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AWO Signs Agreement with Towing Vessel Inspection Bureau TVIB to Take on Training and Certification of RCP Auditors

AWO and the Towing Vessel Inspection Bureau have entered into an agreement under which TVIB will take responsibility for the training and certification of AWO Responsible Carrier Program auditors beginning this summer. The agreement was negotiated pursuant to the direction of the AWO Board of Directors, with guidance from the AWO Executive Committee and RCP Accreditation Board.



AWO's decision to delegate responsibility for the training and certification of RCP auditors to qualified, AWO-recognized third parties is intended to help AWO members prepare for the eventual implementation of Subchapter M by improving the quality and consistency of RCP audits, and to remove AWO from a direct role in the training and certification of RCP auditors.

Under the AWO-TVIB agreement, TVIB may raise, but not lower, current AWO standards for RCP auditor training and certification. AWO intends to extend the certification of all current RCP auditors until TVIB-led recertification training is initiated later this year. Auditors trained by TVIB will be designated TVIB-Certified AWO RCP Auditors. New auditor applications will be reviewed and approved by TVIB. All current RCP auditors will receive a letter in the near future explaining the changes.

TVIB is tasked with reviewing and improving the RCP auditor training curriculum and RCP audit tools to make them more robust and useful for auditors and AWO members. However, TVIB will

not be making changes to the substance of the RCP. The RCP remains an AWO program that can only be amended by a vote of the AWO Board of Directors.

The AWO-TVIB agreement was a major topic of discussion at the Joint Meeting of the AWO Interregion and Coastal Safety committees and the Annual Meeting of the AWO Midwest, Ohio Valley and Southern Regions in New Orleans which took place on January 22-24. The agreement will also be discussed at the upcoming Annual Meetings of the AWO Atlantic and Pacific regions in Philadelphia and Seattle, respectively.

For more information on TVIB, visit www.thetvib.org or contact TVIB Interim Executive Director Chris Parsonage at (636) 728-0300. For more information about the AWO-TVIB agreement or the AWO Responsible Carrier Program, please contact Jennifer Carpenter at (703) 841-9300, extension 260, or jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com.

Coast Guard Lowers Minimum Random Drug Testing Rate for 2013

On January 22, the U.S. Coast Guard announced that the minimum random drug testing rate for calendar year 2013 will be lowered from 50 percent to 25 percent of covered vessel crewmembers. This is the first time the Coast Guard has lowered the minimum random drug testing rate since drug testing regulations

Save the Date...

AWO 2013 Spring Convention & Annual Board Meeting
April 16-19
Mandarin Oriental
Washington, DC



For more information, please contact Sarah Young at (703) 841-9300, extension 291, or syoung@vesselalliance.com.

Coast Guard Lowers Minimum Random Drug Testing Rate for 2013

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for vessel crewmembers were first promulgated in 1988.



The Coast Guard has the authority to lower the minimum random drug testing rate if the industry-wide frequency of positive random test results is lower than one percent for two consecutive years. According to data collected by the Management Information System (MIS), 0.74 percent of covered crewmembers tested positive for illegal drugs in 2010 and 0.77 percent of covered crewmembers tested positive in 2011. This marks the first time that positive drug tests have been below one percent for two consecutive years.

The 25 percent random testing rate is in effect from January 1 to December 31, 2013. The Coast Guard may reset the required testing rate to 50 percent of covered crewmembers if the percentage of positive test results climbs above one percent for any one year, or if the quality of data is not sufficient to accurately assess the positive rate. To read the *Federal Register* notice announcing the 2013 random testing rate, click [here](#).

Marine employers must submit their MIS reports on the results of calendar year 2012 drug tests no later than March 15. For more information, 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.

