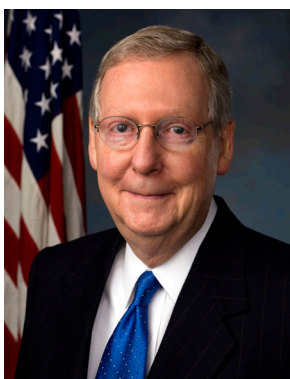


Capitol Currents

December 19, 2017

CORPS RECEIVES GIFT OF STRONG FUNDING, BUT HAS TO WAIT TO OPEN IT



Sen. Mitch McConnell
Photo courtesy of
Congress.gov.

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2018 FUNDING FOR THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM, approved by both the full House of Representatives and the Senate Appropriations Committee, has given the inland waterways industry something to look forward to. However, the inability of Congress to pass appropriations bills by regular order or by an Omnibus Appropriations bill will make the Corps and the inland waterways industry wait for record-level FY18 funding.

When the December 8 deadline of a previously passed Continuing Resolution (CR) was set to expire, on December 7 the House of Representatives passed another short-term CR that will fund the government through December 22. Passage of the CR in the House was in question when the "Freedom Caucus" held up the motion to appoint conferees on the tax reform bill and to try to urge a later expiration date for the CR. However, House Speaker Paul Ryan and Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (R-NC) resolved these issues, and ultimately passed the CR in the House with a vote of 235 yeas (14 Democrats) and 193 nays (18 Republicans). Later the same night, the Senate passed the CR on a vote of 81 yeas and 14 nays to keep the Federal government operating and to avoid a shutdown.

“After Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed that there would be no government shutdown, Congress passed another short-term spending bill that will keep the Federal government operating through December 22, at which time a long-term deal can be struck.”

- Newsmax.com

Under this CR, the Corps is funded slightly below its FY17 funding of \$6.038 billion. Olmsted is the only project funded within the President's budget, and within this CR. The other priority projects – Lower Mon, Kentucky, and Chickamauga – will not receive CR funding, however, these projects have funds available through the end of August 2018.

By December 22, Congress will try to pass a long-term FY18 Omnibus Appropriations bill that would include the Energy & Water Development Appropriations bill. It is more likely, however, that Congress will instead have to pass another short-term CR into January 2018 before they recess for the holiday.

FY18 funding for the Corps in the House and Senate bills is extremely favorable at more than \$6 billion, including record Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funding (\$3.481 billion was provided by the Senate Appropriations Committee and \$3.519 billion by the House), and full and efficient funding of the top four priority navigation projects (Olmsted, Lower Mon, Kentucky and Chickamauga). The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)-established target of \$1.34 billion for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund was also hit in FY18. ♦



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Tax Reform Votes Scheduled

The Senate and House have passed their tax reform bills. Like its House-passed counterpart bill, the Senate bill lowers the corporate tax rate from 35% to 20%. No transportation-related programs or Trust Funds (Inland Waterways Trust Fund, Highway Trust Fund) are altered in these reforms, nor are diesel fuel taxes paid on the inland waterways system. An amendment to dedicate taxes from repatriated income to fund infrastructure was defeated in the Senate. The House and Senate have resolved differences in each bill through the conference committee process. The House is set to vote December 19, with the Senate to follow. ♦

Industry Goes Into ORBIT



TOP: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District hosted a Ohio River Basin Inspection Tour, October 17-19. (Photo by Courtesy Photo). **BOTTOM:** The Ohio River Basin Inspection Tour (ORBIT) helped to promote collaboration between the Corps of Engineers, government agencies, and industry stakeholders to better understand the complexity and varied interests in shared water resources. The focus for this ORBIT included navigation, environmental stewardship and the economy. Shown here, an industry stakeholder panel of (left to right) Mike Somales (Murray American Transportation); Mary Ann Bucci (Port of Pittsburgh Commission); Peter Stephaich and Mike Monahan (Campbell Transportation Co.) and Marty Hettel (ACBL) addressed participants on the inspection tour.

McKee to Receive Waterways Counsel Award

Jeffrey McKee, Chief of the Navigation Branch of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will receive WCI's Waterways Counsel Award on February 14, 2018, at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, DC, as part of the association's 2018 Washington meetings. Mr. McKee is being recognized for his commitment to the improvement of the inland waterways industry over his distinguished career of more than 40 years with the Corps.



Jeffrey McKee, Chief of the Corps' Navigation Branch, will receive WCI's Waterways Counsel Award for his leadership, diligence and commitment to the improvement of the inland waterways industry over his 40-year career.

- Photo courtesy of the Inland Waterways Users Board

In his role as Navigation Branch Chief, Mr. McKee is responsible for managing the Corps' Inland and Coastal Navigation programs with an annual budget of approximately \$1.9 billion for construction, operations and maintenance, and studies. The navigation program accounts for nearly 40% of the Corps' Civil Works program funding. His efforts have focused on maintaining a reliable and resilient marine transportation system in the face of aging infrastructure and constrained resources.

Mr. McKee joined the Navigation Branch at Corps Headquarters in Washington, DC, in 2007 as the Senior Coastal Navigation Program Manager and Assistant Navigation Business Line Manager. Prior to joining Headquarters, he was Chief, Deep Draft Navigation Section and Dredging Program Manager in the Corps' Baltimore District. There, Mr. McKee was responsible for engineering and design, construction and operations and maintenance of the Baltimore Harbor and Channels projects, and construction management of the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project.

