

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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November 2015

www.wapgh.org

November Highlights

A total of (22) twenty-seven members and guests were registered for the November 11, 2015 luncheon meeting at Chartiers Country Club. Eunice Ratcliff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Eunice welcomed Ed Benkart of Nicholas Enterprises and Deputy Commander Cornelius Batts of the US Army Corp of Engineers to their first meeting.

Coast Guard News

LT Devin Adams presented the **attached** report. Eunice thanked LT Adams for his assistance with the wedding party fireworks display that created some issues in particular with the Gateway Clipper Fleet. It may be helpful in the future to share these details with industry members.

Army Corp of Engineers

Richard Lockwood covered the **attached** lock closure report. Concerns regarding the closure of the New Cumberland riverward auxiliary chamber were discussed. This chamber is extremely vital during river ice conditions. A proactive approach regarding a back-up plan for the closure should be put in place. The 2016/2017 repair schedule draft currently contains significant outages that will be addressed with industry members later this month. The draft will be distributed so that a full review can be completed prior to the meeting. The Corp will also be recommending levels of service and this information will be shared by the end of November.

Deputy Commander Cornelius Batts was introduced to the members and he expressed his excitement about being in Pittsburgh and is looking forward to learning more about the region.

National Weather Service

Joe Palko covered the **attached** report.

Port of Pittsburgh Commission Report

Mary Ann Bucci was unable to attend the meeting. Gretchen Chamberlain mentioned the following items:

- The Port of Pittsburgh sent an invitation to the December 9th premiere screening of the documentary: Our Rivers: Yesterday and Today - The Allegheny River produced by the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. If you require any additional details, please contact Mary Ann directly.
- The Pittsburgh Maritime Club Annual Holiday Party will be held on Friday, December 4th. Anyone wishing to attend or donate a Chinese

Auction item can do so my contacting Gretchen Chamberlain or Cheryll Cranmer.

Education Committee Report

Michael Graham reported the following:

- Everyone involved in making the October 15th Barge Breakaway Seminar a success were thanked. Anyone that would like to provide feedback on the information shared that day and/or suggestions for seminar improvement can contact Mike directly.
- Who Works The Rivers - The next WWR is scheduled for April 21, 2016 with the "Future is Mine" Group. As always everyone is invited and encouraged to attend as a speaker and/or a presenter. If any company is interesting in sponsoring these programs, they should contact Michael Graham directly.

Navigation Committee Report

Eunice Ratcliff noted that most topics regarding navigation have been covered under other reports. Early contact with the USACE, USCG and National Weather Service in regards to monitoring conditions leading up to any potential ice issues has been made. The Perry Bridge elevation is currently out for comment at this time with no official decision at this time.

Legislative Committee Report

Richard Kreider provided the following information:

- **Budget deal and possible additional funds**
On October 28, the House passed (266-167) the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, an \$80 billion budget deal that raised spending caps on domestic and defense spending for the next two years. The Nation's debt limit, set to expire this week, was also extended through March 2017. On October 30, the Senate cleared the bill by a vote of 64-35. WCI feels the increase in domestic discretionary spending could mean more money for priority navigation projects in FY '16 and FY '17. I spoke with Mike Toohey last week regarding the scheduled 2016 lock outages in the Pittsburgh District and he encouraged us to take a hard look at the current scheduled work on the Upper Ohio and determine if additional O&M funds could shorten any of the scheduled closures next year. I told Mike I we would discuss it locally and get back with him as soon as possible. I encourage folks to let me know if you have thoughts or ideas relating to this issue.
- **OMNIBUS?**
The Federal government, including the Corps of Engineers, is currently funded under a Continuing Resolution through December 11, 2015. With the two-year budget agreement now law, the path toward enactment of a FY '16 Omnibus Appropriations bill has become clearer. Industry has been briefing House and Senate Appropriations Committee staff as they finalize FY '16 Energy & Water Development funding. Our goal is to raise appropriations levels to \$360-\$370 million for capital projects financed from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and adoption of the House O&M funding level of \$3.058 billion with \$1 billion for inland navigation.

Both bodies have agreed to "Hit the Target" for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund with an appropriation of \$1.25 billion, as called for in WRRDA 2014.

- **WRDA 2016 LISTENING SESSION AHEAD**

The process to develop the next Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) will kick-off this week when the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure holds its first roundtable discussion/listening session titled, "The Importance of Port, Waterway, Flood Control, & Ecosystem Restoration Improvements to the Nation's Economy: Concepts for the Next Water Resources Development Act". The discussion/listening session will be held at the Louisiana Supreme Court in New Orleans. WCI members and staff as well as Industry folks will attend the session and we should have additional info when we meet in December.

- **WCI ANNUAL MEETING AND SYMPOSIUM THIS WEEK**

WCI's Annual Meeting and 12th Annual Waterways Symposium are beginning today and end Friday in New Orleans

- **Court Ruling Confirms Need for Congress to ACT on VIDA**

A recent federal appeals court ruling underscores the impracticability of the current regulatory regime for ballast water and other vessel discharges and the urgent need for Congress to pass S.373, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA). On October 5, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit ruled that the EPA did not adequately assess the feasibility of ballast water treatment standards higher than the International Maritime Organization's when developing the 2013 Vessel General Permit, and ordered EPA to reassess its standard. EPA's current ballast water treatment standard, which is aligned with the Coast Guard's and the International Maritime Organization's, is nationally and internationally agreed to be the most environmentally protective standard that can be achieved with existing commercially available technology. This ruling adds further uncertainty to an already untenable situation for vessel operators and reinforces the need for Congressional action to fix this broken regulatory regime. I encourage folks to reach out to their representatives and urge them to support this important legislation.

Speaker

Avi Geller of Maven Machines presented information regarding the development of wireless Bluetooth headsets that incorporate real-time fatigue monitoring and alert systems. Information can be connected to fleet management and the pilot individually. This application is currently being utilized by trucking companies and the application could be useful to the towing industry.

December Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2015 at Chartiers Country Club. Cost of the luncheon will be \$25. Registration will begin at 11:45 a.m. with lunch served promptly at noon. Please call, email or fax the response form below by Thursday, December 3, 2015 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**Waterways Association of Pittsburgh
Meeting Response Form**

Chartiers Country Club

December 9, 2015

Menu:

Mixed Field Greens w/Chartiers Croutons/Balsamic Vinaigrette
Baked Stuffed Breast of Chicken (stuffed w/a traditional home style
dressing)
Red Bliss Potatoes
Crème De Menthe Parfaits

Cost: *\$25/per member*

_____ YES, I will be attending

_____ No, I will not be attending

****Special Dietary Requirements:** _____

NAME: _____
(Please print)

COMPANY: _____

Please respond **by Thursday, December 3, 2015** to:

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