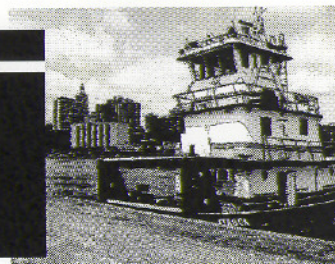


WATERWAYS

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In the basin and Washington, D.C.

UMR - IWW plan hearings open

UMWA members up and down the main stem have been attending the series of public hearings on the Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System that started June 7 in Davenport, Iowa.

Although it seems like "déjà vu all over again," this series of hearings has added significance because they are official hearings which comply with NEPA requirements.

Meets needs now

In the Association's comments, President Lee Nelson pointed out that we believe the Corps' April 29, 2004 Preferred Plan meets the immediate needs of the Basin.

The statement also says that, "Having spent \$70 million to understand the economic and environmental impact of our

ivers, we need to move forward with today's information."

We also point out that in the recently introduced U.S. Senate legislation, Congress found that the U.S. Department of Transportation projects that freight congestion on the nation's roads and rails will double in the next 25 years and that water transportation will need to play an increasing role in moving freight.

Declining capacity

It found also that the current capacity of the Upper Mississippi River System is declining by 10 percent annually because of unplanned closures of a 70-year old infrastructure, thereby reducing the potential for sustained growth.

And perhaps most important, UMWA points out that Congress found that econometric models,

while useful analytic tools to provide valuable information, are unable to account for every market trend, development and public policy impact and that the current 30-year schedule makes it imperative to start construction immediately to avoid lost export sales and diminished national competitiveness.

Corps tells boaters 'Be patient' with Excursion

The Corps of Engineers is advising recreational boaters to, "exercise patience during this time of increased boat traffic." The 'time' referred to is the upcoming Grand Excursion and the call for patience is one of the basics for boaters offered by the Corps. Others include this reminder: "Commercial passenger vessels, such as steamboats, have priority when locking through."

The Corps warns that radio traffic will be heavy and asks boaters to monitor channels 14 and 16, but to keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum.

The one thing missing from all the advisories and information is a gestimate of the number of recreational boats that might accompany the paddlewheelers into St. Paul.

If you encounter boaters who want more information, the safe boating reminders along with more information and a link to free, downloadable river charts is available on the Internet at www.grandexcursion.com

Ohio River to be (b)locked

It'll be a real-life example of what will happen if one of the pieces of aging infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi breaks. The Army Corps of Engineers says it plans to close an Ohio River lock at Louisville, Kentucky Aug. 3-16 to make much needed repairs.

Any time a bad time

Although the repairs come in the pre-harvest period, Dan Mecklenborg, senior vice president of Ingram Barge told the Associated Press, "It will be an extremely serious disruption for us."

That's because the lock funnels traffic down the Ohio from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Ill. Many of the barges follow the Mississippi River to New Orleans. The interruption also affects up bound traffic and has barge lines and shippers frantically adjusting schedules.

Needed now

The Corps says the \$700,000 work on the McAlpine lock is needed now to fix cracks in a steel gate. The lock is 43-years old and the cracks are the result of usual

Ohio cont'd on 2

Executive Director's Report...

It looks as though statements made by commercial navigation over the 12-year history of the Navigation Study may have found their way into the mind-set of some Senators.

In late May, Senators Bond and seven co-sponsors introduced a bill to enhance navigation and ecosystem restoration of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (S.2470).

AS WITH MOST (all?) bills so introduced, Congress finds that certain conditions exist. Collectively, these "findings" indicate how the bill addresses specific matters of public concern, which, in turn, helps to explain why the legislation is being introduced. By my count the 28 findings include 20 relating to economic issues and eight focusing on environmental concerns.

Taking literary license, of the economic issues, Congress recalled that in 1986, they had already declared the importance of regulating the river simultaneously as an economic necessity and an irreplaceable natural treasure, and did so again.

They found that grains shipped on the river to export markets offset a sizeable amount of the dollar value of imported hi-resolution TVs, game-boards and other consumer goodies; and that in total, the movement of 100 million tons of river freight provides employment for 400,000 people, or the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Omaha, Nebraska.

NOT ONLY THAT, but river commerce annually generates income equal to the gross domestic product of Barbados (\$4 billion), with total economic activity equal to twice the gross domestic product of the Republic of Malta (\$14 billion).

Perhaps one of the most significant findings is #17 wherein Congress stated that the current 600-foot lock configuration was developed for steamboats at a time when 4 million tons moved on the UMR system and our

annual crop of corn was 2 billion bushels, compared to today when the river moves upwards to 120 million tons annually and the U.S. corn crop is 10 billion bushels.

IN MY MIND, to acknowledge the economic times in which today's lock system was designed is to understand the need for their improvement.

Specifically, the bill includes: \$730 million for 7 new 1200-foot locks (20, 21, 22, 24, 25, LaGrange and Peoria), with an equal amount from shippers through the Inland Waterway Trust Fund, for a total of \$1.46 billion.

\$1.46 billion for ecosystem restoration, land easement authority and land acquisition.

The bill also provides for \$24 million for moorings at 12, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24 and LaGrange; for switchboats at 20 through 25; and for development of an appointment scheduling system. Shippers pay an equal amount through the Inland Waterway Trust Fund.

LASTLY, the bill authorizes \$100 million for mitigation for the new locks and the above small-scale measures; shippers also pay an equal amount through the Inland Waterway Trust Fund.

MARC 2000 and others hail this as a major step, a consensus to support economic growth and environmental stability and that after 12 years, we are moving forward to ensure economic growth and environmental sustainability in our region.

Amen.

[S.2470 is at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c108:./temp/~c10852L7CR>]

Ohio cont'd from 1

wear and tear from the more than 140,000 tons of commodities which pass through the lock each day. In addition to agricultural commodities up and down, the Ohio carries coal, steel and petroleum.

There are 20 locks along the 981-mile-long Ohio River. The auxiliary lock adjoining McAlpine lock was demolished to make way for a new lock that will be ready by 2008, so there will be no traffic moving during the shutdown.

Bipartisan bill lands in U.S. Senate inbox

A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators has introduced legislation to begin the much needed rebuilding process on the Upper Mississippi River.

The bill, S.2470, was co-authored by Senators Kit Bond (R-Mo.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Jim Talent (R-Mo.), Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Peter Fitzgerald (R-Ill.) and Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), demonstrating its broad geographic and political support.

As drafted, the bill calls for new 1,200-foot locks and extensive environmental improvements in the Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRB). It specifically authorizes replacement of seven locks which are now almost 70 years old and calls for billions of dollars for the river system's ecosystem.

The legislation sets up a two-part process in which pre-engineering design preparation for 1200-foot lock chambers will be started for Locks 20-25 on the Mississippi River and the Locks at Peoria and LaGrange on the Illinois Waterway.

Five other locations would receive extensions to existing chambers, and non-structural efforts would occur at other locations.

Half of the infrastructure improvements will be paid by shippers through the Inland Waterway Trust Fund. Restoration of the ecosystem will be federally funded at about \$5.3 billion, while total construction is estimated to cost \$2.4 billion. For more on this bill, see the Executive Directors Report on this page.

(below) some of the boats that will be in the Grand Excursion next month

