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HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

Corps of Engineers Confident in Mississippi River Navigation through Spring.....1

113th Congress Begins with Big Changes.....1

TSAC to Advise Coast Guard on Manning Policy for Inspected Towing Vessels.....3

Coast Guard Issues Safety Alert on Pressure Switches for Vessels with Fixed Fire Suppression Systems.....3

CMTS Launches National Online Dialogue on E-Navigation.....4

Applications for New MERPAC Members Due March 11.....4

Coast Guard Seeks to Harmonize Seagoing Barge Regulations.....4

Coast Guard Posts Implementation Dates for SOLAS Requirements for Wheelhouse Alarms.....5

Save These Important Meeting Dates.....5

AWO Submit Comments for Lake Erie No Discharge Zone.....6

Corps of Engineers Confident in Mississippi River Navigation through Spring

Cites Rock Removal Progress, Forecasted Rain in Improved Outlook



In a January 13 press release, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lauded the progress of the first phase of the rock removal work on the Mississippi River near Thebes, Illinois. The Corps noted that the removal has been completed ahead of schedule, and that this work will provide barge operators and shippers on the river with additional depth in the navigation channel.

The Corps worked to remove approximately 365 cubic yards of limestone from the river in the areas with the most immediate impact on navigation. Additional rock removal is ongoing.

“The Corps is especially pleased with the efficient and effective performance of the rock removal effort, which deepened the navigation channel by two feet in just three weeks,” said St. Louis District Commander Col. Christopher Hall.

“The Corps has used every resource available to us to successfully sustain navigation,” said Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Mississippi Valley Division Commander. “The success of the rock removal work, combined with recent and forecast rain, increases our confidence we will sustain an adequate channel through this spring,” he added.

AWO, WCI and many other stakeholder groups praised the Corps for its efforts to expedite the rock removal work while continuing to watch the Mississippi River levels with concern. As AWO and WCI stated in a January 8 press release, the industry “continues to seek assurances

that all options to maintain navigation without further restrictions on draft remain on the table.”

Intense media attention also remains focused on the Mississippi River, with several stories featuring AWO members appearing on nightly network news, national radio broadcasts and in influential newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*.

AWO and WCI will continue to work with industry as well as the Corps and the Coast Guard to monitor conditions on the river and provide information to industry members.

For more information on this issue, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or lmuench@vesselalliance.com, or Caitlyn Stewart at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or cstewart@vesselalliance.com.

113th Congress Begins with Big Changes

Seismic shifts involving three of the maritime industry’s strongest supporters took place soon after the 113th Congress was gavelled into session on January 3. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI), a longtime friend of the maritime industry, died from complications of a respiratory ailment on



Attention, AWO Members:

Several important AWO meetings are coming up – have you registered yet? Please see page 5 for a full calendar and meeting registration information.



113th Congress Begins with Big Changes

(continued from page 1)

December 17. Sen. John Rockefeller (D-WV), chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee since 2009, announced his intention to retire at the end of his term in 2014. Both changes—one immediate, the other set to take place in two years—will have a long-term impact on maritime policy. On the heels of this news, Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ) vacated the chairmanship of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation to lead the Aviation Subcommittee.

Sen. Inouye, who at the time of his passing was chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been succeeded by Hawaii Lt. Gov. Brian Schatz in an appointment made by Gov. Neil Abercrombie. Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), a maritime industry supporter and tireless advocate for the Port of Baltimore, succeeds Sen. Inouye at the helm of the Appropriations Committee.

With the retirement of Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Sen. John Thune



“We were saddened by the loss of Sen. Daniel Inouye, one of the finest friends the maritime industry could ask for, whose exemplary public service set a standard for hard work and civility,”

- AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti

(R-SD) takes over as the Commerce Committee’s ranking minority member. New members of the committee include Sens. Schatz, Dean Heller (R-NV), Daniel Coats (R-IN), Tim Scott (R-SC), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Deb Fischer (R-NE), and Ron Johnson (R-WI). Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK) will continue as chairman of the Oceans, Atmosphere and Coast Guard Subcommittee.

