A mariner may not be required to be fingerprinted for the issuance or renewal of a license or MMD if he or she was fingerprinted for a TWIC;
- A secondary authentication system may be used for mariners applying for TWIC when fingerprints are not able to be taken; and,
- The Coast Guard must conduct an assessment for Congress of keeping enrollment sites open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and keeping existing sites open after September 25, 2008.

Ballast Water

The ballast water title sets uniform national ballast water treatment standards while containing a key provision preempting state regulation. However, while the bill gives the Coast Guard the authority to regulate ballast water, it does not explicitly remove it from the purview of the Clean Water Act, nor does it address other discharges incidental to normal vessel operations, leaving them open to regulation under the state-administered National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting process.

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While aimed primarily at oceangoing vessels, the bill does not explicitly exempt inland vessels from ballast water treatment or management requirements. However, the bill does give the Secretary of DHS the authority to exempt vessels from ballast water exchange or treatment requirements if the Secretary determines that they operate in waters of a single ecosystem where the risk of spreading alien or invasive species does not exist. The process for designating such waters requires consultations with the representatives of each state affected by the waters within the ecosystem.

State Pilotage

This provision requires single-hulled tankers and tank barges carrying more than 5,000 barrels of oil through Buzzards Bay, MA, to be under the direction of either a Massachusetts state pilot or a federal pilot with more than 20 trips through the area. This provision, which is similar to one in the Senate version of the legislation, violates over 150 years of maritime law providing for exclusive federal pilotage jurisdiction on coastwise seagoing vessels.

Licensing

The bill includes several provisions affecting the Coast Guard's mariner credentialing process:

- The bill would eliminate the "license creep" problem by providing that a renewed document may be issued up to eight months in advance of the expiration date of the existing license or MMD, but is not effective until the date that the previous document expires;
- The Coast Guard must establish an interim clearance process for issuance of an MMD to enable newly hired seamen to begin working on towing

vessels or offshore supply vessels as long as they do not pose a safety or security risk;

- The Coast Guard must develop a plan to expand the streamlined license evaluation process as used by the Houston Regional Examination Center;
- The Coast Guard must submit a report to Congress outlining methods to address maritime personnel shortages with a focus on entry-level positions. The study must also explore whether an educational loan program could provide an incentive for individuals who are considering entering the maritime workforce;
- The Coast Guard must develop a plan to ensure that the MMD application process can be completed entirely by mail for mariners who have applied for a TWIC;
- A mariner whose license, certificate of registry or MMD has been suspended or revoked may appeal that decision, within 30 days, to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The NTSB will affirm or reverse the order after providing notice and an opportunity for a hearing on the record; and,
- The Coast Guard must promulgate regulations requiring that records of each individual serving aboard a vessel be maintained for at least five years and made available to the Coast Guard upon request.

Double-Hull Fuel Tanks and MARPOL Annex VI requirements

The bill would require all domestic vessels delivered after August 1, 2010, with more than 600 cubic meters (157,000 gallons) of aggregate fuel capacity to meet the existing

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Important Dates and Reminders

..... at a glance

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

May 14-15: Coastal Safety Committee Meeting, Chateau Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA

July 17-18: Southern Region Summer Meeting, Grand Hotel Resort, Point Clear, AL

July 23-24: Interregion Safety Committee Summer Meeting, Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel, St. Louis, MO

August 13-14: Midwest and Ohio Valley Regions Joint Summer Meeting, The Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL

August 21-22: Atlantic Region Summer Meeting, Location TBD

September 11: Pacific Region Summer Meeting, Salty's on Alki, Seattle, WA

House of Representatives Passes Coast Guard Bill Without TWIC Interim Work Authority Provision

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requirements of MARPOL Annex I for the protection of fuel tanks. These new vessels will be required to “double hull” their fuel tanks.

The bill also contains a title implementing the MARPOL Annex VI requirements regarding vessel air emissions. These provisions have previously been approved by the House of Representatives as a stand-alone measure that was referred to, and passed by, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee (see related story, page 7).

