

Waterways

A publication of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association
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River problems mean...

Road salt shortage is widespread

Somewhat lost amid all the other dire economic news recently is a widespread shortage that graphically demonstrates the continued need for river transportation. Stories in newspapers throughout the U.S. talk about a growing scarcity of road salt and escalating prices for it.

For example, St. Paul Street Maintenance Engineer Gary Erichson told the newspaper *USA Today* that last year the city paid about \$43 a ton, but got a bid of \$63 for this year's supply. And Ohio Governor Ted Strickland is calling for an investigation into why salt prices have more than doubled for some of his cities.

The Salt Institute says the steep price increases come down to supply and demand and a lack of available river transportation.

In a statement to the news media, the Institute says, "That 'pipeline' has been interrupted this year with four weeks of lock and dam closures on the Upper Mississippi and, in some cases, a late end to winter last season; this shortens our shipping season.

There is intensive competition for available barges on the Mississippi and, reportedly, a couple Lake Vessels have been removed from service since



(Above) Many years of experience are represented in this group of river rats (for the uninitiated, that's a compliment) gathered at the recent UMWA Annual Meeting in South St. Paul on Thursday, Sept. 18. Shown left toright: MNDot's Dick Lambert, Carl Genz, retired traffic manager for Koch Refinery, guest speaker Jack Lambert and retired attorney Dean Johnson.

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From the Executive Director

Presidential Timbre

Jack Lambert gave life to history at our 2008 Annual Meeting last month. As a past president of UMWA, Jack clarified a few misconceptions attributed to the Lambert legacy. St. Paul's "Lambert's Landing," said Jack, was named after his grandfather Col George Lambert, a prominent St. Paul attorney, a central figure in lobbying for the nine-foot channel, General Counsel of the forerunner of CHS, a founder of UMWA, Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard and founder of the St. Paul Port Authority.

As for himself, after military service during the Korean war Jack started Twin City Barge & Towing in 1952, taking an early retirement from the company after three decades of growth and several mergers. After a period of publishing works penned by others, Jack wrote and published many articles and papers on U.S. and global military history.

Jack stayed active in waterway issues with a consulting/publishing business focusing on the building and maintenance of an extensive database of barges used in commercial navigation on the U.S. navigable waterway system.

In recognition of our 76-year history, we offer this chronological listing of Presidents:

- C.C. Webber, 1932 – 1938, Deere and Webber Company.
- H.M. Hill, 1938 – 1948, Affiliation unknown.
- H.M. Baskerville, 1948 – 1953, Upper Mississippi Towing Corp.
- R.C. Woodworth, 1953 – 1954, Cargill, Inc.
- Tom W. VonKuster, 1954 – 1955, David C. Bell Investment Co.
- T.W. Talbert, 1955 – 1957, Republic Coal and Coke Co.
- Joe L. Shiely, Jr., 1957 – 1959, J.M. Schiely Co.
- E.C. Rippie, 1959 – 1961, Upper Mississippi Towing Corp.
- Kingsley Day, 1961 – 1963, Southside Lumber Co.
- J. W. "Jack" Lambert, 1963 – 1965, Twin City Barge.
- W.E. Frenzel, 1965 – 1967, Minneapolis Terminal Warehouse.
- Otto Shelton, 1967 – 1969, Peabody Coal Co.
- Gene M. Kirchoff, 1969 – 1971, Northern Waterways Terminals.

- Donald C. Reioux, 1971 – 1973, J.L. Shiely Co.
- Len Peterson, 1973 – 1975, Northern States Power Co.
- John Wilder, 1975 – 1976, Cargo Carriers Inc.
- Andy Nelson, 1976 – 1977, Farmers Union GTA.
- Norton Quarve, 1977 – 1981, Continental Grain Co.
- Gerry Brown, 1981 – 1983, Cargo Carriers, Inc.
- Richard Lambert, 1983 – 1985, Upper River Services, Inc.
- Stewart Sumpton, 1985 – 1986, St. Paul Navigation.
- John W. Gorman, 1986 – 1990, John W. Gorman Co.
- Russell J. Eichman, 1990 – 1991, Harvest States Cooperatives.
- Jim Hartman, 1991 – 1993 River Fleets, Inc.
- Robert Kermes, 1994 – 1995, Northern States Power.
- Lee J. Nelson, 1996 – 1997, Upper River Services
- Tom Groves, 1998 – 1999, CCI.
- Gregory J. Genz, 2000 – 2001, Kaposia Marine.
- Tim Purus, 2002 – 2003, HSC.
- Lee J. Nelson, 2004 – 2005, Upper River Services.
- Richard Kreider, 2006 – present, CCI.

