

Waterways

A publication of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association

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October 2009

It's now official...

UMWA approves Merger

The Annual meeting of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) Sept. 17, 2009, was in one way the end of an era, but also the beginning of a new, stronger organization. As outlined in last month's newsletter, UMWA directors voted to approve a merger with the River Resource Alliance (RRA), an organization formed in the 1990s to focus on river infrastructure needs.

When the merger officially takes place on Dec. 15, 2009, UMWA Chairman Lee Nelson says it will mean a stronger organization representing river interests on policy and infrastructure issues.

"We're bringing together memberships of similar interests which will allow us greater efficiencies while at the same time emphasizing the primary focuses of the two previous organizations," Nelson says. "You'll see an increase in activity relative to infrastructure and issues that affect our industry."

RRA Board Chairman Al Christopherson also has expressed optimism about the combined strengths of the two organizations and the grass roots efforts they can generate. (For more on the merger, see the Executive Director's column in this newsletter.)

During its Membership and Executive Committee meetings that same evening, UMWA nominated and



Above: President Rich Kreider, Exec. Dir., Russ Eichman and Bd. Chmn. Lee Nelson at the annual meeting. More pictures on other pages of this newsletter.

elected a slate of officers and directors for 2010. Here is a rundown of those elected.

2010 Officers

Chairman of Board of Directors
President
Vice President

Lee J. Nelson
Richard Kreider
Tim Paurus

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From the Executive Director...

Familiar Issues – A New Time

In 2009, UMWA celebrated its 77th year with a merger agreement; not between hesitant and competitive groups, but of kindred organizations seeking to increase member effectiveness while coping with the realities of post-bubble uncertainties and decreasing resources.

Last month's Annual Meeting included a vote by Directors to approve a Plan of Merger with River Resource Alliance, followed by a membership vote to ratify that action. Merger documents were filed with the Minnesota Attorney General on October 1st as required by law and the merger itself becomes effective on December 15. The name of the organization will remain the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association.

Changes Were Needed

While the merger will become final before year's end, its genesis reaches back more than three years when dues-payers with cross membership questioned the need for multiple groups to represent their interests. Changes were clearly needed.

RRA, under a 1997 Minnesota charter, grew out of the MARC 2000 grass roots effort to encourage upper river congressional delegations to support 1200-foot locks on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. As a consequence, all three organizations: MARC 2000, UMWA and RRA participated in many of the same hearings, representing many of the same members echoing many of the same arguments to improve failing waterway infrastructures.

The first change came several years ago when MARC 2000 merged into WCI, while retaining its current St. Louis office. Shortly thereafter, UMWA and RRA started discussions which will be finalized with the December 15 merger date.

Merger Synergies

The unanimous vote by members of each organization reaffirms the expectation that this merger will bring benefits from a unified agenda and integrated efforts. The new Board will quickly adopt a modified mission statement and list of priorities, representing interests

and concerns of our collective members. While the twenty or so issues on that list span commercial, environmental, recreational and educational efforts, the new Board will be charged with adjusting it to meet ongoing and future challenges.

In his remarks to members and guests at the September 17 Annual Dinner, President Richard Kreider said: "These, no doubt, are difficult times and organizations are working to do more with less. With that said, I would like to challenge our members to really consider the importance and timing of their support as we appear to be facing an ever increasing number of regulatory and political challenges that impact the core of our businesses."

Support Needs Renewal

"I have grown increasingly concerned the past few years over the declining support and participation in our organization. Perhaps I am preaching to the choir a bit as you folks clearly have made the effort to join us tonight. As I look around the room, I see many members who routinely engage in our organization. I would like to extend a special welcome to our uniformed guests and thank you for your service and ongoing participation in our organization. We have enjoyed a strong relationship with all of our ExOfficio members and welcome your support."

"My primary concern is with the many members that are not in the room tonight or actively engaged in the organization. I believe we need to reach out to these members and challenge them to reenergize themselves as we appear to be at a critical point in the history of our organization and of our nation."