FMCSA Study Confirms Validity of Split Sleep

A recent study commissioned by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has concluded that obtaining sleep in two periods, a main or anchor sleep period and a supplemental nap, is preferable to a single period of consolidated daytime sleep. The FMCSA study evaluated three different sleep schedules, an opportunity for consolidated nighttime sleep that lasted from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., a consolidated daytime sleep period from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and a split sleep period that provided subjects with the opportunity to sleep between 3:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The study found that subjects on the consolidated daytime sleep schedule slept an average of 6.4 hours a day, while those on the split sleep schedule got 7.2 hours of sleep.

The FMCSA study supports the split sleep research commissioned by AWO and conducted by the Northwestern University Center for Sleep and Circadian Biology. The Northwestern study had four phases: Phase I was a literature search that analyzed published studies and data on sleep schedules, including split sleep research sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Phases II and III had investigators ride on 17 towing vessels, collect data on crewmember sleep patterns, and develop and test educational materials; and Phase IV studied the sleep habits of more than 160 wheelhouse crewmembers while on board the vessel and at home.

AWO is sharing the Northwestern research findings with members, the Coast Guard, and the National Transportation Safety Board, and is also seeking their feedback on potential next steps for AWO. AWO has also convened an External Advisory Board (EAB) composed of internationally recognized fatigue experts from academia to peer-review the Northwestern research and make recommendations on next steps. One of the EAB members, Dr. Gregory Belenky, U.S. Army (ret.) is one of five authors of the FMCSA study.

To read the FMCSA study, click [here](#). For more information about the Northwestern research or AWO's work to manage fatigue risk and promote crew alertness, please contact Jennifer Carpenter or Brian Bennett at (703) 841-9300, extensions 260 and 279, respectively, or via email at jcarpenter@vesselalliance.com or bbennett@vesselalliance.com.

REMINDER: Many VGP Annual Reports Due February 6!

For vessels that have been covered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Vessel General Permit since its February 2009 effective date, annual noncompliance reports are due to the appropriate EPA regional office on February 6. For more information, please visit EPA's VGP monitoring and reporting website by clicking [here](#).

AWO Urges Coast Guard to Revise FSO Model Training Program

AWO urged the U.S. Coast Guard to make significant revisions to its draft model training program for Facility Security Officers (FSOs) in comments submitted on January 25. The Coast Guard was mandated by Congress to develop “comprehensive facility security officer training requirements” in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010. To read the proposed model training program, click [here](#).

The draft model training program requires all FSOs to take a baseline 32 hours of general coursework, after which they can elect to take additional training “modules” for more specialized security duties, including the handling of Certain Dangerous Cargoes, barge fleetings, and container facilities, among others. This heightened concerns among many maritime industry stakeholders that the training program was targeted to higher risk facilities and offered a poor fit for smaller facilities that do not face the same security threats. “The required content in the proposed model training course is geared toward cargo vessels engaged in international trade,” AWO wrote in its comments. “Many of the required components of the proposed training program offer little to no value to FSOs of small inland facilities.”

AWO went on to urge the Coast Guard to develop instead a module-based program with online certification that would allow FSOs to focus their training on those components that are most relevant to the facilities where they work. AWO explained further that a tailorable, module-based program would also reduce the number of hours FSOs of smaller, lower-risk facilities would be required to commit to training and would better accommodate FSOs who do not have easy access to training resources.

“The required content in the proposed model training course is geared toward cargo vessels engaged in international trade. Many of the required components of the proposed training program offer little to no value to FSOs of small inland facilities.” - AWO

“Because maritime facilities are so different,” AWO explained, “the suite of available modules should be far more extensive than the material covered in the general training requirements.”

AWO member companies that own and operate certain facilities have been required to have Coast Guard-approved Facility Security Plans since 2004, and covered facilities are inspected and audited repeatedly.

“These steps were taken without the benefit of an approved model training

program and AWO is not aware of any instance in which FSO training and qualifications have been the source of significant Coast Guard or auditor discrepancies,” AWO wrote in its comments. The association urged the Coast Guard not to begin with the assumption that current FSO training requirements are inadequate.

