

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

River Industry Executive Task Force signs Memorandum of Understanding

BATON ROUGE, La., August 21, 2015 - Leadership from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard and the inland towing industry signed a memorandum of understanding Friday, designed to ensure consistent communications and support efficient and safe movement of commerce on the western rivers of the United States.

The memorandum, to be signed by Jim Guidry (Kirby Inland Marine LP and RIETF co-chairman), Rear Admiral June E. Ryan (commander of the 9th Coast Guard District), Rear Admiral David R. Callahan (commander of the 8th Coast Guard District), Major General Michael C. Wehr (commander of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division), and Brigadier General Richard G. Kaiser (commander of the Corps' Great Lakes and Ohio River Division), provides a foundation for improving communication between RIETF members, the Corps and the Coast Guard, which will further facilitate commerce while ensuring proper safety and environmental protection.

"This memorandum of understanding is a great step forward for our joint efforts to keep the nation's commerce moving," said Jim Guidry. "It provides the assurance that we have communications processes in place to ensure that we move goods safely, securely, and efficiently, as the Coast Guard, the Corps and industry commit to work together for the good of the nation's economy."

"This agreement challenges us to communicate to the point of reducing any chance of misunderstanding. We are committed to getting there," said Maj. Gen. Wehr. "Maintaining our nation's waterways infrastructure to move commerce safely, efficiently and in an environmentally friendly manner ensures our continued success as a maritime nation." Maj. Gen. Wehr is also president of the Mississippi River Commission.

"Communication is always one of the foundations for success, and in an environment where the nation depends on steady flow of commerce, it is imperative that we continue to update our methods to keep one another informed. The Coast Guard works closely with the river industry in so many functions, and we look forward to the increased dialogue and interaction to steer commerce flow in an increasingly more informed, reliable and safe direction," said Rear Adm. Callahan.

RIETF, a standing task force of the American Waterways Operators, a national trade association for the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, was formed in 1988 to create an ongoing dialogue between senior leaders of the Corps, the Coast Guard, and the towing industry.

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About the American Waterways Operators

The American Waterways Operators is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which operates on the rivers, the Great Lakes, and along the coasts and in the harbors of the United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, please visit www.americanwaterways.com

About the Mississippi Valley Division

The Mississippi Valley Division is responsible for water resources engineering solutions in a 370,000-square-mile area, extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and encompassing portions of 12 states. Work is carried out by district offices located in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La. For more information on the MVD: www.mvd.usace.army.mil

About the U.S. Coast Guard

Since 1790 the Coast Guard has safeguarded our Nation's maritime interests and environment around the world. The Coast Guard is an adaptable, responsive military force of maritime professionals whose broad legal authorities, capable assets, geographic diversity and expansive partnerships provide a persistent presence along our rivers, in the ports, littoral regions and on the high seas. Coast Guard presence and impact is local, regional, national and international. www.uscg.mil

About the Mississippi River Commission

Since its establishment in 1879, the seven-member presidentially appointed Mississippi River Commission has developed and matured plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River from the Head of Passes to the headwaters. The Mississippi River Commission brings critical engineering representation to the drainage basin, which impacts 41% of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, more than 250 tributaries, 31 states and two Canadian provinces. For more information on the MRC: [http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/About/MississippiRiverCommission\(MRC\).aspx](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/About/MississippiRiverCommission(MRC).aspx)

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