



NEWS RELEASE

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MIDWEST AREA RIVER COALITION (MARC 2000) TO MERGE INTO WATERWAYS COUNCIL, INC.

National Presence, Grassroots Advocacy Join Efforts

WASHINGTON, DC – The Board of Directors of the Midwest Area River Coalition (MARC 2000) voted unanimously on December 15, 2006 to approve the merger of MARC 2000 into Waterways Council, Inc. The Board of Directors of Waterways Council had previously approved this merger. Under the terms of the agreement, Waterways Council will retain the right to continue to use the name MARC 2000 in pursuance of the Midwest region's priorities and goals. It is expected that this merger will be completed by the end of 2006.

This merger is designed to nationalize the issue of lock modernization for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (UMRS) to help accomplish the mission of maintaining and modernizing the waterways infrastructure of the UMRS.

The MARC 2000 coalition, with headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, was formed in 1992 to promote Midwest economic growth through the responsible development and improvement of the infrastructure of the UMRS, which includes the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Waterways Council, which is based in Washington, DC, and lead by President and CEO R. Barry Palmer, plans to maintain a Midwest regional office to be headed by Paul Rohde, current president of MARC 2000.

Under the terms of the merger agreement, MARC 2000 has committed to encourage its members to remain as members of Waterways Council, Inc. and to provide support to Waterways Council's priorities. These priorities include working to ensure an optimal level of federal support and funding for the planning, construction, operation and

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maintenance of port and inland waterways navigation improvements, and working to ensure public awareness of the integral role of a modern and well-maintained system of navigable ports and inland waterways to meet the Nation's transportation needs.

A transition team will be appointed for the merger composed of representatives from Waterways Council, Inc. and MARC 2000.

"This merger is a critically important step in allowing our industry to speak with one, nationally authoritative voice on issues related to inland waterways infrastructure," said Mark Knoy, Waterways Council, Inc. Chairman.

"MARC 2000 has played a vital and effective role during its 15-year history," said Rick Tolman, MARC 2000 Chairman. "The resulting organization in this merger will be a stronger and more effective representation for water transportation issues and in particular, the Upper Mississippi River Basin, in the new and evolving political environment that we now face."

Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways. The group is supported by waterways carriers, shippers, port authorities, shipping associations and waterways advocacy groups from all regions of the country.

MARC 2000 membership is comprised of almost 200 river transportation carriers and related entities, agricultural producer groups, grain and industrial shippers, organized labor unions, manufacturers, economic development and recreation advocates, environmental organizations and other stakeholders.

Visit www.waterwayscouncil.org.