Mr. McKee will retire on February 3, 2018. ♦

WRDA 2018 Kicks Off

On October 27, in Miami, FL, Dan Mecklenborg, Senior Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and Secretary, Ingram Barge, testified on behalf of WCI and AWO before a House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Roundtable that included nine members of Congress including T&I Committee Chairman Bill Shuster; Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Energy & Water Development Subcommittee, Reps. Garret Graves and Grace Napolitano, and eight other stakeholder panelists. The panel addressed, "America's Water Resources Infrastructure: Concepts for the Next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)," and was a launch event for a potential WRDA 2018 bill.

In his statement, Mr. Mecklenborg said, "There is a portfolio of 25 high priority inland projects

either in construction or waiting to begin construction. At the current rate, many of these projects will not even begin construction in the next 20 years. In WRDA 2016, Congress

changed the cost-share model for funding construction of deep draft ports with depths of 45 to 50 feet from 50% non-federal sponsor and 50% federal government, to 25% non-federal sponsor and 75% federal government. By doing the same thing with the Inland Waterways Trust Fund the Committee would allow the

inland navigation capital construction program to remain at or above the \$400 million level that has been achieved since the cost-share change at Olmsted. In crafting WRDA 2018, we would hope this Committee would consider making this cost-sharing change for the Inland Waterways Trust Fund." ♦



Dan Mecklenborg





WCI Member Spotlight: Bechtel

New WCI member Bechtel is a global engineering, construction, and project management company that works closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others in the U.S. government as a major defense contractor and world-class builder. Since 1898, Bechtel has completed more than 25,000 diverse projects across 160 countries on all seven continents. They operate through four global businesses: Infrastructure; Nuclear, Security & Environmental; Oil, Gas & Chemicals; and Mining & Metals. Its work has meant that Bechtel has managed efforts such as chemical weapons demilitarization projects, missile-defense, infrastructure that includes locks and dams, base operations, procurement and project management, and restoration and recovery.

Bechtel's work is diverse, and more than just impressive. Within its infrastructure portfolio, the company has delivered 300 subway and rail projects, more than 17,000 miles of highways and roads, over 6,200 miles of railroad, and 390 individual power plants. A leader in mining and metals, Bechtel has produced more than 200 million metric tons per year of installed iron ore, 42 major copper projects, 30 aluminum smelter projects, and eight alumina refinery projects.

Bechtel's work on large dam projects began with perhaps the most famous U.S. dam of all, the Hoover Dam. The company has since gone on to complete ports and maritime projects across the world including the Khalifa Port and Industrial Zone in Abu Dhabi, the Port of Los Angeles, and Jubail Industrial City and Port in Saudi Arabia. Other work includes purpose-built ports for refinery and liquid natural gas projects in the U.S. and abroad.

Eighty percent of nuclear plants in the U.S. have been designed, delivered, or serviced by

Within its infrastructure portfolio, the company has delivered 300 subway and rail projects, more than 17,000 miles of highways and roads, over 6,200 miles of railroad, and 390 individual power plants.

Bechtel, with 150 in the world. The company has procured more than \$1.3 billion in goods and services from U.S. small businesses in 2015, and is building the world's largest and most complex radioactive waste treatment plant.

In its Oil, Gas & Chemicals Division, Bechtel has worked on more than 275 refinery expansions and modernizations, installed over 6,200 miles of pipeline systems, and worked on 380 major chemical and petrochemical projects. Bechtel employees number 50,000 colleagues world-wide, and span over 100 nationalities.

"Together, with our customers, we deliver landmark projects that foster long-term progress and economic growth," said Richard Tighe, Bechtel principal vice president and manager of Strategic Planning and Marketing & Business Development.

"It was important to us to join the ranks of Waterways Council, Inc. to better understand the next steps in an infrastructure initiative, but also to explore ways in which Bechtel might help the Corps in its construction of state of the art waterways projects," he continued. "We use many of these waterways to ship plant modules and bulk construction materials to our customers' construction sites. We know firsthand how important the waterways are to the movement of goods and materials, and we can approach the program from the viewpoint of a user as well as a builder and project manager of many complex megaprojects." ♦



WCI Donates to Houston Food Bank for Hurricane Harvey Relief

At its November meetings, in lieu of registration and speaker gifts, WCI donated \$1,000 to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts via the Houston Food Bank. If you wish to further contribute, visit <http://www.houstonfoodbank.org/Harvey>. ♦



Kurt Nagle

AAPA Strongly Advocates Federal Support for Landside, Waterside Infrastructure

By Kurt Nagle, President & CEO, American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA)

Federal support for land and waterside infrastructure improvements, together with security and environmental protection, are key priorities for America's ports in 2018. The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is advocating on behalf of U.S. ports in several key legislative areas – annual appropriations, tax reform, the broad infrastructure package, and the Water Resources Development Act.

