

the connecting link

GICA "Mobile-izes" After Ivan

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To facilitate communications and expedite reopening of the waterway, the GICA relocated from Houston, Texas to Mobile, Alabama for the entire week following Hurricane Ivan's assault of the central Gulf Coast. Quite often, the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers need feedback from industry on priorities for vessel movements after a total halt of marine traffic. At the same time, they are typically consumed with response planning and resource management. As a result, communications to industry may not always address the issues of greatest concern, or be as frequent as we would like. As part of its mission to add value for members and promote the efficient operation of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, the GICA sees this need for a communications conduit as one it is uniquely equipped to fill.

After working closely with the Marine Safety Offices at Morgan City and New Orleans, as well as the Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge, the waterway and Mississippi River were completely reopened to traffic by 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 16, one day after Ivan's arrival on the Gulf Coast. It was obvious from early reports, however, that the eastern end of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway would take much longer to reopen to traffic.

On Saturday, September 18, **Raymond Butler** determined that the most effective course of action would be to temporarily relocate to Mobile, where the association could best represent industry priorities for vessel movement and waterway reopening, while communicating the latest updates to industry to assist operators in planning alternate routes. Both the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers welcomed the GICA to the command team.

On arrival, Butler found efforts to survey the deep draft channels and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway by the Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration well underway. The Corps had established a command center at their main offices in downtown Mobile, and the Coast



Butler temporarily relocated to Mobile, where the GICA could best represent industry priorities while communicating updates

Guard had set up their command center at Air Station Mobile (anticipating damage to the MSO office on Mobile Bay).

The following priorities for vessel movement surfaced as the week developed:

- Gasoline loading at Chevron Pascagoula, destined for points eastward in Florida
- Repair and salvage equipment destined for the damaged I-10 bridge over Escambia Bay
- Critical fuel delivery to the Florida Department of Transportation at Freeport, Florida
- Coal supplies to power plants on the Escambia River near Pensacola and Panama City

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Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn.
2010 Butler Drive
Friendswood, TX 77546
P: 281.996.6915
F: 281.992.4383
www.gicaonline.com

Welcome New Members

Coastal Resort Properties, LP
Charlotte, NC

Sabine Pilots Association
Groves, TX

T&T Marine/Tug Josephine, Inc.
Galveston, TX

“Mobile-izes” continued from pg. 1

- Cement deliveries from Mobile to New Orleans

In addition:

- Fuel deliveries to Florida Air Force Bases would become critical within one week
- Barges were needed at Solutia Chemical on the Escambia River within 4 to 5 days
- Vessels trapped in Mobile Harbor were impacting customers on the Mississippi River and points west

All of these concerns were fed into the command center for planning purposes.

Industry was able to assist with channel depth and navigation aid survey processes through use of Kirby Corporation’s response vessel, which was trailered to Mobile in hopes it could provide help after the storm (see related story on page 3). This proved to be a most fortunate decision. Local resources were stretched very thin, and the Kirby vessel provided the additional help necessary to expedite these processes.

The GICA continued to participate in the response and planning effort from Mobile through Thursday, September 23, when Ivan set its sights on the Texas Gulf Coast. Given that the one section of the waterway remaining closed was set to reopen on September 24, Butler left

Mobile to return to Houston ahead of Ivan’s forecast arrival there on Saturday.

The GICA owes a debt of gratitude to many, many people whose spirit of cooperation made the best of a challenging situation. The Coast Guard Eighth District, for example, established a 24-hour crisis center that served as an excellent vehicle for securing information during pre- and post-storm efforts. Thanks are also due to **Capt. Jim Bjostad, Capt. Steve Hardy, Cmdr. Gary Croot, Lt. Maurice York, Lt. j.g. John Mangum, Lt. j.g. Josh Rose, Chief Petty Officer Mike Holmes, Chief Warrant Officer Rich Simmons, and Petty Officer Matt Kelly** for admitting the GICA into the Coast Guard planning process. Thanks also go to **Nelson Sanchez, Carl Dyess, Wynne Fuller, and Terry Jangula** – all of the Corps of Engineers – for their pre-storm planning, rapid deployment of survey vessels, and admission of the GICA into their command structure. Our gratitude also goes to **Tim Osborn** and **Alan Bunn** of the NOAA for their help in assisting with rapid surveys and reports of channel conditions.