Bridges

The Coast Guard must conduct a study on the construction or alteration of any bridge or causeway over navigable waters with a channel depth of 25 feet or greater that may impede future navigation to or from ports.

The bill also contains a provision transferring the bridge administration program from the Coast Guard to the Maritime Administration.

Log Books

This section expands the requirement for log books on vessels going to foreign ports and vessels more than 100 gross tons to other vessels, including towing vessels and barges. It also requires that log books must record watch schedules, manning hours and all crew incidents.

Unsafe Operations

This provision allows the Coast Guard to take specific action if it observes a vessel operating unsafely, including removing its Certificate of Inspection, requiring the operator to return the vessel directly to mooring, or requiring the captain to take steps to protect the safety of the crew or passengers.

Coast Guard Marine Safety Program

The bill addresses the concerns of House Transportation and

Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) with the Coast Guard’s marine safety performance by establishing a modified safety program, to be led by a Rear Admiral or Senior Executive Service civilian. This section also mandates staffing levels, qualification requirements and the creation of a training program.

For more information, please contact Mary McCarthy or Krista Reddington at (703) 841-9300, extensions 254 or 251, respectively, or via email at mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com or kreddington@vesselalliance.com.

TWIC Enrollment Update

TWIC enrollment has begun/will begin at the following ports:

- **May 5 - June 6:** The Enrollment Center at Kodiak, AK will be open to the public for a limited time.
- **May 7:** Houma, LA
- **May 8:** Anchorage, AK
- **May 9:** Morgan City, LA
- **May 14:** Calcite, MI; San Francisco, CA
- **May 15:** Kansas City, MO

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



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.

Coast Guard Takes Action on Lingering OPA 90 Issues AWO Supports Notices on TLPM, Escort Vessels



Within the past month, the Coast Guard published two notices concerning lingering issues from the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), one relating to tank level or pressure monitoring (TLPM) devices, and the other to escort vessels.

On May 5, the Coast Guard announced a three-year extension of the suspension of regulations concerning TLPM devices on single-hull tank vessels carrying oil because technology does not exist to meet the regulations. The suspension would last until June 6, 2011. While OPA 90 required TLPM devices, a 2004 amendment to OPA 90 changed that requirement to one mandating the Coast Guard to study, and report on, the feasibility of requiring TLPM devices or alternatives. The report concluded that it was unlikely that adequate TLPM technology would be available by the time single-hull tank vessels are fully phased out in 2015. The suspension will give the Coast Guard time to seek comment on a proposal permanently removing the TLPM regulations from the books.

The other notice, published on April 15, announced the withdrawal of a previously-docketed rulemaking and a request for comment on the extension of requirements for escort vessels in waters other than Prince William Sound and Puget Sound. OPA 90 required escort vessels for single-hull oil tankers over 5,000 gallons in those waters, and also required the Coast Guard to identify any other waters on which it should require escort vessels. In 1993, the Coast Guard submitted an advance notice of proposed

rulemaking (ANPRM) that solicited comments on escort vessels, including where and for what vessels they should be required, and what they should be required to do.

The Coast Guard is now proposing to withdraw the ANPRM due to the length of time since it was published, and the fact that the Coast Guard has concluded that it should only consider requiring escort vessels after studying specific local conditions. Comments on this notice are due on July 14.

For more information, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or via email at mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com.

New NMC Procedures in Place to Reduce Credential Processing Time

The Coast Guard's National Maritime Center (NMC) has implemented new procedures intended to improve customer service and reduce credential processing times, including a 90-day time frame for mariners to respond to requests for missing information. Beginning on April 7, the NMC began sending letters to mariners whose license applications were lacking certain needed information. If a mariner does not respond within 90 days, the NMC will withdraw the application and return it to the address listed on the application. Unapplied user fees paid by the mariner will be credited to a future application should the mariner choose to reapply. Mariners who choose not to reapply will receive a refund upon request.



The changes are intended to encourage mariners to respond promptly to requests for information needed to complete the processing of their merchant mariner credential. Of the more than 25,000 credential applications that are currently pending nationwide, fully one-third are missing critical information that is essential to complete the application.