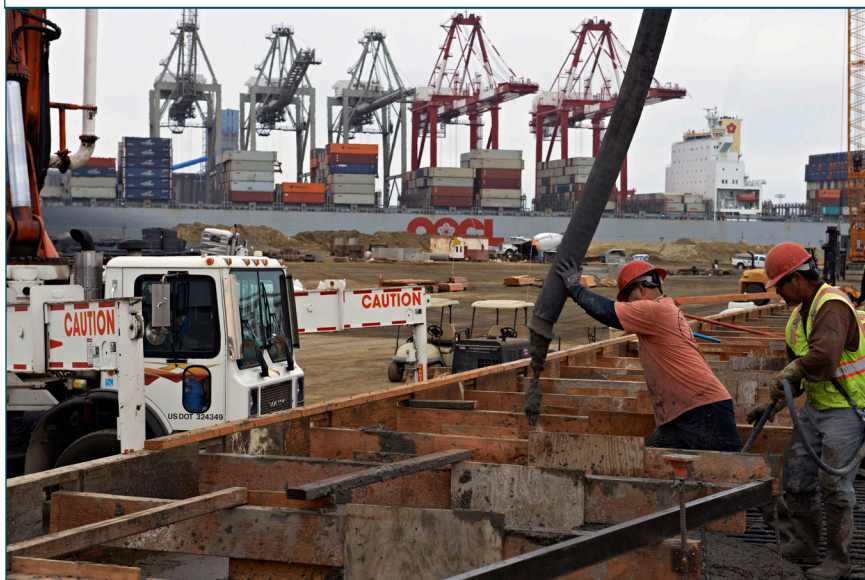
FY 2018 Appropriations. AAPA member ports are pleased Congress continues to provide strong funding for the Corps' Navigation program, including making progress toward full use of annual Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenues. AAPA is also advocating for Congressional appropriations in other federal programs for freight transportation, port security (including Port Security Grant Program funds), diesel emissions reduction grants, additional Customs resources at seaports, FAST Act investments, MARAD's StrongPorts Program and NOAA's navigation program.

Tax Reform. AAPA is urging Congress to maintain existing tax exemptions (including exempting the Alternative Minimum Tax) on Private Activity Bonds, continue to allow advance refunding of existing bonds to help finance building infrastructure and maintain the tax credit for wind energy projects.

Infrastructure Package. As Congress and the Trump Administration consider a broad infrastructure investment package, U.S. seaports have identified \$66 billion in necessary port-related infrastructure investments over the next decade to keep freight moving efficiently. On the waterside, this works out to about \$33.8 billion. On the landside, the amount is estimated to be \$32.03 billion.

- On the waterside, there's a need for \$27.6 billion to maintain deep-draft channels and harbors, and \$6.2 billion to modernize them. Of the \$27.6 billion amount, \$18.6 billion would come from full use of annual Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenues, which includes providing more equity to donor ports, plus \$9 billion from the current HMT surplus to address the chronic dredging maintenance backlog at U.S. deep-draft ports. Of the \$6.2 billion modernization amount has identified, \$3.1 billion is needed for the federal share of 15 current congressionally-authorized construction channel improvements and another \$3.1 billion for the federal share of constructing projects undergoing feasibility studies.
- For the landside portion of the infrastructure investment need, \$28.9 billion is necessary through 2025 to build vital road and rail connectors to ports, plus \$3.13 billion to improve port infrastructure, allowing more funding for multi-modal freight projects. The \$28.9 billion landside building total is based on AAPA's 2015

(Continued on page 6)



Early construction of the Port of Long Beach's now-finished Middle Harbor Terminal. Investments are needed at and near ports to keep freight moving efficiently over the next decade. Photo courtesy of Port of Long Beach.

AAPA Strongly Advocates Federal Support for Landside, Waterside Infrastructure

(Continued from page 5)

The State of Freight report, in which U.S. port authorities were asked to identify infrastructure investments needed at and near their ports to keep freight moving efficiently over the next decade. To reach this goal, robust funding will be needed to support federal initiatives such as the U.S. Department of Transportation's FAST Act state formula funds and INFRA grants. For the \$3.13 billion identified for port infrastructure improvements, AAPA advocates providing \$1.25 billion annually to the U.S. Department of Transportation for a discretionary infrastructure grants program, with 25 percent dedicated to port infrastructure.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). AAPA is finalizing its priorities for WRDA

legislation in 2018. Priorities are anticipated to include a permanent solution for full use of HMT revenues while addressing tax fairness; further streamlining of the Corps' Feasibility Study process; and clarifications such as Section 408 reviews and utility relocations.

America's seaport cargo activity accounts for over a quarter of the national economy, supports more than 23 million U.S. jobs and generates over \$320 billion annually in tax revenues. Local ports and their private sector partners plan to invest nearly \$155 billion into infrastructure over the next five years. Leveraging federal investments in port-related programs will yield huge dividends in the form of economic growth, maintaining and creating jobs, enhancing America's international competitiveness and sustaining a healthy environment. ♦



WCI Leaders Attend White House Meeting

WCI Chairman Tim Parker of Parker Towing Co. (left) and WCI Executive Committee Member Scott Leininger of CGB, Inc. (right) stand in front of the White House just after a "Rural Infrastructure Conversation" meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue on November 2. Also in attendance were White House infrastructure policy advisor D.J. Gribbin and Rick Dearborn, Deputy Chief of Staff to President Trump.

At the meeting, Secretary Perdue emphasized the vitality of the inland waterways transportation system, the need to re-invest, and the importance the President places on the waterways by his visit to the Ohio River on June 7. ♦



James Nominated to Civil Works Post

The nomination of R.D. James to become Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) was reported favorably by both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee. His final confirmation awaits a vote by the full Senate, expected before Congress recesses for the holiday. ♦



National Waterways Foundation and MARAD Release Lock Outage Study



On November 1, the National Waterways Foundation (NWF), in cooperation with the Maritime Administration (MARAD), released a study -- “The Impacts of Unscheduled Lock Outages”-- examining the economic impacts of unscheduled lock outages that highlights economic benefits associated with reliable inland waterways navigation.

The study was conducted by the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Tennessee, and the Vanderbilt Engineering Center for Transportation and Operational Resiliency at Vanderbilt University.