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

Coast Guard Clarifies Application of Towing Vessel Stability Letters

On January 17, the U.S. Coast Guard Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise (TVNCOE) updated the Frequently Asked Questions section of its website to clarify that operational conditions identified in a towing vessel stability letter are only applicable when the vessel is operating outside the Boundary Line. To read the FAQ guidance, click [here](#).

The TVNCOE published this guidance in response to inquiries from towing vessel operators whose vessels have load lines but only operate inside the Boundary Line and often exclusively within harbors. The guidance clarifies that the operating requirements outlined in a stability letter apply only when a towing vessel is operating beyond the Boundary Line, consistent with the parameters of the vessel’s load line certificate. The Coast Guard further clarified that towing vessels are not required to carry stability letters at this time, regardless of whether they have a load line certificate or not.

The Coast Guard intends to publish a new stability letter template that clarifies that it is only applicable to operations outside the Boundary Line. Vessel owners who would like to receive a new stability letter with the revised language may contact Mr. Tom Gruber, U.S. Coast Guard, at (703) 519-9987; however, there is no requirement to do so.

For more information, 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.

Ninth Coast Guard District Joins Eighth District in Extending Suspension of IRVMC Reporting

On January 23, the U.S. Coast Guard published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing that the Ninth District is extending the suspension of reporting requirements under the Regulated Navigation Area for barges loaded with certain dangerous cargoes (CDC) to September 30. The suspension was initially established in January 2011, just before the contract for the CDC barge reporting system at the Inland River Vessel Movement Center was due to expire. The Eighth District published a similar announcement on January 2. To read the *Federal Register* notice, click [here](#). For more information, please see the January 7 *AWO Letter* or contact Caitlyn Stewart at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or cstewart@vesselalliance.com.

First Meetings of 2013 Boast Generous Sponsorships

AWO is honored to recognize the generosity of the following member companies for their support of the association's first meetings of 2013. Please join us in saying thank you for the role the following companies played in making the Joint Coastal & Interregion Safety Committees Meeting as well as the Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley & Southern Regions a resounding success.

Joint Coastal & Interregion Safety Committees Meeting January 22-23

Meeting Sessions

AccuTrans, Inc.

Safety Committees Reception

Platinum: Turn Services, LLC

Silver: DeLoach Marine Services, Ingram Barge Company

Sponsor: Magnolia Marine Transport Company

Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley, & Southern Regions January 23-24

Discussion Session

Florida Marine Transporters, Inc.

Combined Annual Meeting Reception

Platinum: Turn Services, LLC

Silver: JANTRAN, Inc., WQIS

Partial Breakfast

James Marine, Inc., Magnolia Marine Transport Company

Business Meeting

Mt. Vernon Barge Service



Please Join AWO for the Eleventh Annual Congressional “Barge-In”

It's Government by the People— Let's Remind Them Who the People Are

Lately, we've heard a lot of talk from Congress about helping the economy. Here's your chance to meet with lawmakers about how they can help.

Given the maritime industry's impact on the U.S. economy, Congress needs to pay attention to our concerns. You and

the companies you work for pay taxes and produce jobs. More importantly, lawmakers need your vote.

Laws don't originate in a vacuum. They're the result of a process that started with an idea. And those ideas come from people who took the time to educate their Representative or Senator and their staffs about their work and the issues that affect them.

That's why Congress needs to hear from you. Now more than ever, with 94 House and Senate freshmen taking their seats in the 113th Congress, face-to-face advocacy is the key to building new

legislative champions for the industry who will stand up for our interests.

AWO is planning now for the Eleventh Annual Congressional Barge-In to ensure targeted visits with Senators and Representatives to help you start or grow relationships with your elected officials. Signup for the Barge-In will be part of the AWO Spring Convention registration form. If you wish to sign up early, please contact Frank Leach at fleach@vesselalliance.com. For more information, please contact Craig Montesano at (703) 841-9300, extension 297, or cmontesano@vesselalliance.com.

Be sure to arrive in time for a preparation session to be held April 16 at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.