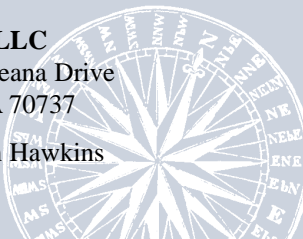
The Coast Guard reminds mariners that it is vital that applications be complete in order to avoid delays in processing. The NMC reports that the most common problems with applications are:

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Welcome,
New Affiliate Member!

T J Hawks, LLC
318 South Oleana Drive
Gonzales, LA 70737

Rep: Mr. Jim Hawkins
Owner





EPA Publishes Final Rule on Marine Engine Emissions

On May 6, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its final rule establishing a new generation of engine emissions standards for commercial marine diesel and locomotive engines. On March 14, EPA released the text of the regulation (which has not changed) and its specific details can be found in the March 21 *AWO Letter* by clicking [here](#). The rule takes effect on July 7 and establishes the following:

- “Tier 3” standards for new marine engines, phasing in between 2009 and 2014, depending on engine size;
- “Tier 4” standards for new engines above 600 kW (800 hp), phasing in between 2014 and 2017; and,
- A remanufacture program that requires owners of certain engines to use EPA-certified remanufacture systems (if such systems are available) when the owner replaces all power assemblies, either at once or over a five-year period. The rule only affects engines that meet ALL of the following criteria:
 - o Those over 800 hp;
 - o Those built between 1973 and 2012; and,
 - o Those whose owners have more than \$5 million in annual revenues fleet-wide.

AWO worked closely with EPA throughout the regulatory process to ensure that the new regulations balance the dual needs of reducing emissions of particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) without impeding the efficient flow of vital maritime commerce.

For a copy of the final rule, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or via email at mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com.

New NMC Procedures in Place to Reduce Credential Processing Time



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- Insufficient sea service
- Missing information from physician
- Missing training certificates
- Missing issuance user fee
- Missing or insufficient tankerman requirements
- Missing or incomplete STCW assessment(s)
- Missing examination user fee
- Missing or incomplete Towing Officer Assessment Record (TOAR)
- Missing Federal Communications Commission License
- Missing continuity renewal statement

The NMC continues to make improvements to the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program and welcomes comments and suggestions, which can be sent to the Coast Guard directly at iasknmc@uscg.mil. AWO members with questions should contact Krista Reddington at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or kreddington@vesselalliance.com.

Welcome, New Carrier Members!

Great White Towing, LLC
P.O. Box 0
Morgan City, LA 70381

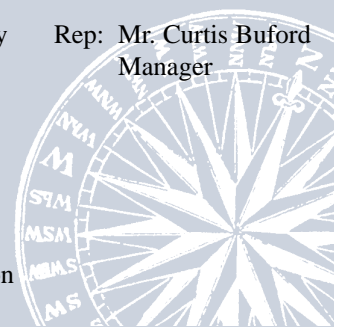
Rep: Mr. Dennis Mahaffey
General Manager

RoBuf Towing, LLC
479 Prairie Road N
Franklin, LA 70538

Rep: Mr. Curtis Buford
Manager

TAKO Towing, Inc.
452 Destrehan Avenue
Harvey, LA 70058

Rep: Ms. Beverly Chaisson
Operations Manager



House Transportation Committee Holds Hearing on WRDA 2008

Steve Little, Crouse Corporation, Testifies on User Tax Proposal

On April 30, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2008. Congress passed a WRDA bill in 2007 over the President's veto (see November 9, 2007, *AWO Letter*). WRDA legislation is usually considered by Congress every two years; however, no bill had been passed in the previous six years, so WRDA 2007 was a very large bill containing provisions covering all six years. WRDA 2008, the subject of the April 30 hearing, is a new bill which will contain provisions that were not included in the previous versions of the legislation.

The WRDA 2008 legislation is also a possible vehicle for the Administration's inland waterways

user tax proposal. Steve Little, President and CEO of Crouse Corporation, testified in opposition to the user tax proposal on behalf of Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI). Mr. Little is the General Counsel of WCI and Crouse Corporation is a member of AWO.