It studied four geographically different locks on the inland waterways system: Markland Locks and Dam (Ohio River near Cincinnati), which opened in 1959; Calcasieu Lock (Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Louisiana), which opened in 1950; LaGrange Lock and Dam (southern-most of the navigation structures on the Illinois River), which opened in 1939; and Lock and Dam 25 (Mississippi River, north of St. Louis), which opened in 1939. These four locks support traffic on every segment of the Mississippi River system.

Among the key findings, the study reported:

- If an unscheduled closure of the Markland Locks and Dam were to occur, the Shipper Supply Chain Cost Burden expected is estimated to exceed \$1.3 billion annually. An unscheduled outage that carriers and shippers would have no opportunity to prepare for at Markland would require the availability and use of 40,000 additional rail carloads and 60,000 additional truckloads to transport the current cargo transiting the lock.
- The Shipper Supply Chain Cost Burden of an unscheduled closure of the Calcasieu Lock is estimated to exceed \$1.1 billion

annually. An unscheduled lock outage at Calcasieu would require the availability and use of 10,000 additional rail cars and several hundred locomotives to transport the current cargo transiting the lock.

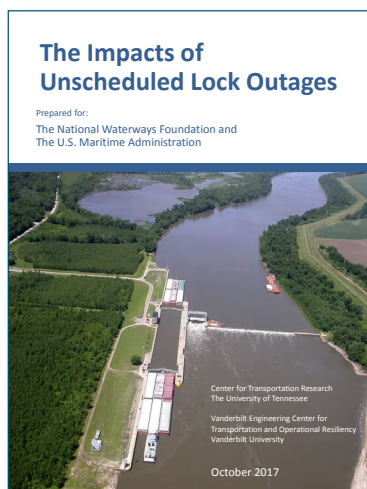
- The Shipper Supply Chain Cost Burden for a closure at LaGrange and/or Lock and Dam 25 is estimated to exceed \$1.5 billion at either lock annually. Unscheduled outages at LaGrange and/or Lock and Dam 25 would severely stress the nation’s railroad system to transport the current cargo transiting the locks. Trucking to alternative waterway locations would mean an additional 500,000 loaded truck trips per year and an additional 150 million truck-miles in affected states.

• These navigation projects span a broad range of both geographies and economic purposes, and in some cases provide freight mobility that may not be easily replaced by other

transport modes.

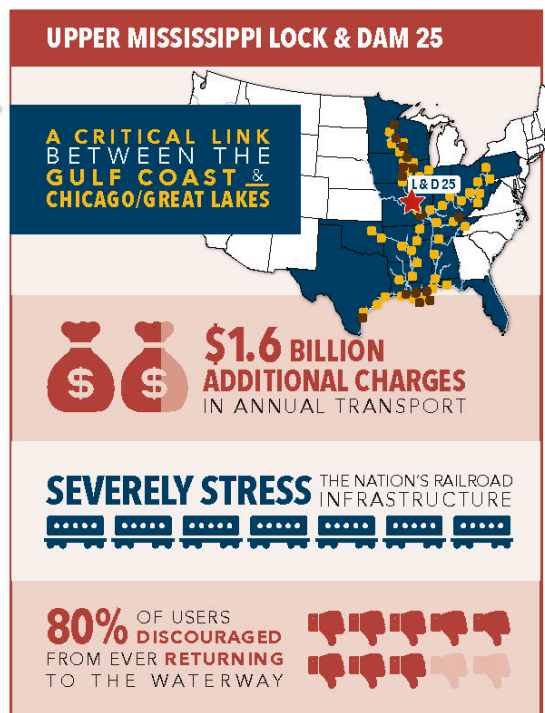
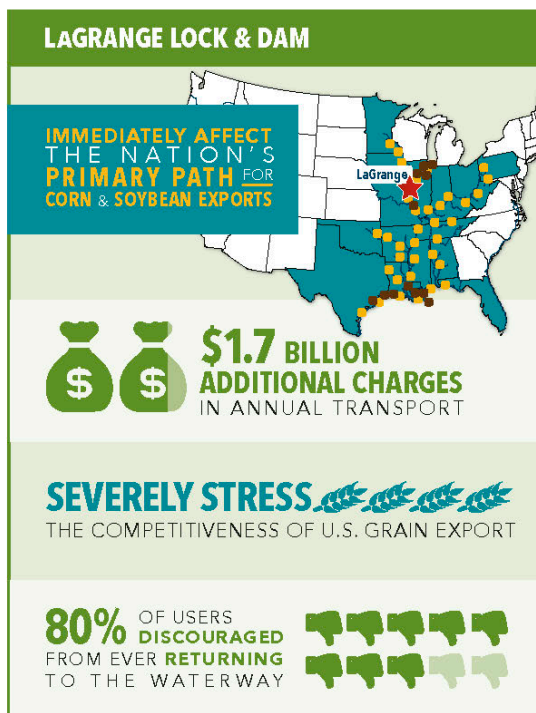
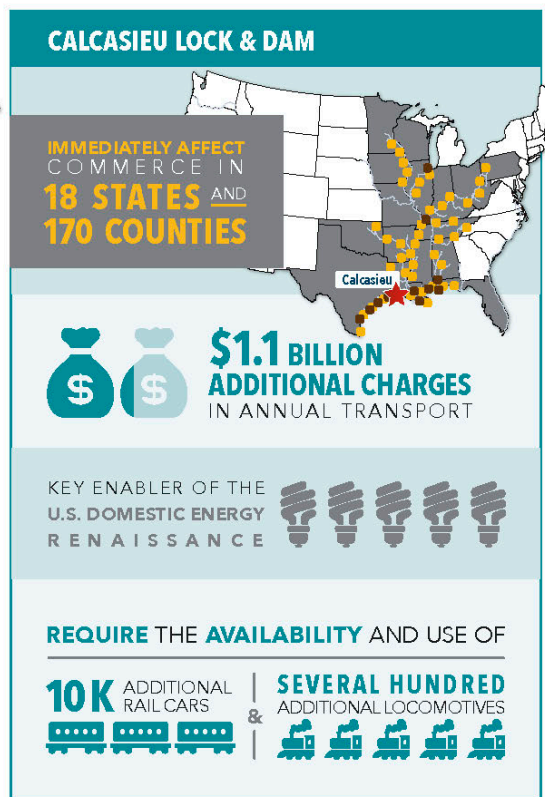
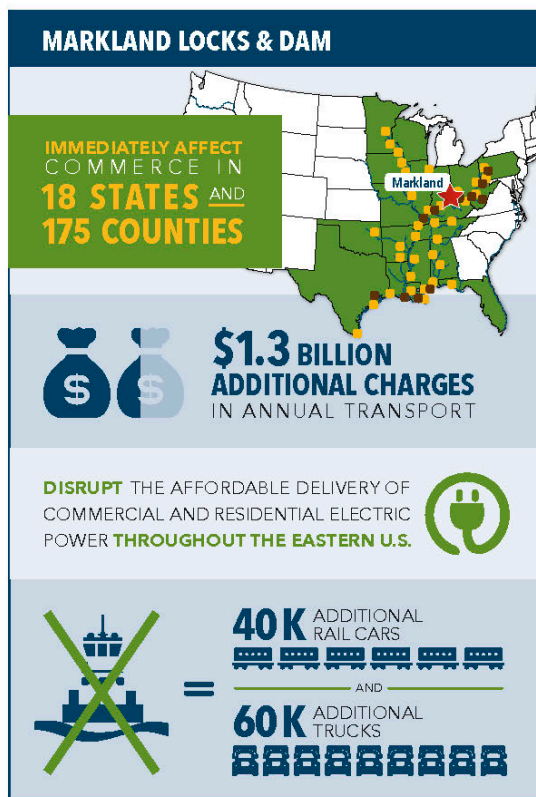
- Lock outage duration for this study is based on a one-year closure that triggers long-term changes by shippers and carriers.
- While every state that originates or terminates traffic supported by the four locks benefits from the availability of inland navigation, the results reflect the waterway system’s extraordinary commercial value to 18 states, especially Louisiana, Texas, and Illinois.