There are always many lessons to be learned after participating in a response effort like this one. Our hope is that industry and our partner agencies will make good use of the experiences we gained in dealing with Hurricane Ivan to be even better equipped to respond to emergency situations in the future.

Harvey Canal Closed for Storm Surge Protection Project

The Harvey Canal was closed to navigation on October 4, marking the beginning of a 40-day, ‘round-the-clock closure period required to drive pilings for a new, \$36 million floodgate. The floodgate is part of the *West Bank and Vicinity, New Orleans Hurricane Protection Project*, and is designed to protect the West Bank area of New Orleans from hurricane storm surges.

“This floodgate will be the centerpiece of the West Bank system of hurricane levees, floodwalls and gates,” said **Carol Burdine**, senior project manager. “The gate is the biggest single step toward achieving a closed system of hurricane protection for 250,000 people in metro New Orleans who live west of the Mississippi River.”

When a hurricane approaches, two 175-ton gates will pivot out of their bays to meet and form the barrier to storm surges coming north from the wetlands, lakes and canals toward metro New

Orleans. “It will take 10 minutes to close it,” Burdine said. Most of the time, however, it will remain open to provide a 125-foot horizontal clearance for vessel traffic.

The project is being built by the Corps of Engineers, with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the West Jefferson Levee District. Costs are shared in a 65/35 split between federal and non-federal funding sources. Completion of the gate is expected in 2006.

Completion of the entire *West Bank and Vicinity, New Orleans Hurricane Protection Project* is expected to come in 2016, based on current project funding levels. Total cost is estimated at \$314 million. Completed works will be maintained and operated by the West Jefferson Levee District.

The 7-mile-long Harvey Canal links the Mississippi River with the westbound Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.



Kirby Resources Play Critical Role in Reopening Waterway After Ivan Strikes

In an effort to expedite reopening of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway after Hurricane Ivan, Kirby Corporation's response vessel, along with **Capt. Ed Reioux**, relocated from Houston, Texas to Mobile, Alabama. Capt. Reioux trailered the 30-foot, diesel-powered Kirby responder to the Mobile area to provide assistance to the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard in channel depth and navigation aid assessments after the storm.



Kirby's responder prepares for efforts to expedite reopening of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway after Hurricane Ivan

The responder was first called upon to determine the presence and extent of any shoaling along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. A quick "toe of slope" – or centerline survey – is all that is necessary for a preliminary assessment. If any evidence of shoaling is found, a more detailed analysis is administered using cross-sectional surveys of the channel.

The Kirby responder, under the command of Capt. Reioux and accompanied by a Coast Guard petty officer, completed the initial survey from Pascagoula to Gulfport within a 4 hour period. Results showed an "all clear" for this section. Reioux also confirmed there to be no shoaling in the Bayou Cassotte Channel serving Chevron Pascagoula.

This information enabled the Corps of Engineers to make a much quicker assessment of the entire Gulf Intracoastal Waterway than would have otherwise been possible. With it, they were able to reopen the waterway later that day to barge traffic carrying critical fuel cargos to and from the Chevron facility.



The vessel *Karma*, ironically, did not have good luck weathering the storm

The response vessel was then charged to assist in surveying the Mobile Harbor for shoaling and missing navigation aids. The following day, Capt. Reioux, accompanied by another Coast Guard officer, surveyed the Theodore Channel, finding one missing navigation aid and several missing day boards. Channel depth remained the same as it was before the storm, and posed no problem to barge traffic. The assist effort provided by the Kirby vessel in this particular situation helped expedite reopening of Theodore Channel to critical barge traffic engaged in cement movements to New Orleans.

Finally, Capt. Reioux and the Kirby responder were utilized to assist with marking a shoaled area near Mile 170.5, where traffic was routed to the north side of the waterway to avoid a shallow area.

All told, the additional resources provided by Capt. Reioux and the Kirby response vessel may well have resulted in expediting the reopening of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway by one full day. We are grateful to the Kirby Corporation for lending their assets, and thank the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard for allowing industry to assist in the reopening effort.



Extensive damage was visible from the Kirby responder's launch site

Williamson Brings Headquarters, Jobs to Port

Williamson Production Services (WPS) Inc., an integrated parts and service company supplying gas compression, power generation, pumps and process equipment to the oil and petrochemical industry, is in the process of relocating its corporate headquarters to New Iberia, Louisiana. The move will mean more than 200 new jobs for the area, as well as a new, 164,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at the former Parker Drilling Services site, according to an article in the *Daily Iberian*.