Mr. Little told the committee that "Proposals to raise taxes on the barge industry, such as the one being advanced by the Administration, are based on flawed and misguided premises and should be rejected by Congress." He went on to note the inappropriateness of a tax increase at a time when the economy is struggling and said that the proposed lockage fee will raise consumer costs and further depress the economy in areas of the country that rely upon barge transportation.

"Proposals to raise taxes on the barge industry, such as the one being advanced by the Administration, are based on flawed and misguided premises and should be rejected by Congress."

- Steve Little
Crouse Corporation

He described a recent intermodal comparison study that showed that barge transportation has significant advantages over truck and rail transportation. It only makes sense, he explained, that sound public policy would encourage barge transportation rather than penalize it and drive commerce off of the inland waterways and onto congested roads and rails.

Mr. Little told the committee that before taxes are raised for the barge industry, there should be an effort to determine why inland waterways lock and dam projects take so much longer to build and cost so much more than originally estimated. In order to continue to fund projects at their current level, the cost sharing formula should be adjusted so that the Inland Waterways Trust Fund covers 25 percent rather than 50 percent, of construction and major rehabilitation projects. This would allow ongoing projects to continue to be funded at approximately the level of recent years.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the testimony, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, or mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com.

Senate Committee Approves MARPOL Annex VI Bill

On April 24, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved the MARPOL Annex VI Implementation Act of 2008 (H.R. 802). The bill, which was passed by the House of Representatives last spring, would require the Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to prescribe regulations to carry out Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention, which sets standards on air emissions from large ocean-going vessels. It would also give the Coast Guard and EPA the authority to administer these regulations, including conducting inspections to verify compliance.

The committee passed the bill shortly after the governors of California, Oregon and Washington released a letter supporting it. In addition, similar language is contained in the Coast Guard Authorization bill (H.R. 2830), which was recently passed by the House of Representatives; a vote on the Senate version of the bill is pending. Any remaining differences in the language will most likely be worked out during the House-Senate conference on either the Coast Guard bill or the stand-alone bill.

For more information, please contact Mary McCarthy at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or via email at mmccarthy@vesselalliance.com.

NINE MORE MEMBERS CERTIFY RCP COMPLIANCE

Nine more 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 the association, 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:

- K-Sea Transportation, Hawaii Division**
Honolulu, HI
- Ruby Marine, Inc.**
Nenana, AK
- E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc.**
Metairie, LA
- Intergulf Corporation**
Pasadena, TX
- Magnolia Marine Transport**
Vicksburg, MS
- Huguenot Energy**
Charleston, SC
- Devall Towing & Boat Service, Inc.**
Hackberry, LA
- Turn Services, Inc.**
New Orleans, LA
- Cenac Towing Company**
Houma, LA
- TAKO Towing, Inc.**
Harvey, LA

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
May 21-22	Salyers Solutions, LLC Baltimore, MD	Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) (504) 236-4962 salyers_solutions@hughes.net
June 18-19	Salyers Solutions, LLC Huntington, WC	Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) (504) 236-4962 salyers_solutions@hughes.net
June 30-July 1	Salyers Solutions, LLC Honolulu, HI	Jo Ann Salyers (Instructor) (504) 236-4962 salyers_solutions@hughes.net

Midcontinent Office

New Ninth District Policy Letter Signed on Limited Geographic License

On May 5, RADM John E. Crowley, Commander - Ninth District, U.S. Coast Guard, signed the new Policy Letter for limited geographic licenses. The new Policy Letter mirrors the Eighth District Policy Letter released a few months ago. The one addition the Ninth District letter makes is to extend this policy to companies that work on the Illinois waterway that functions as part of the Western River system but is legally recognized as part of the Great Lakes.

If you would like a copy of the Policy Letter or have further questions, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or via email at lmuench@vesselalliance.com.

