



With strong governance and generous financial support from AWO members, a cohesive and dedicated staff, and an extraordinary member-staff partnership, AWO worked to deliver exceptional value to members in every region and every sector in 2015. Notable accomplishments include:

### **Advocacy**

- Led the American Maritime Partnership, a 450-member coalition in support of the Jones Act, in carrying out a comprehensive advocacy and public affairs effort to build support for the Jones Act and decisively defeat challenges to U.S. cabotage laws.
- Prevented anti-Jones Act amendments from being considered during Congressional debate on the Keystone XL pipeline and crude oil export legislation.
- Secured affirmations of support for the Jones Act from key lawmakers, including House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster and Senate Surface Transportation & Merchant Marine Subcommittee Chairman Deb Fischer.
- Led the introduction of vessel discharge reform legislation in the Senate and the House. S. 373 twice approved by Senate Commerce Committee and added to Coast Guard authorization bill awaiting consideration by the full Senate.
- Spurred submission of the Subchapter M rulemaking package to the Department of Homeland Security and kept pressure on DHS to expedite its review, positioning rule for publication in spring 2016.
- Secured instruction from Coast Guard headquarters to field units not to reclassify currently unmanned ATB barges as manned and established Coast Guard-AWO working group to modernize ATB policy.
- Secured House passage of Coast Guard authorization bill requiring the Coast Guard to:
  1. Align expiration dates for merchant mariner credentials, medical certificates and radar observer endorsements
  2. Report to Congress on plans to implement the Towing Safety Advisory Committee recommendations to improve the casualty reporting program
  3. Consult with stakeholders before modifying or removing an aid to navigation
- Managed and led the UnLock Our Jobs Coalition to ensure that commercial navigation is not impeded by physical structures or other Asian carp control measures on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
- Prevented the addition of report language to Senate appropriations bills that would have authorized the Corps of Engineers to proceed with physical separation project at Brandon Road lock.

- Added language to the Coast Guard authorization bill that requires the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to receive an attestation from the Coast Guard of the suitability of a leasing area for offshore wind energy projects before moving forward with a lease.
- Kept problematic responder immunity legislation that would have increased liability exposure for tank barge and towing vessel operators out of the Coast Guard authorization bill.
- Secured Coast Guard policy changes that ensure consistent treatment for tank barges enrolled in the Eighth District Tank Barge Streamlined Inspection Program when operating on rivers in the Ninth District.
- Signed MOU with Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers to improve communication with industry and ensure safe and efficient navigation on the rivers.
- Worked through the River Industry Executive Task Force to facilitate more efficient commercial traffic during low water and removal of the Rock Pinnacles on the Mississippi River.
- Secured Coast Guard agreement to forgo the annual towing vessel position snapshot requirement of the AWO alternative planning criterion for emergency towing in the Eighth and Ninth Coast Guard districts.
- Intervened with the Coast Guard on behalf of AWO members moving petroleum products in western Alaska to secure an extension of their alternative planning criterion for oil spill prevention and response.
- Prevented introduction of a costly, precedent-setting service tax on the towing industry in Illinois.
- Defeated Washington state legislation that would have undermined federal authority through problematic tug escort and pilotage provisions.
- Ensured that AWO members had an extra year to evaluate whether to enter into a Habitat Conservation Plan with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Intervened in successful administrative appeal by the Port of Seattle and Foss Maritime to ensure a consistent and reliable regulatory environment for marine businesses in Seattle.
- Planned and executed the largest Barge-In in AWO history, with 187 Congressional visits attended by 146 AWO members.
- Expanded AWO relationships with Members of Congress and their staffs, conducting visits with 144 of 435 House Members and 69 of 100 Senators.
- Sponsored 23 tugboat and towboat tours for 113 Congressional staff and 3 Members of Congress.
- Raised more than \$141,000 for the AWO PAC, exceeding the Board-directed goal for 2015 and posting the strongest PAC fundraising year on record, with contributions from 89 individuals, a 5-year high.
- Conducted 21 Sector luncheons attended by more than 150 AWO members to build and strengthen relationships with Coast Guard Captains of the Port and senior staff.

## Safety

- Secured confirmation of Coast Guard intent to accept the Responsible Carrier Program as a Towing Safety Management System when the Subchapter M rule is published.
- Implemented a robust member education program to ensure all AWO members are prepared to successfully implement Board-approved changes that position the RCP for Coast Guard acceptance as a TSMS by January 1, 2016.
- Launched web-based safety statistics reporting program recommended by the Task Force on the Future of AWO Safety Leadership.
- Through the RCP Gap Analysis Working Group, commenced work on FOSL Task Force recommendations to develop a Towing Vessel Self-Assessment as a tool for continuous improvement.
- Supported a Transportation Research Board study scheduled for publication in December 2015 that makes recommendations to improve fatigue risk management while concluding there is no scientific data to support a change in hours of service requirements for towing vessel crewmembers.
- Managed Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership Quality Action Teams on aids to navigation, safe navigation around structures, and towing vessel cold weather and ice operations in Alaska.

## Public Affairs & Communications

- Increased positive coverage of industry in trade and mainstream media, including 46 stories appearing in over 500 publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*.
- Issued six news releases and developed an improved distribution system that led to placement in 1,200 publications and online sites with an audience of over 500,000 people.
- Established media partnerships with key industry trade publications, resulting in consistent coverage of AWO advocacy and safety priorities.
- Distributed 75 Working for You emails, Member Alerts, and Calls to Action and 20 newsletters to keep members apprised of key public policy developments.
- Significantly increased AWO's social media presence and engagement with key influencers.

## **Membership, Operations, Administration & Finance**

- Launched a campaign to conduct a personal visit with every AWO carrier member by April 2016.
- Posted a net increase in AWO membership.
- Staged national, regional and safety committee meetings attended by 740 individuals from 226 AWO member companies.
- Implemented the recommendations of the Dues & Assessments Task Force to improve fairness, equitability and transparency for AWO members.
- Terminated the legacy defined benefit plan, reducing risk to the organization and saving AWO members \$300,000 annually.
- Ensured successful audits for AWO and its alliance partners, WCI and the National Waterways Foundations, with no adjusting entries or management letter recommendations.
- Improved and stabilized the quality and service of AWO's email and phone communication systems and implemented a more secure infrastructure that reduces risk to the AWO network.
- Increased e-storage capabilities, reducing physical storage and attendant costs by more than 50%.
- Improved the recruitment and hiring process, resulting in the timely hiring of well qualified candidates for open staff positions.