RiverWorks Discovery® Now Includes Traveling Exhibit

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and the National Rivers Hall of Fame have created a new traveling exhibit based on the successful and extremely popular educational program, RiverWorks Discovery. The traveling exhibit, *RiverWorks Discovery®: A Journey of Exploration*, is a dynamic, hands-on learning experience that engages audiences with films, interactive exhibits, and captivating images.

The RWD traveling exhibit is funded with major support from AEP Foundation, AEP River Operations, Cargill, Amherst Madison, Ingram Barge Company, Eugenie & Joseph Jones Family Foundation (Canal Barge Company), and The McKnight Foundation.

The intent of the 2,000 square foot exhibit is to bring to life the story of rivers in a meaningful and tangible way in strategic locations across the country. The exhibit opens at Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center in Shreveport on February 23 and will travel to Mud Island

River Park in Memphis in June. The exhibit will travel around the country for three years.

"We believe that this is a tremendous opportunity to tell the big story of America's rivers, not only their history, but their role in our future."

– Jerry Enzler, President and CEO, National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and National Rivers Hall of Fame

The exhibit's key concepts include:

- **Commerce:** Rivers are water highways that transport goods that we use in our everyday lives and are vital to the health and well-being of our nation's economy;
- **Culture:** Rivers and river trade have shaped history for hundreds of years and have provided a deep and rich cultural heritage that has inspired music, literature, and art; and,
- **Conservation:** Clean waterways and watersheds are important to the quality of all life.

The RWD traveling exhibit will reach hundreds of thousands of visitors in major metropolitan areas, an unparalleled public outreach opportunity. The exhibit will engage community and industry leaders and build regional awareness and support for the nation's

waterways. The comprehensive content of the exhibit appeals to a variety of venues, including river museums, children's museums, science museums, history and natural history museums, and other educational institutions. The RWD traveling exhibit is being offered rent-free for a period of three months.

Today, RWD has more than 80 cosponsors, including several AWO member companies, and almost 40 non-profit partners nationwide who make it possible for RWD to provide free educational materials and presentations to the public.

For more information on the RiverWorks Discovery® educational program visit www.riverworksdiscovery.org, or contact Errin Howard at errin@riverworksdiscovery.org or (513) 403-9312. For more information on the traveling exhibit, please contact the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and National Rivers Hall of Fame at (563) 557-9545.☘

MG Peabody Addresses AWO Members



MG John Peabody, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Mississippi Valley Division, briefed AWO members on USACE efforts to maintain a navigable channel during the Mississippi River low water crisis. See full story, page 7.

AWO Interregion and Coastal Safety Committees Hold Joint Meeting in New Orleans



On January 22 and 23, the AWO Interregion and Coastal Safety Committees held a joint meeting in New Orleans preceding the AWO Midwest, Ohio Valley, and Southern Regions Combined Annual Meeting.

The meeting, which was attended by over 130 representatives of AWO member companies, was opened on January 22 by Coastal Safety Committee Chairman Matt Baker, Moran Towing Company. After a safety briefing provided by Mary McCarthy, Canal Barge Company, Inc., Mr. Baker explained how the meeting's theme, lessons learned from falls overboard, originated with the report of the Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership's Quality Action Team (QAT) on Reducing Fall-Overboard Crew Fatalities. He emphasized that falls overboard are a concern for both inland and coastal vessel operators.

Mr. Baker then introduced Paul Hassler, JB Marine Service, Inc., who gave the first Lessons Learned presentation, which concerned a fall overboard that resulted in a fatality. Mr. Hassler was followed by Jim Smith, Magnolia Marine Transport Company, who discussed the role that the safety committees can play in implementing the recommendations of the Fall-Overboard QAT. Next, Jeff Slesinger, Western Towboat Company, gave a Lessons Learned presentation on a fall overboard from a coastal tugboat.