Midcontinent Office**ADM Thad Allen Visits the Western Rivers**

On May 2, the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard ADM Thad Allen spent the day in Paducah, KY, to hear the concerns of professional mariners, from the deck level to company presidents. ADM Allen began his day touring James Marine, Inc., where Ronnie James, President, provided information about the workings of an inland shipyard and conducted a tour.

Next, ADM Allen spent almost two hours onboard the *m/v Miss Kris*, owned and operated by Marquette Transportation Co., Inc. Capt. George Acheson provided critical information to ADM Allen as the Admiral steered the 6,140 hp vessel with 20 barges of aggregate through two bridges and over a submerged wicket dam during high water. ADM Allen then spent 45 minutes with mariners at an informal question and answer session at Seaman's Church Institute. Capt. Greg Menke organized and facilitated the session.

For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or via email at lmuench@vesselalliance.com.



TOP: Front row, left to right -- ADM Thad Allen, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; John Paul Eckstein, Marquette Transportation Co., Inc.; and Steve Crowley, Marquette Transportation Co., Inc. Far left, Tom Erickson, Marquette Transportation Co., Inc. Far right, CAPT Tim Close, U.S. Coast Guard.

BOTTOM: The crew of the *m/v Miss Kris* hosted ADM Thad Allen (third from left) on May 2. The *m/v Miss Kris* is owned and operated by Marquette Transportation Co., Inc.

Midcontinent Office

Secretary Woodley Rejects a Missouri River Basin Section 216 Study

In response to a letter from Governor Matt Blunt (R-MO) urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not to initiate a Section 216 study for the Missouri River basin, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)

John Paul Woodley, Jr. stated that “the [Army] Corps [of Engineers] has no plans to initiate a Section 216 study.” Secretary Woodley noted that there are no funds budgeted in 2008 for the study, nor has a non-federal sponsor to cost-

share the study been identified. The letter did not rule out a Section 216 study.



Woodley

A Section 216 study can be requested if there has been “significant engineering, environmental, economic, and social changes since the project was authorized and constructed.” Governor M. Michael Rounds (R-SD) and upper river basin groups believe the congressionally-authorized purposes could be changed after a Section 216 study that would allow the upper basin states to further hoard water in the reservoirs during drought years and de-authorize navigation.

In response to the attempts to remove navigation as a primary congressionally-authorized purpose of the system, Congressman Kenny Hulshof (R-MO) and several other navigation champions in the House of Representatives are co-sponsoring H. Res. 1012, which reaffirms “continued Congressional support for commercial navigation on the Missouri River” and pays tribute to the role of commercial navigation on the river to the economic development of the country. AWO members will be contacted in the next week about reaching out to their Congressmen to request that they co-sponsor the resolution. For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or via email at lmuench@vesselalliance.com.

RIETF Elects New Chairman

On April 28, the River Industry Executive Task Force (RIETF) elected Scott Noble, Ingram Barge Company, as Chairman to fill the seat recently vacated by Mike Monahan. Scott Noble was elected RIETF Vice Chairman in March at the RIETF Annual Meeting.

RIETF is an AWO standing task force. For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or lmuench@vesselalliance.com.

Southern Region

Corps Proceeds With Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Deep Draft De-Authorization

On April 30, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the reuse of Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Jetty Rock. The 30-day public review and comment period runs through May 30. Comments are being sought on the removal of jetty stone on the MRGO for possible use in the MRGO closure at Bayou LaLoutre.

The MRGO Deep Draft De-Authorization Study, completed on January 29, was recently approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley, and sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for input. OMB is anticipated to respond by June 1, after which Secretary Woodley will send the report to Congress.

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lock Contingency Workgroup, of which AWO is a member, has been active on both the Jetty Rock and de-authorization study issues. The workgroup also consists of other navigation industry representatives and stakeholders, as well as members of the Corps. It has been meeting regularly to identify ways to restore navigation as quickly as possible in the event of an extended closure of the IHNC Lock following the MRGO closure. AWO continues to work with the Corps and the Coast Guard to identify an alternate navigation route when the IHNC lock is closed.

To view the draft EA and FONSI, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Addie Wiseman at (281) 540-5004, or via email at awiseman@vesselalliance.com.