At the Environment and Public Works Committee, Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) succeeds Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) as ranking member. One of Sen. Vitter’s early stated intentions is to work with Sen. Boxer in crafting a Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) as soon as possible.

Rep. LoBiondo, who since 2001, served as Chairman of the Coast Guard Subcommittee for eight years and Ranking Member for two years, will be succeeded by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA). Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) is departing from his role of Subcommittee Ranking Member, with a successor yet to be named. In addition, the gavel of the full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is now held by Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA), whose district includes a 20-mile section of the lower Monongahela River. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV), who recently expressed interest in Sen. Rockefeller’s Senate seat, returns as the panel’s ranking

member. Several freshmen members with coastal or inland waterway districts have been named to the committee, including Reps. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY), Rick Nolan (D-MN), and Cheri Bustos (D-IL).

Finally, the House Homeland Security Committee will undergo a transition as Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) takes over as chairman from the term-limited Rep. Peter King (R-NY). Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS) will retain his post as ranking member and Rep. Candice Miller (R-MI) will remain as chairwoman of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee.

“We were saddened by the loss of Sen. Daniel Inouye, one of the finest friends the maritime industry could ask for, whose exemplary public service set a standard for hard work and civility,” said Tom Allegretti, AWO President & CEO. Commenting on Sen. Rockefeller’s pending retirement, Mr. Allegretti stated: “With two more years of Sen. Rockefeller’s steady leadership at the Commerce Committee, it’s too early to say goodbye. But it’s not too soon to say that his wise and pragmatic approach to legislating will be missed. As for Rep. LoBiondo, we will always be grateful for his tireless efforts on behalf of the maritime industry, and we wish him the best as he takes on a new role at the Transportation Committee.”

Welcome, New Affiliate Members!

BOKF Marine Finance

1401 McKinney Street, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77010

Rep: Sebastien Solar
Senior Vice President

Sweetwater Marine Consulting

2858 Mesquite Drive
Sugar Land, TX 77479

Rep: Stephen Richards
President

TSAC to Advise Coast Guard on Manning Policy for Inspected Towing Vessels

The Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), a federal advisory committee that provides advice to the Secretary of Homeland Security via the Coast Guard on matters of towing vessel safety, held a teleconference January 21 and agreed to form a subcommittee to make recommendations on manning policy for inspected towing vessels.



Task #13-02, which was unanimously accepted by the committee, builds on the recommendations previously provided by TSAC during development of the proposed Subchapter M. “The Coast Guard believes that the [previous] TSAC recommendations provide a useful framework for the development of policy on manning of inspected towing vessels,” the task statement reads. The task statement goes on to note that while “the Coast Guard does not intend for the transition to towing vessel inspection to produce widespread changes in the way towing vessels are manned today... there are several regulatory requirements applicable to inspected vessels that do not apply to uninspected vessels. In order to ensure safe manning and avoid unintended consequences, it is important to carefully consider the circumstances under which these regulations may affect minimum manning requirements for some towing vessels.”

The task statement asks TSAC to provide recommendations to the Coast Guard on the content of a new section of Chapter 21 of Marine Safety Manual Volume III regarding manning of inspected towing vessels in domestic and international service. TSAC members Cathy Hammond, Inland Marine Service, and Mike Vitt, E.N. Bisso and Son, will co-chair the subcommittee conducting this work.

TSAC also accepted a new task on AIS Encoding for Towing Vessels. TSAC member Dan Nutt, Kirby Offshore Marine LLC, will lead the subcommittee responsible for this task.

The next meeting of TSAC will take place March 20-21 in New York City. Subcommittees will meet on March 20 and the full committee will meet March 21. At that meeting, TSAC plans to review final work products from subcommittees previously tasked with making recommendations on the prevention of falls overboard, voluntary standards for training of entry-level personnel on towing vessels, towing vessel operational stability, standards for mobile vapor control systems, and fire prevention and containment on towing vessels.