The National Waterways Foundation seeks to develop intellectual and factual arguments for an efficient, well-funded and secure inland waterways system. For more information on the National Waterways Foundation and to see the lock outage study, visit www.nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org ♦



Among the consequences the Nation could face with unscheduled closures of our locks and dams is billions of dollars in additional annual transportation charges that would immediately affect the nation's primary path for corn and soybean exports, and overall world competitiveness of U.S. grain exports.

Consequences the Nation will Face with Unscheduled Closures of our Locks and Dams



- Graphics courtesy of Howell Design.



SCI's 18th Annual River Bell Awards Honors River Leaders

Photo 1: (Left to Right): 2017 River Bell Awards Event Chairman Mark Knoy stands with Lifetime Achievement Award winner Scott McGeorge, who was introduced by Tony Greer, and Rev. David Rider. **Photo 2:** James Farley accepts the 2017 River Bell Award, speaking of the American mariner – that “hardworking, selfless, maddening, fantastic crew” who had given him “an education in life, courage, and relentless determination.”

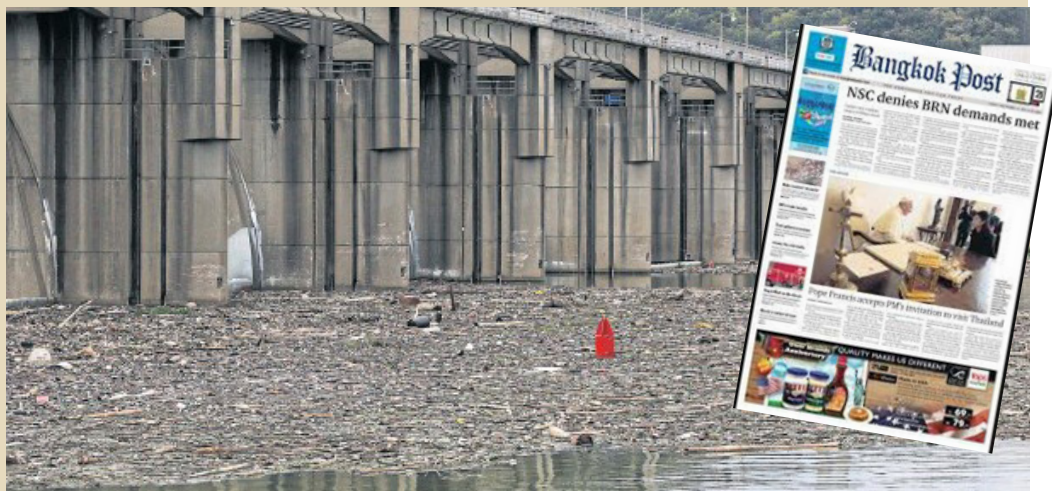
Photo 3: (Left to Right): SCI Executive Director Rev. David Rider stands with 2017 Distinguished Service Award recipient Cherrie Felder and Rick Calhoun, who introduced her.