Fred Nyhuis, Marathon Petroleum Company, delivered the next Lessons Learned presentation, focused on a fall overboard that was captured on camera and accompanied by an interview with the crew member involved. He was followed by Matt Lewis, Kirby Corporation, who discussed lessons

learned from a fall overboard in a barge fleet. Mr. Nyhuis then returned to the podium to brief the safety committees on the progress made by the AWO Safety Statistics Working Group, which he co-chairs, to develop a safety statistics reporting program for the association.

CAPT John Arenstam, Eighth Coast Guard District Chief of Western Rivers, then gave a Lessons Learned presentation on the Coast Guard's recent experiences with falls overboard. Next, Mr. Baker and AWO Interregion Safety Committee Chairman Jason Adams, Ingram Barge Company, led a discussion of the findings of a report commissioned by the Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership on the frequency and causes of operational oil spills from towing vessels. Mr. Slesinger returned to the podium to discuss the impacts of training and watchkeeping regulations on the availability of qualified towing vessel engineers. To conclude the day's session, Tom Allegretti, AWO President & CEO, and Chris Parsonage, Towing Vessel Inspection Bureau, told the safety committees about AWO's agreement with the TVIB to transition the training and certification of Responsible Carrier Program auditors.

Mr. Adams began the morning of January 23 by asking Coastal Safety Committee Vice Chairman Matt Stump, Andrie, Inc., to provide a safety briefing. Mr. Adams then spoke to the group about developments in the "vertical integration" of the safety committees into the work of AWO. He also invited Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chairman Tom McWhorter, Maritime Services Group

of Louisiana, LLC, to update the group on TSAC's active task statements.

Next, Mr. Adams introduced the meeting's keynote speaker, Barry Strauch of the National Transportation Safety Board, who gave a presentation on managing risk from a human factors perspective. Mr. Strauch was followed by Mr. Baker, who returned to the podium to discuss lessons learned from a series of falls overboard, one of which resulted in serious injury. Will Kraft, W&M Kraft, Inc., then gave a presentation on how companies can establish effective safety cultures.

Mr. Kraft was followed by Brian Callaway, American Commercial Lines, Inc., whose Lessons Learned presentation concerned several recent falls overboard. Next, Jennifer Carpenter, AWO Senior Vice President – National Advocacy, led a discussion about the findings of Northwestern University's research on split sleep and asked the safety committees to identify any issues that the association should consider as it thinks about next steps. Mr. Adams closed the meeting with a brief review of the sessions and invited the safety committees' input.

The next meetings of the AWO Interregion and Coastal safety committees will be held this summer. For a copy of the joint meeting packets, click [here](#). To review the joint meeting presentations, click [here](#). For more information about the joint meeting, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or at lmuench@vesselalliance.com, or Caitlyn Stewart at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or at cstewart@vesselalliance.com.

Midwest, Ohio Valley and Southern Regions

AWO Regions Hold Combined Annual Meeting in New Orleans

On January 23 and 24, the AWO Midwest, Ohio Valley, and Southern Regions held their combined Annual Meeting in New Orleans. In addition to the Annual Meeting, the AWO Joint Interregion Safety Committee, the Safety Statistics Reporting Work Group and the Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee also met during the week.

The Annual Meeting began with a discussion session on January 23 that was chaired by Ohio Valley Chairwoman Cathy Hammond, Inland Marine Service, who also provided a regional report. She was followed by Lynn Muench, AWO Senior Vice President – Regional Advocacy, and Mark Wright, Vice President – Southern Region, who delivered a joint regional office presentation that included the proposed 2013 regional priorities for the Midcontinent Office and Southern Region, respectively. Caitlyn Stewart, AWO Government Affairs Manager, then provided an update on the pending 2013 Vessel General Permit, and Mr. Wright provided details about AWO

PAC plans for the 2013-14 PAC cycle. Next, Ann McCulloch, AWO Director – Public Affairs, Craig Montesano, AWO Director – Legislative Affairs, and Ms. Muench led an extensive presentation and discussion about the Missouri River and navigation on the Mississippi River. Jennifer Carpenter, AWO Senior Vice President – National Advocacy, then updated attendees about the towing vessel inspection NPRM and Mr. Montesano returned to the podium to highlight AWO plans for the new Congress. Tom Allegretti, AWO President & CEO, and Chris Parsonage, Interim Executive Director, Towing Vessel Inspection Bureau, briefed members about changes to accrediting RCP auditors and the role of the TVIB. The meeting concluded following a presentation by Ms. Carpenter about AWO's 2013 national priorities.