For more information on any of these tasks, please contact Jennifer Carpenter or Brian Vahey at (703) 841-9300, extensions 260 and 251, respectively, or via email at jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com or bvahey@vesselalliance.com.

Coast Guard Issues Safety Alert on Pressure Switches for Vessels with Fixed Fire Suppression Systems

On December 31, the U.S. Coast Guard issued Marine Safety Alert 05-12, “Pressure Switch Location for Fixed Fire Suppression Systems.” The alert advises owners of vessels with installed fixed fire suppression systems to ensure that the pressure switches for these systems are not located within protected spaces that could become sealed off in the event of a fire.

Pressure switches sense the activation of a fixed fire suppression system and secure the ventilation systems operating in the protected space. Current regulations require controls and valves for the operation of fixed fire suppression systems to be outside of the space protected, and do not allow them to be located in any space that may be cut off or made inaccessible in the event of a fire. The alert clarifies that the Coast Guard considers pressure switches a “control” subject to this requirement.

The Coast Guard issued the alert in response to a recent accident in which firefighting crews could not secure the engine room ventilation because the pressure switch was located within the engine room, where the fire occurred.

To read the alert, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Brian Vahey at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or via email at bvahey@vesselalliance.com.

CMTS Launches National Online Dialogue on E-Navigation

The Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) e-Navigation Integrated Action Team (IAT) has launched a national online dialogue as part of its strategic outreach to e-navigation partners and stakeholders. CMTS is a Federal Cabinet-level, inter-departmental committee chaired by the Secretary of Transportation whose purpose is to create a partnership of Federal departments and agencies with responsibility for the Marine Transportation System (MTS). The dialogue will run through February 28.

The U.S. vision for e-navigation is to establish a framework that enables the transfer of data between and among vessels

and shore facilities, and that integrates and transforms that data into decision and action. The online dialogue is an effort to facilitate partnership between government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and intended beneficiaries to provide an integrated information environment for marine transportation.



To participate in the National Online Dialogue, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extension 279, or at bbennett@vesselalliance.com.

Applications for New MERPAC Members Due March 11

The Coast Guard is seeking applications for membership on the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC). This committee advises the Secretary of Homeland Security on matters related to personnel in the U.S. merchant marine, including but not limited to training, qualifications, certification, documentation, and fitness standards. To be eligible, applicants must have experience in one or more of the following areas of expertise:

- Marine educator representing the viewpoint of State Maritime Academies;
- An engineering officer who is licensed as either a limited chief engineer or a designated duty engineer;
- A licensed deck officer with an unlimited tonnage master’s license with experience on tank vessels;
- A member who represents the viewpoint of a company employed in vessel operations and management;
- An unlicensed mariner who represents the viewpoints of Qualified Members of the Engine Department; or,
- A member drawn from the general public.

Coast Guard Seeks to Harmonize Seagoing Barge Regulations

On January 9, the U.S. Coast Guard published a notice of proposed rulemaking in the *Federal Register* to harmonize Coast Guard regulations with current law. The NPRM updates outdated definitions of “seagoing barge” in Coast Guard regulations and clarifies the seagoing barge inspection exemption passed in 1993. Since 1993, federal law has exempted seagoing barges from inspection if they are unmanned and do not carry a hazardous material as cargo or a flammable or combustible liquid, including oil, in bulk.

Consistent with current law and Coast Guard policy, the NPRM codifies “in bulk” to mean a 250 barrels or more, and “unmanned barge” to mean unmanned for the purposes of barge operation or navigation.

The NPRM should not result in any changes to existing seagoing barge operations. For a copy of the *Federal Register* notice, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extension 279, or at bbennett@vesselalliance.com.

Each MERPAC member serves a term of office up to three years. Members may be appointed to serve consecutive terms. MERPAC typically meets twice a year, once at or near Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC, and once at a location outside of Washington. Applications are due on or before March 11. For more information, please contact Davis J. Breyer of the U.S. Coast Guard at (202) 372-1445 or davis.j.breyer@uscg.mil.