- Photos courtesy of Seamen's Church Institute



Wooden Dams and River Jams: U.S. Strains to Ship Record Grains

A December 5 *Reuters* Wire Service article about outages at Lock 52, “Wooden Dams and River Jams: U.S. Strains to Ship Record Grains,” appeared on December 6 in the *Bangkok (Thailand) Post*. A caption in the article read, “Garbage and debris pile up behind the Markland Lock and Dam on the Ohio River in Florence, Indiana in the U.S. on September 14, 2017.”





WCI Directors, Executive Committee, Officers and Audit Committee Members Elected

At WCI's 2017 Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting, held November 8 in Mobile, AL, the WCI Nominating Committee recommended and had approved the following three-year terms ending November 2020 and directors to fill vacancies:

Ohio Valley Region

Peter Stephaich, Campbell Transportation Company, Pittsburgh, PA

Mississippi Region

Lee Nelson, Upper River Services, St. Paul, MN

Southern Region

Steve Golding, Golding Barge, Vicksburg, MS

East/West Coast Region

Tim Parker, Parker Towing Company, Tuscaloosa, AL

Shippers Category

Todd Sandifer, Marathon Petroleum Company, Ashland, KY

Carriers Category

Jeff Webb, Cargo Carriers, Wayzata, MN

Waterways Services Category

Brian Mueller, The Heartland Companies, Columbia, IL

Associations/Government Category

Brandy Christian, Port of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA

At-Large Category

Dave Frederick, First Energy, Akron, OH

Jeff Keifer, American Electric Power, Columbus, OH

Board Members by Virtue of Their Title

Michael Toohey, President and CEO, Waterways Council, Inc., Washington, DC, Term expires: November 2018

Dan Mecklenborg, General Counsel, Ingram Barge Company, Nashville, TN, Term expires: November 2018

The WCI Nominating Committee's recommendations for members of the 2018 WCI Executive Committee, Officers and Audit Committee were also approved as follows:

Executive Committee

Tim Parker, Chairman; **Merritt Lane**, Immediate Past Chairman; **Michael Toohey**, President and CEO; **Peter Stephaich**, First Vice Chairman; **Steve Golding**, Vice Chairman; **Rob Innis**, Vice Chairman; **Caryl Pfeiffer**, Vice Chairman; **Rodney Weinzierl**, Vice Chairman; **Dan Mecklenborg**, General Counsel; **Marty Hettel**, Secretary; **Cherrie Felder**, Treasurer; **Scott Leininger**, At Large; **Lee Nelson**, At Large; **Matt Ricketts**, At Large; **Dale Roth**, At Large; **Matt Woodruff**, At Large; **Rick Calhoun**, Honorary Past Chairman; **Mark Knoy**, Honorary Past Chairman; and **Berdon Lawrence**, Honorary Past Chairman

Officers

Tim Parker, Chairman; **Merritt Lane**, Immediate Past Chairman; **Michael Toohey**, President and CEO; **Peter Stephaich**, First Vice Chairman; **Rob Innis**, Vice Chairman; **Steve Golding**, Vice Chairman; **Caryl Pfeiffer**, Vice Chairman; **Rodney Weinzierl**, Vice Chairman; **Matt Woodruff**, Vice Chairman; **Dan Mecklenborg**, General Counsel; **Marty Hettel**, Secretary; **Cherrie Felder**, Treasurer; **Debra Calhoun**, Senior Vice President; and **Paul Rohde**, Vice President

Audit Committee

Lee Nelson, **Caryl Pfeiffer**, **Matt Ricketts**, **Peter Stephaich** and **John Wepfer** ♦



Jeff Webb



Brian Mueller

Reprinted by Popular Demand: Cherrie Felder River Bell Speech

By popular request, Capitol Currents is pleased to provide the acceptance speech made by Cherrie Felder after she received the SCI Distinguished Service Award on December 7, 2017 in Paducah, KY.



I had the pleasure of getting to know Rick [Calhoun] when he served as Chairman of WCI. While I respect his business acumen and dedication to the waterways industry, I take full credit for setting him, finally, on the right path by marrying Deb. As you know, Rick is retired now from Cargill and while away his days golfing and lunching with the neighborhood ladies....and every afternoon he hosts the most delightful cocktails – complete with hors d’oeuvres of his own making in his front yard. All the neighbors stop on their way home from work. If you’re in the Silver Springs area, I encourage you to stop by. More seriously, Rick may be retired, but he still spends much of his time visiting with editorial boards around the country and legislators to preach the value of investment in our inland waterways. Thank you for that, Rick!

I am delighted that my mother, Nancy, and brother, Rowdy, could be here, and thank Merritt Lane and Canal Barge for giving them a ride – early on, my Mother learned to be an advocate for our industry...for many years she conducted tours all over the country and when she was going to be anywhere near a waterway, she would call to get up to speed on the latest issues to share with her tour group. There are many ordinary citizens that know more about the inland waterways than they ever imagined they would. Thank you, Mother!

SERENDIPITY: The Oxford Dictionary defines it as “the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way”

Many people from an early age plan their lives – what school they want to attend, what kind of job they want, where they want to work, and when they want to retire – I’m not one of them. I left myself open to whatever adventure presented itself and hoped that I could support myself doing it. To my Daddy’s great amazement – and relief – I actually got a job at the New Orleans Museum of Art after college using my art degree – it was an adventure, but...