On January 24, the Annual Meeting's Business Session was called to order by AWO Southern Region Chairman Frank Morton, Turn Services, LLC, who gave his region's Chairman's Report before introducing Rep. Steve

Scalise (R-LA), who delivered the keynote address. AWO Chairman Linn Peterson, Kirby Inland Marine, LP, delivered his Chairman's Report. Mr. Peterson was followed with an update by RADM Roy A. Nash, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, and Will Kraft, W & M Kraft, Inc., who discussed elements needed to create an effective organizational safety culture. MG John Peabody, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mississippi Valley Division, provided a detailed presentation about Mississippi River navigation and the problems stemming from low water. Next, CAPT John Bingaman, Chief of Staff, Ninth Coast Guard District, provided a district update and Mr. Allegretti provided attendees with a national perspective on AWO's work. Following Coast Guard and Corps regional reports, Fred Nyhuis, Marathon Petroleum Company, LP, provided an update on the Safety Statistics Reporting Work Group's efforts to develop a towing industry safety statistics reporting program, Ms. McCulloch previewed AWO's public affairs agenda for 2013, Jason Adams, Ingram Barge Company, provided a report about the Joint Interregion and Coastal Safety Meeting held earlier that week, and Brian Vahey, AWO Government Affairs Manager, provided a Bridging and Implementation Team update.

During the business session, the nomination slates for regional Board members were elected. For the Midwest Region, the following slate was approved: Cathy Hammond, Inland Marine Service; Bill Barr, Amherst Madison, Inc.; David Sehart, Ingram Barge Company; Paul Tobin, American Commercial Lines, Inc.; and, Glenn Hendon, Hunter Marine, as the Alternate. Bill Barr was selected as

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CAPT John Bingaman, Chief of Staff, Ninth U.S. Coast Guard District; Tom Allegretti, President & CEO, The American Waterways Operators; and, Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA), hear introductory presentations at the Business Session of the Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley, and Southern Regions in New Orleans on January 24.

Midwest, Ohio Valley and Southern Regions

AWO Regions Hold Combined Annual Meeting in New Orleans

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Chairman and Jeff Keifer, AEP River Operations, was named Vice Chairman.

The Ohio Valley Region slate was also approved, and includes Gregg Thauvette, The Great Lakes Group; Brent Nissen, American River Transportation Co.; and Molly Isnardi, Upper River Services.

For the Southern Region, the approved slate is Matt Devall, Devall Towing & Boat Service, Inc.; Austin Golding, Golding Barge Line, Inc.; Chas Haun, Parker Towing Company, Inc.; Matt Holzhalb, E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc.; Paul Janoush, JANTRAN, Inc.; Tom Marian, Buffalo Marine Service, Inc.; Gary Osorno, CGBM 100, LLC/AccuTrans, Inc.; Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation; and Alternate Kelly Teichman, T&T Marine Salvage, Inc. Also, the Southern Region nominated Z. David Deloach, Deloach Marine Services, for Chairman and Matt Woodruff, Kirby Corporation, as Vice Chairman.

All meeting packets and presentations are available by following the links below or on the AWO website at www.americanwaterways.com. For the Midwest, Ohio Valley, & Southern Regions Combined Annual Meeting Discussion Session packet, click [here](#). For the Midwest, Ohio Valley, & Southern Regions Combined Annual Meeting Business Session packet, click [here](#).

For more information about the meeting, please contact Lynn Muench at (314) 446-6474 or lmuench@vesselalliance.com, or Mark Wright at (985) 674-3600 or mwright@vesselalliance.com.



