

Waterways

A publication of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association

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Summer brings changes...

Three River Leaders to Retire

Waterways notes several significant retirements this summer. CAPT Sharon Richey, Commander, Sector Upper Mississippi River will retire from the Coast Guard next month after heading the St. Louis based sector for two years. CAPT Richey made a final visit to the Twin Cities in May, and attended the monthly UMWA Executive Committee meeting (*below*).

New CO from Pittsburg

CAPT Richey will be relieved by CAPT Steve Hudson who comes to the sector from command of the Pittsburg District.

During her tenure, CAPT Richey has been responsible for overseeing much of the leg work for

the upcoming Republican National Convention in St. Paul in Sept. The St. Louis Sector covers more than 2,000 miles of river including parts of the Upper Mississippi, Illinois, Missouri Rivers and their tributaries.

Audubon losing McGuiness

Also announcing his retirement as Director of the National Audubon Society's Upper Mississippi River Campaign is Dan McGuiness. He just turned 60 and says he will continue working on river issues.

A native of Blooming Prairie, Minn., McGuiness started his river career in 1968 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. Over the years, McGuiness has built a reputation as a hardworking, credible advocate for the river who does his homework.

McGuiness was instrumental in compromise legislation that will be important to the future environment and infrastructure on the Upper River.

Lee Nelson, president of Upper River Services told the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* recently that, "I don't think there's any way either (industry) or the environment as a stand-alone would have gotten that (WRDA) bill passed."

Nelson also said "He's got credibility on all sides of the issue, and the river issues are not going to go away. We have one river and a great number of



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From the Executive Director

Railroads now promote themselves as the eco-friendly mode. And for good reason. Rail ton-mileage, according to a Dec., 2007 study, has increased to 413 ton/miles per gallon (one ton of freight carried one mile) from the paltry 202 miles once quoted in the well-known Eastman Study. While this 100+ percent increase might raise a few eyebrows, the pedigree of the author, Texas A&M, probably won't.

The Eastman Study, as a reminder, was the highly touted ton/mile study used during the Navigation Study started some two decades ago. Here's a comparison with the Texas A&M upgrade (Eastman/A&M). Trucks 59.2/155. Railroads 202/413. Barges 514/576. Truck mileage increased 260%! Rail mileage is up 205%! But barge barely held its own with a 12% increase.

Rail industry advertising

The *Wall Street Journal* (May 29) quoted the transportation policy coordinator of Friends of the Earth as saying that, "in general, train transportation is much more fuel efficient than trucking, and we should be doing more of it."

Continuing multiple advertising campaigns started more than a year ago, CSX now does national radio and TV ads that have grabbed national attention. Union Pacific's web site heralds the company's "cleaner and greener" fleet of locomotives, arguing that if 25% of truck freight was diverted to rail, there would be "nearly 800,000 fewer tons of air pollution by 2025." Norfolk Southern is running a series of environmental TV spots and has a "carbon footprint analyzer" feature on its Web site allowing customers to measure the environmental advantages of shipping by rail rather than truck.

Some soul searching needed

According to these numbers, the barge industry should do some serious soul-searching. The industry gets high marks on the intensity of its national lobbying efforts which successfully led to passage of WRDA 2007. However, this is a presidential election year with all House seats in play. Small wonder, then, that Congress made the WRDA bill a must-pass item, knowing that merely authorizing much needed infrastructure projects is an easy way to gain voter support and national attention for finally doing something, while knowing also that actual funding of

many of these same projects may never happen.

Railroads appear to be one step ahead of this game because, unlike the highway and barge industry, railroads are not dependent upon federal funding for infrastructure or maintenance. True, as the nation was developing, they received free land grants from the federal government that included hundreds of square miles on both sides of their new rights-of-way which the railroads sold to finance westward expansion. By the way, Congress has long ago absolved them of repayment.

Asking for federal \$

Notwithstanding private ownership, the rail industry, now spending billions for system improvements is, according to several press notices, increasingly seeking public funding to help pay for some expansion projects. In addition to seeking federal dollars for specific projects, the rail industry is also asking Congress to pass a proposed bill that would give railroads tax credits for money spent on track expansion. And, ever protective of their private ownership status, the rail industry is also trying to fend off calls for tough federal regulations that would enable shippers to easier challenge prices in areas where railroads have a monopoly. Given this scenario, it is easy to understand the rail publicity blitz: it gains public attention, and by osmosis, Congressional interest.