A CR for now

In a separate matter, *Capitol Currents* reports that due to the near collapse of the U.S. financial system last month, Congress delayed until the last minute, passage of a continuing resolution to fund Federal programs. This makeshift funding measure continues funding the majority of federal programs at FY 2008 spending levels.

The CR included an additional \$2.77 billion to the Corps for disaster relief, \$121.1 million for 'emergency situations' on the Mississippi and other rivers, \$740 million to dredge channels and \$415.6 million to repair eligible projects nationwide. Since Congress failed to pass any of the 12 appropriations bills, the CR is needed to keep Federal departments and agencies operating.

The COE's civil works program benefited from continuing funding at FY 2008 levels since it received \$5.587 billion this year – \$287 million more than the Senate panel allotted.

The legislation specifies that funding for inland waterway major rehabilitation projects "shall not be derived" from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, now almost depleted.

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last winter and not replaced, putting constraints on vessels to ship salt. There is also the issue of truck availability (railcars are ALWAYS a problem). Not only are barges in heavy demand, but trucks, rail cars and Great Lakes ships are too.”

The Institute says salt mining companies have also faced rising energy costs, which puts additional upward pressure on prices.

No shortage of activity

In St. Paul the riverfront continues to be busy, even though the Republicans have left town. For example, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman recently led a tour that called attention to the newly renovated Raspberry Island and two other city parks. That tour also went up-river a bit to the Upper Landing and stopped to watch construction going on at the old Municipal Elevator and Sackhouse.

Then there was the annual inspection of the Lafayette Bridge which slowed traffic for a couple of weeks and meetings to talk about its replacement or renovation. At a public information meeting, officials from MnDOT, Ramsey County and the city of St. Paul outlined plans for a bridge with two through lanes and a secondary lane in each direction. UMWA members have been talking with MnDOT about bridge pier placement to minimize impediments to navigation.

And remodeling and improvements are finally underway at the former GTA river terminal headhouse. Although it has taken more than a decade, the concrete structure and one-story sackhouse are finally getting a facelift and, minus a restaurant, it is expected to open to the public next spring or summer.

Formerly owned by the regional cooperative that is now CHS Inc., the elevator and sackhouse played an important role in river commerce into the early 1980s. There's also a strong link between UMWA and the old terminal because Col. George C. Lambert, for whom Lambert Landing is named (for more see Executive Director's column), helped convince the city of St. Paul to expand the elevator to encourage river commerce. In addition to his many other leadership roles, Col. Lambert was secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota Farmers Union and believed that success for the elevator and the farmers it represented was dependent on river transportation.

Missouri Season ends early

The Corps of Engineers has announced that it is ending the 2008 navigation season on the Missouri River because there is no scheduled activity. Late last month, a group of Missouri River stakeholders, including navigation representatives came to St. Louis to start talking about how to improve the Missouri.

Called “The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee” the group will look at ways to protect three endangered species, while serving the needs of agriculture and navigation.

Meanwhile the just-announced Missouri River draft operating plan for 2009 calls for two pulses of higher water past Omaha to help the pallid sturgeon and minimum flows for spring barge traffic. Predictions in the plan call for steady to rising levels during the spring run-off season and the Corps proposes water releases in March and May from Gavins Point Dam to mimic the river's natural rise and fall. The water pulses may be scaled back if there is heavy run-off and potential flooding.

Free fill from COE

Another note from the Corps of Engineers: The St. Paul District is offering free dredge material to the public at eight locations along the Mississippi River. The Corps says the 800,000 cubic yards of material it dredges each year is clean, medium grade sand and can fill a variety of needs.

Material pickup sites will be in Wabasha, Minn., Alma, Wis., West Newton, Minn., Trempealeau, Wis., Brownsville, Minn., Lansing and Guttenberg, Iowa.

If you are interested in using any of the sand at these locations, please contact Lisa Lund with the Corps' channel maintenance office at 608-687-3112, Ext. 2.