ABOVE: Lynn Muench, AWO Senior Vice President - Regional Advocacy, and RADM Roy Nash, Commander of the Eighth U.S. Coast Guard District, at the Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley, Southern Regions. BELOW: AWO members Mike Kuehne, Bollinger Shipyards, Inc., and Del Wilkins, Canal Barge Company, Inc., talk with CAPT John Arenstam, Chief, Western Rivers Division, Eighth U.S. Coast Guard District.

Midwest, Ohio Valley and Southern Regions

RQSC Holds Winter Meeting in New Orleans

On January 24, the Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee (RQSC) held its winter meeting following the Combined Annual Meeting of the Midwest, Ohio Valley, and Southern Regions in New Orleans. The RQSC is part of the U.S. Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership, which has focused on developing non-regulatory solutions to safety, security, and environmental issues facing the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry for over 15 years.

The meeting was opened by Mid-America RQSC co-chairs Mark Wright, AWO Vice President – Southern Region, and CAPT John Arenstam, Eighth Coast Guard District Chief of Western Rivers. Following introductions and a historical brief about the RQSC and the Safety Partnership, CAPT Arenstam discussed the River Industry Executive Task Force and its recent work to facilitate Mississippi River navigation during low water. Caitlyn Stewart, AWO Government Affairs Manager, next

made a presentation about the report of the RQSC's Training and Orientation Quality Action Team. The RQSC voted to approve the report and present it to the National Quality Steering Committee.

Mr. Wright then briefed attendees about the Casualty Reporting Working Group and how its efforts could be coordinated with pending work of the Towing Safety Advisory Committee. He advised the Committee that the Coast Guard was preparing a tasking TSAC on a similar issue and that the working group should adapt its goals and process to complement the federal advisory committee's work. AWO Interregion Safety Committee Chairman and RQSC member Jason Adams, Ingram Barge Company, then reported on the joint meeting of the Interregion and Coastal Safety committees held earlier in the week.

RQSC member Fred Nyhuis, Marathon Petroleum Company, LP, provided an update on the AWO Safety Statistics Work Group's efforts to develop a safety statistics reporting program for association members. TSAC and RQSC member Mike Vitt, E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc., discussed the recent TSAC meeting and previewed action on adopted task statements. Next, Brian Vahey, AWO Government Affairs Manager, discussed the Bridging and Implementation Team

(BAIT) program's work. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Wright explained that since COL Al Lee (Ret.), U.S. Corps of Engineers – Mississippi Valley Division, was unable to join the meeting because he was recently deployed to Afghanistan, RQSC members would take the time during his absence to explore other options for Corps engagement with the the Committee.

Mid-America RQSC members in attendance were Mr. Nyhuis; Mr. Adams; Tom Smith, Canal Barge Company, Inc.; and Mr. Vitt. RQSC Member Mario Munoz, Turn Services, LLC, was unable to attend the meeting. In addition to Ms. Stewart and Mr. Vahey, AWO staff attending the meeting were John Harms, Manager – Atlantic Region, and Craig Montesano, Director – Legislative Affairs. Guests at the meeting included Roy Murphy, Coast Guard Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise; Cherrie Felder, Channel Shipyard Company, Inc.; and Mary McCarthy, Canal Barge Company, Inc.

For more information on the Mid-America RQSC meeting, please contact Mark Wright at (985) 674-3600 or via email at mwright@vesselalliance.com, or Caitlyn Stewart at (703) 841-9300, extension 262, or via email at cstewart@vesselalliance.com.



Welcome, New Carrier Members!

Lulich Marine Transportation, LLC

709 Jean Lafitte Blvd
Lafitte, LA 70067

Rep: Mike Enclade
Vice President of Operations

Krause Marine Towing Corporation

9815 Gunforge Road
Perry Hall, MD 21128

Rep: David Krause
Owner/Managing Member

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.