Contrast this to inland waterway PR efforts. In addition to wooing Washington, some in the industry have programs aimed at elementary and secondary school education on the premise that when kids discuss homework assignments at home, parents will be educated as well. Some g[Type a quote from the document or the summary of an interesting point. You can position the text box anywhere in the document. Use the Text Box Tools tab to change the formatting of the pull quote text box.]

government agencies have programs to expose high school and college teachers to the merits of good transportation policy that will hopefully find its way into the curriculum. And, most importantly, some regions have developed coalitions of industry, labor and environmental groups to collectively argue for funding of WRDA and NESP. Yet, despite these best efforts, there remains a disconnect with 'the street' as witnessed by a recent University conference discussing ways to increase transportation efficiencies and a national

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newspaper article touting rails as ecosystem-friendly without either of them mentioning water transportation. It's possible that waterway alternatives were not discussed because neither of these venues were conducted with the barge industry in mind. But that's just the point, conference planners and newspaper editors are savvy enough to know the world beyond their own front door, yet do not question why, when discussing surface modes, one of the major players has been left out.

Ad campaign needed

It might be time for barge industry leaders to commit to a major ad campaign -- not one that continues to preach to supporters, but one on a scale that will get the attention of the national press as well as local commuters and environmental groups.

We've often thought that a billboard placed adjacent to a traffic-clogged urban interstate system running parallel to the river would have a positive impact. "Tired of congestion? One barge hauls 70 trucks – the one in front of you and 69 more!" might be one message.

Or, to use Norfolk Southern's claim that shifting trucks to rail will result in a reduction of 800,000 tons of air pollution by 2025, we might remind a national audience that shifting trucks to barges will reduce air pollution by upwards to 1.1 million tons. (Rail emissions are 39% more than barges).

And what about state Departments of Transportation and State Governors' budgets? To our knowledge only a handful of Midwestern governors know that if freight now handled by waterways is forced onto truck or rail, there will be negative consequences to roadways, traffic gridlock, air-fouling emissions, the environment and the economy, not to mention already strained budgets. That's what last year Texas A&M Study is all about, but no one seems to be listening.

Certainly, since the MARAD and the National Waterways Foundation commissioned this study it might be appropriate for them both to broadcast it to the world.

Contact us at umwa@qwestoffice.net if you want a copy of the Texas A&M Study.

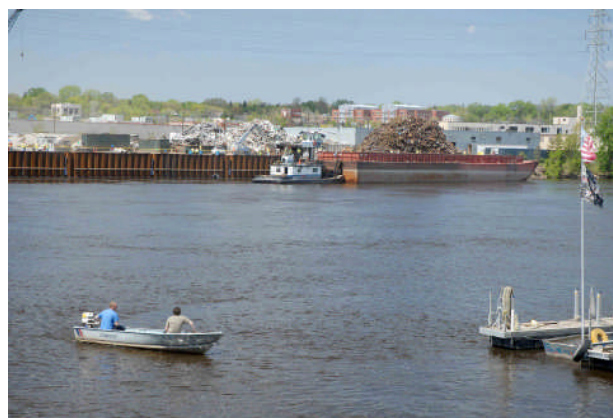
legitimate beneficiaries, and we need to figure out how we all coexist."

Goodbye Holly

And in an email to her many friends, members and co-workers, Holly Stoerker has announced that she will retire June 30, after 31 years with the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) and its predecessor commission.

Sadly Holly is retiring to devote more time to her husband Ron's fight with esophageal cancer.

UMRBA members have hired Barbara Naramore as Executive Director.



First barge at American Iron

The first barge of the season arrived at American Iron's new dock May 16, during a small celebration to christen a new dock. The new structure was completed after extensive soil remediation and upgraded construction. The new single wall dock is smaller than the old docks, with a reduced footprint into the river. Angled wings allow a smoother current flow around the structure, minimizing turbulence and silt build-up. Also, the paved work surface is sloped away from the river and all rainwater is diverted into a network of catch basins. There is no storm water run-off into the Mississippi.