Got Links?

If you receive a hard copy of the *AWO Letter* and need to know the exact web address of the hyperlink in any article, please contact Frank Leach at (703) 841-9300, extension 254, or at fleach@vesselalliance.com.



Coast Guard Posts Implementation Dates for SOLAS Requirements for Wheelhouse Alarms



On January 14, the U.S. Coast Guard reminded vessel owners of the implementation dates for international requirements for Bridge Navigational Watch Alarm Systems (BNWAS). The purpose of a BNWAS is to detect operator disability that could lead to a marine accident. A BNWAS monitors the awareness of the Officer of the Watch and automatically alerts the Master if, for any reason, the on-duty officer becomes incapable of performing his or her duties. In accordance with SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19, U.S.-flagged vessels engaged on international voyages are required to carry a BNWAS. The effective date for the regulation was January 1, 2011; however, implementation dates vary based on the type and size of the vessel.

- Cargo ships of 150 gross tonnage and upwards and passenger ships irrespective of size constructed on or after July 1, 2011 were required to be in immediate compliance as of the January 1, 2011 effective date. Under SOLAS, towing vessels are classified as “cargo ships”;
- Passenger ships irrespective of size constructed before July 1, 2011, must be in compliance no later than the vessel’s first survey after July 1, 2012;
- Cargo ships of 3,000 gross tonnage and upwards constructed before July 1, 2011, must be in compliance no later than the first survey after July 1, 2012;
- Cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 3,000 gross tonnage constructed before July 1, 2011, must comply by no later than the first survey after July 1, 2013; and,
- Cargo ships of 150 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 500 gross tonnage constructed before July 1, 2011, must comply no later than the first survey after July 1, 2014.

The Coast Guard has not yet adopted domestic regulations to implement the SOLAS BNWAS requirements. Accordingly, carriage of a BNWAS on U.S.-flagged vessels operating domestically is voluntary. For U.S.-flagged vessels engaged on international voyages, the Coast Guard will continue to issue SOLAS Safety Equipment Certificates regardless of whether the vessel complies with the BNWAS requirement, but any vessel operating internationally without a BNWAS past the applicable compliance date may be subject to detention by foreign port state officials and other administrative action by foreign authorities.

For more information, click [here](#) to read the *Federal Register* notice or contact Brian Vahey at (703) 841-9300, extension 251, or via email at bvahey@vesselalliance.com.

Attention AWO Members: Save These Important Meeting Dates!

Following this week’s Joint Safety Committees Meeting and Combined Midwest, Ohio Valley, and Southern Region Annual Meeting, AWO will continue with a full slate of meetings for the coming year. As such, please note the following dates on your calendar. When additional meetings are confirmed, we will alert members via e-mail, post details on AWO’s website, and announce in the *AWO Letter* as well as on AWO’s Facebook page.

For more information about AWO’s 2013 meetings, please contact Sarah Young at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or syoung@vesselalliance.com. We hope to see you soon!

February 6-7
Atlantic Region Annual Meeting
Hotel Monaco, Philadelphia

February 20-21
Pacific Region Annual Meeting
The Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Seattle

February 27-28
Executive Committee Meeting
AWO Office, Arlington, VA

April 16-19
Spring Convention & Board Meeting
Mandarin Oriental, Washington, DC

July 31-August 1
Executive Committee Meeting
AWO Office, Arlington, VA

October 16-19
Fall Convention & Board Meeting
The Ritz-Carlton, South Beach, Miami, FL

December 2-3
Executive Committee Meeting
AWO Office, Arlington, VA

Atlantic Region

AWO Submit Comments on Lake Erie No Discharge Zone

On January 7, AWO submitted comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in response to a December 6 *Federal Register* notice announcing receipt and tentative approval of New York State's request to designate certain portions of Lake Erie as a No Discharge Zone (NDZ). If approved, the NDZ area will include navigable portions of the Upper Niagara River, Barcelona Harbor, Dunkirk Harbor, and Buffalo Outer Harbor.