New Look At Critical Challenges

"I remain hopeful this merger will be just what the doctor ordered to reenergize members from both organizations and force us to take a new look at our ever increasing list of challenges."

"A combined membership representing agriculture, ports, labor, national organizations, commodity groups, shippers, carriers, packet boats and recreational marinas gives the new organization additional resources with which to garner strong support for navigation and ecosystem restoration projects."

Ahead for UMWA in 2010

One of the first orders of business for UMWA in 2010 will be setting out a prioritized set of tasks that reflect the focuses of the new organization on funding and policy issues as well as infrastructure. A look at recent waterway related headlines shows that members won't face a shortage of concerns.

There is for example the recent main chamber miter gate failure at the Markland Locks and Dam on the Ohio River. Traffic on the Ohio is being forced to use the 600 foot auxiliary chamber and forcing delays and higher shipping costs.

As noted by the Waterways Council, that gate failure, one day after it passed an inspection, underscores the need for Congress to appropriate funding for the Navigation Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway, which was authorized by the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which both UMWA and RRA strongly supported.

In its annual report to Congress in August, the Inland Waterway Users Board noted that the inland barge industry is small and its ability to pay for the lock and dam system is limited.

Early this year, the board noted, Inland Waterways Trust fund balance available for new obligations was \$44.6 million, while projects currently under construction or almost ready to start total about \$7 billion and would take about 40 years to complete at present funding levels.

Some other river notes from around the country.

Although it's unlikely to happen, there's renewed talk in the Pacific Northwest about removing four dams on the Snake River. Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) has introduced a bill that would breach the dams and end navigation on the Snake.

Currently the Port of Lewiston, Idaho, sends a long list

of agricultural commodities down river and the dams generate about 1,000 megawatts of electricity, which estimates say is enough to supply a city the size of Seattle.

The Port of St. Louis is looking for \$70 million in federal money to upgrade docking facilities along the Mississippi River in hopes of attracting more barge and container traffic. Supporters hope the improvements would coincide with the expansion of the Panama Canal and a major expansion in the Port of New Orleans.

The idea is that containers coming into New Orleans bound for the Midwest could be put on barges and floated upriver.

Federal money goes to IDOT

Senator Charles Grassley recently announced that the Federal Highway Administration has awarded six grants totaling \$1.9 million to the Iowa Department of Transportation.

One grant for \$760,000 will go to the Great River Road to build the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center. The Iowa Byways Signage Program will get \$580,000 to help with a new signage program on all nine state byways and two national scenic byways.



Above: Guests register for the UMWA Annual Meeting at Southview Country Club.

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Treasurer	Mark Caspers
Secretary	Vacant
Wisconsin VP	Kent Pehler
Missouri VP	H. Nelson Spencer III

2010 Board of Directors:

(*) Indicates member of Executive Committee

*Dean Johnson	Retired
*Mark Duncan	Aggregate Industries
*Kent Pehler	Brennan Marine
*Mark Caspers	CCI
*Mike Donze	CCI
*Richard Kreider	CCI
*Scott Dohmen	CF Industries
*Tim Paurus	UMW A Vice President
*John Carr	Dairyland Power
Cooperative	
*Jack Holm	Holcim (US) Inc
*Gregory J Genz	Kaposia Marine
*William C King	King's Cove Inc
*Rick Voigt	Voigt Consultants LLC
*Jerry Christensen	River Services
*Chuck Derscheid	St Paul Port Authority
H. Nelson Spencer III	The Waterways Journal
*David Johnson	Tow Inc
*Lee J. Nelson	Upper River Services
*Mike Wilson	Wilson Oil & Gas

Once the merger is completed in December, there will be some changes in the officer ranks and directors, as determined by the new board of directors.



Above: 2010 UMWA officers – L to R – Pres. Rich Kreider; Chairman Lee Nelson; Treasurer Mark Caspers; VP Tim Paurus.



Above: Scene from the UMWA Annual Meeting, Sept. 17