Then another adventure came along and I found myself directing a professional rodeo – which turned out to be the most fortuitous stroke of SERENDIPITY – I met Dennis Steger and Jim Farley.

I guess Dennis recognized my adventurous soul because he insisted I go to work in the towboat and barge industry (which was totally alien to me) – and he convinced Bill Johnson, who was leaving Ingram Barge to start the Marine Division of Torco Oil Company, to hire me. I remember distinctly all of these many years later, the “AHA” moment when I realized he was right. I was working alone in the office before my bosses Bill Johnson and Val Slichko moved back to New Orleans from Nashville and was tasked with crew change, making groceries, handling payroll and booking barges. Bill sent me a copy of the Inland River Record and told me to call people for help. I did and they did. One morning about 2 a.m., I got a telephone call from Capt. Raymond Pixley, nicknamed GATOR, Captain of the Torco Houston. He asked me – if I wasn’t busy – to come on out to Bertucci, where he was building tow below the Huey P. Long Bridge. So I did. He was trying to build tow with the mess I had given him. To me, at that time, a barge was a barge. Instead of calling my boss to ask him why he had an idiot giving tow orders, he spent the next several hours explaining the differences between loads and empties, tank barges, hopper barges, deck barges, LASH barges (all of which I had booked) and high/low couplings, and tow efficiencies. I was fascinated and remember thinking “how cool is this!” Then I got really lucky and was given the opportunity to ride boats and learn how it’s done. I spent days in the wheelhouse learning about currents and sets and a million other fascinating things, as well as in the engine room and on the deck. I knew I had finally earned the respect of our Port Captain, Buddy Grimm, who was a gruff character, when he took me along to the annual gathering of Captains and Pilots from a number of the towing companies. Every year, they would gather right down the road from here in Wycliffe, out in the country at an old shack. There would be barbeque, whiskey and beer, and a couple of the guys would bring guitars... there would be singing, and LOTS of storytelling. Every one of them had earned bragging rights and they one-upped each other with towboat tales.

(continued on page 12)

Reprinted by Popular Demand: Cherrie Felder River Bell Speech

(Continued from page 11)

And every one of them welcomed me and made me feel like I belonged. And they were all gentlemen. When Buddy died, it was standing room only at this funeral. His son, Mike, was a towboat Pilot and after his death, his wife, Sue, went to work as a towboat Cook.

I have the utmost respect for the men and women who earn their livings on towboats. Without them, the rest of us would be doing something very different. I think there is nothing more beautiful than a tow moving along a waterway. I live two blocks from the Mississippi River in New Orleans, and as long as I can hear those diesel engines humming, I know everything is all right.

From the beginning, I was influenced and mentored by men who were eager to share their passion for this industry: Bill Johnson, Val Slich, Merrick Jones, Howard Brent...they were never too busy to share their knowledge, and the endless stories and anecdotes that never got old.

And all along the way, my good friend Steve Valerius encouraged me to be involved, to participate in the organizations working to make a difference in the industry. Sitting on the sidelines was just not an option, as far as he was concerned. I appreciate Connie Valerius detouring from her family Christmas gathering to represent Steve here today.

For the past 18 years, I have had the great good fortune of working at Channel and Lynchburg Shipyards. Quite simply, I would not be standing here today if not for Dennis Steger and the support of Channel Shipyard. Dennis' Father, Hugh Steger, was a VP at MG Transport for many years, and Dennis grew up around the industry, including working as a deckhand in the summer, and early on began his own career in the industry. His genuine love of the industry and its people was infectious 38 years ago when he persuaded me to begin a new adventure, and it is still evident by his support of my contributions to all the organizations striving to ensure a healthy, strong future for the inland river towing industry. I am truly delighted now to be working with the third generation of Stegers in the industry - Dennis' sons, Jess, Dustin and Kyle.

It is wonderful to see all of the young people stepping up to take their places to move the industry forward, and they are organizing to make the most of their relationships:

- Mary McCarthy, Canal Barge Company, is President of the Admiralty group which meets to network and share

their experiences and learn from each other. There is an age requirement, but I love that they invite some of us more "industry experienced", if you will, to address their group to share our stories as well.

- Kasey Eckstein with Marquette recently launched the Women in Maritime Operations organization, whose mission is to promote women in the maritime industry through sharing knowledge and continuing education. Thirty-eight years ago, I was usually the only women in the room. I am very happy to say that has changed, and recommend gentlemen that you step up your game!
- Tracy Zea, WCI Government Relations Director and Chris Blanchard, Cooper Consolidated just organized a Young Professionals group of WCI members. I really hate that I have "aged out" of that group, but have been known to crash all kinds of wonderful events.

I want to offer my congratulations to Jim, Scott and Tim. It is truly an honor to be recognized alongside them, and to join the company of previous recipients of the Distinguished Service Award. I am especially delighted to be honored today with

Jim, since he was there 38 years ago at the beginning of my serendipitous adventure – which has absolutely been both happy and beneficial, certainly to me.

I am truly the luckiest person I know. To be able to earn a living in this remarkable industry, to have the opportunity to encourage investment in our nation's waterways, to participate in regulatory oversight, and to enjoy lasting friendships is a gift I do not take for granted.

In October, I attended a Coast Guard Foundation dinner that recognized an older couple, Robert and Patti Brody, who volunteer as Coast Guard Auxiliarists at Station Rochester New York. They received an award for preventing a maritime collision of a 34-foot yacht that had lost power due to an electrical fire and for saving the lives of the seven people on board. In accepting their award, Mrs. Brody made an observation that made a huge impression on me: "Life should not be measured by how many breaths you take, but rather by those things that take your breath away."