As reported in the December 17 *AWO Letter*, in 2012 AWO provided the state of New York's Department of Environmental Conservation with information on the number of commercial vessels that transit the proposed NDZ area, commonly traveled routes, the availability of pumpout trucks or vessels, and constraints on the ability of commercial vessels to use pumpout trucks or vessels. AWO's comments focused on the safety and logistical

concerns of retrofitting towing vessels and suggested an improved process for the EPA to assess the adequacy of pumpout facilities for commercial vessels.

To read the *Federal Register* notice, click [here](#). To read the AWO

comments, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or lmuench@vesselalliance.com or Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300 extension 279, or bbennett@vesselalliance.com. ☘

Atlantic Region Annual Meeting to be held in Philadelphia

Atlantic Region members are invited to the Atlantic Region Annual Meeting February 6-7 at the Hotel Monaco in Philadelphia. Regional meetings provide members with an opportunity to take part in discussions on emerging issues and receive updates from AWO staff on AWO's work with Congress, federal agencies and the states, all while networking with your peers. Your participation is important! Click [here](#) to register for the Atlantic Region Annual Meeting.

The events will begin Wednesday, February 6, at 2:00 p.m. with a members-only discussion session to be followed by a reception and dinner honoring Don Ivins, a longtime industry and AWO leader from Express Marine. On February 7, attendees will convene for the business meeting, which is set to adjourn at noon. The Atlantic Region Board will meet over lunch from 12:00 noon– 2:00 p.m.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Hotel Monaco at a rate of \$179 per night, exclusive of taxes and fees. The guarantee for the group rate has expired, but you are encouraged to call and request the group rate. Reservations are available by telephone at (855) 295-2355. If reserving by telephone, please reference the 2013 Atlantic Region Annual Meeting. A government rate of \$135 is offered based on availability; to access the government rate, please contact Sarah Young via email at syoung@vesselalliance.com.

Meeting materials will be sent in the coming weeks.

If you are interested in meeting sponsorship opportunities, please click [here](#). For more information, please contact John Harms, Manager-Atlantic Region, at (703) 841-9300, extension 292, or via email at jharms@vesselalliance.com. ☘



Welcome, New Carrier Member!

Deep South Marine, LLC
2225 Foxglove Street
League City, TX 77573

Rep: Lea Baker
Manager

Pacific Region

Registration is Open for the Pacific Region Annual Meeting!

Members of the Pacific Region will convene on February 20-21 for the Pacific Region Annual Meeting at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington. This important meeting provides you with an opportunity to take part in discussions on emerging issues and receive updates from AWO staff on AWO's work with Congress,

federal agencies and the states, all while networking with your peers. To register for the meeting please click [here](#).

The meeting will begin on Wednesday, February 20 with a members-only discussion session from 2:00 - 5:30 p.m., followed by an evening reception at 6:00 p.m.

The business meeting will convene on Thursday, February 21, at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude at 12:00 noon. A breakfast buffet will be available at 7:30 a.m.



The Pacific Region Board Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, from 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m.

The Pacific Region Quality Steering Committee (RQSC) of the Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership will meet on Thursday, February 21, from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

For your convenience, a small block of rooms has been reserved at The Fairmont Olympic at a rate of \$205 per night, exclusive of taxes and fees. The group rate will expire January 29. Reservations are available by telephone at (800) 441-1414 or (206) 621-1700 ext. 3131. If reserving by telephone, please reference The American Waterways Operators. Please contact Sarah Young at syoung@vesselalliance.com for the government rate.

If you are interested in meeting sponsorship opportunities, please click [here](#).

Meeting materials will be sent in early February.


For more information, please contact Charlie Costanzo, Vice President - Pacific Region, at (206) 257-4723, or via email at ccostanzo@vesselalliance.com.

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- Contributes to America's economic, national and homeland security because our vessels are American-owned, American-built and American-crewed



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