This Distinguished Service Award quite takes my breath away! And I accept it with sincere appreciation and great joy! Thank you, Dennis. You promised me an adventure and you have absolutely delivered! Thank you Seamen's Church and the River Bell Committee for choosing ME! And thank each and every one of you for your efforts every day to keep our nation's commerce moving. ♦

"Life should not be measured by how many breaths you take, but rather by those things that take your breath away."

WCI'S FALL MEETING AND 14TH ANNUAL WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM: MARITIME MERRIMENT IN MOBILE



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Photo 1: (Left to right): John Wepfer (Wepfer Marine), Molly Isnardi (Upper River Services) and Kyle Makarios (United Brotherhood of Carpenters). **Photo 2:** WCI Chairman Tim Parker is happy to see Inland Marine Service's CEO Cathy Hammond. **Photo 3:** Mike Toohey, WCI President & CEO (left), greets Rodney Weinzierl (Executive Director, Illinois Corn Growers Association) at GulfQuest, National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico. **Photo 4:** WCI Board of Directors member Brandy Christian (President & CEO, Port of New Orleans) addresses Waterways Symposium attendees on a port panel. **Photo 5:** Informa Economics IEG's Ken Eriksen (left) catches up with Garry Niemeyer (National Corn Growers Association) (center) and Jim Adams (Jones Walker).

WCI'S FALL MEETINGS CONTINUED



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Photo 1: Edmund Redd (Vulcan Materials) (left) listens to Jim Scharner (David J. Joseph Company) on the "What's Moving on the Waterways?" Commodities Panel at the Waterways Symposium. **Photo 2:** WCI Treasurer Cherrie Felder stands proudly with the National Rivers Hall of Fame Achievement Award, presented by Kurt Strand, President & CEO, National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium. **Photo 3:** Scott McGeorge (Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel) (center) holds his National Rivers Hall of Fame Achievement Award, presented by Mr. Strand (right). Also pictured is Errin Howard, RiverWorks Discovery (left) and Teri Goodmann (City of Dubuque, IA (right), also with the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium. **Photo 4:** The Corps' V. Autumn Pittman, Chief, Data Management, and Justin Carlson, Statistician, addressed WCI's Board in November about collecting industry data. **Photo 5:** Spencer Murphy (left) (Canal Barge Company) discusses the WCI symposium at the opening reception with Peter Stephaich (center) (Campbell Transportation Co.) and Tracy Zea (WCI).

Living Lands & Waters: Cleaning Up for 20 Years!

In his 2017 End of Year Letter, Living Lands & Waters (LL&W) Founder & President Chad Pregracke said, “I’m excited about where we’ve been and where we’re going as an organization. I have tried to make use of every single minute

given to me because time is humankind’s most precious resource, something we can never get back. And it’s true time flies when you’re having fun, because, in many ways, it feels like we’re just getting started!” ♦

Living Lands & Waters (LL&W) volunteers and staff celebrate the success of 2017.

60 COMMUNITY CLEANUPS ★ 29 WORKSHOPS ★ 1938 VOLUNTEERS
110,000 TREES PLANTED ★ 441,667 LBS OF GARBAGE

17624 ROUTE 84 NORTH, EAST MOLINE, IL 61244

PHOTO BY MICHAEL P. PEREZ

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Waterways Council, Inc. wishes its members and supporters the very best of the holiday season and New Year. We look forward to serving you in 2018 and beyond!



The M/V Allen L. Martin lights up the waterways and spreads holiday cheer.

Industry Events Ahead

January 7-11: Transportation Research Board 97th Annual Meeting (Washington, DC) www.trb.org

January 28-31: Passenger Vessel Association Annual Convention (Savannah, GA) www.passengervessel.com

February 13-15: WCI Washington Meetings (Washington, DC) www.waterwayscouncil.org

March 5-7: 2018 Legislative Summit (Washington, DC) <https://waterways.org/future-meetings/>

March 18-20: National Grain & Feed Association 122nd Annual Convention (Scottsdale, AZ) <https://www.ngfa.org/upcoming-events/>

March 20-21: Inland Waterways Conference (New Orleans) www.maritimemeetings.com

April 17-19: American Waterways Operators Spring Convention and Board of Directors Meeting (Washington, DC) www.americanwaterways.com

April 23-26: Inland Rivers Ports & Terminals 2018 Annual Convention (Cincinnati) www.irpt.net

April 24-27: Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association 36th River and Marine Industry Seminar (New Orleans). <http://gnobfa.com> ♦



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Save the Date for WCI's 2018 Washington Meetings: Feb. 13-15

All events will be held at the Watergate Hotel, 2650 Virginia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Group Rates are available until January 20, 2018 for hotel rooms, at \$279/night, plus tax. Register for the meetings here (www.eiseverywhere.com/298557).

Reserve your room here (<http://bit.ly/2C8QIPa>), or call the hotel directly at 844/617-1972 and reference Waterways Council.

Fees are \$450 for seminar registration; \$195/seat or \$1,950/table for the Leadership Service Award Dinner. Sponsorships are available: Platinum: \$3,500; Gold: \$2,500; Silver: \$1,500. Contact Deb Calhoun at dcalhoun@waterwayscouncil.org.

For questions, contact Medina Moran, 202/765-2115, mmoran@waterwayscouncil.org. ♦