"Water accessibility is the primary motive (for the relocation)," said chief financial officer **Scott Thomas**. The new facility will enable WPS to build larger units and ship them on boats, ultimately making the company more competitive on a global scale.

Projections call for 265 jobs to be brought to the port by the end of 2004 as a result of the relocation. Total employment is expected to reach 340 in 2005, and 500 in 2006. Positions will range from laborers to engineers and managers.

Industry Teams with Coast Guard to Keep Traffic Moving After Spill

The GICA, together with the Marine Safety Office Port Arthur and the Sabine Pilots, assisted the Capt. of the Port, Port Arthur, Texas, in reopening the Neches River to traffic after a major oil spill on August 1. The tanker *Torm Mary* spilled several hundred barrels of number six fuel oil after colliding with a bunker barge. The oil bled into the Neches River at the Sun Anchorage and resulted in complete closure south of the spill for two days.

Capt. Sharon Richey accepted our offer to assist in coordinating the industry response and reopening effort, allowing her staff to concentrate on the oil spill cleanup.

Thanks to the generosity of Marine Fueling Service of Port Arthur, **Mike Measells** and **Chris Bean**, a temporary Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) was set up. The site was Bean's fleet dispatch office, which overlooks the Neches River intersection. This makeshift traffic coordination center was manned with volunteer vessel traffic advisors from the towing industry, including **Cpts. Jim Guidry, Vern Brown, Mark Shell** and **Ed Reioux** from Kirby Corporation, and **Capt. Marvin Reed** from Martin Gas Marine. These gentlemen worked around the clock until traffic procedures could be established and the need for the VTS was removed.

The temporary Neches River VTS coordinated deep and shallow traffic through the safety zone for approximately 48 hours. Our partners from the Sabine Pilots, including **Cpts. Ellen Warner** and **Mark Taylor**, along with **Emile Millich**, were instrumental in developing an initial traffic flow plan and insuring traffic safety measures were maintained. Thanks are also due to **Lt. Brian Falk** and **Lt. Kevin Smith** of the Coast Guard, who were both very receptive to our ideas and helped implement the plan quickly and efficiently.

While this was a most challenging incident, the situation proved to be another example of industry working in partnership with the Coast Guard to manage a successful response to a waterway crisis.



(L-R) Lt. Brian Falk, Capt. Jim Guidry, Raymond Butler, Lt. Kevin Smith, Capt. Mark Shell, and Vern Brown (seated) were part of the makeshift VTS office established in response to a major oil spill on the Neches River

MARSEC Committee Rolls Out Funding Plan for Internet-Based Information System

At its meeting on September 30, the Communications Work Group of the Houston-Galveston Area Maritime Security Committee rolled out its plan for future funding of their internet-based information and emergency call out system. Annual subscriptions will be offered to those in the Houston area maritime community who want to be included on the AMSC website information list and secure call out/notification system.

Since May 2004, Dialogic Communications Corporation (DCC) has provided a secure, automated call out system to notify members of significant security information that may be of a sensitive nature. The system performed very well

during its initial test, as part of the committee's security notification drill in July.

The system requires participants to register with the communications project manager, pay a \$150 annual fee, and be "SSI" cleared to receive security sensitive information. It will be used for several functions in the future. For example, it will be one of a number of systems by which maritime facilities, agencies, carriers and service providers in the Houston, Galveston, Texas City and Freeport areas can be notified of changes in maritime security (MARSEC) levels. The Greater Houston Port Bureau will serve as the manager and administrator of both the website and call out system beginning January 1, 2005. Currently, volunteers assist in maintaining the system.

Initial funding for the system was provided

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Partners Tour Galveston Railroad Bridge Span



...the level of finesse required to make the transit without incident was readily apparent.

Several key partners were provided a guided tour of the Galveston Causeway Railroad Bridge on August 10. The purpose of the tour was to familiarize the partners, who will take ownership of the railroad bridge fenderworks in 2007 when the adjacent vehicular causeway is complete, with issues surrounding navigation of the bridge span while pushing a large empty tow.

The tour included two bridge transits, made possible by Kirby Corporation and Higman Barge Lines/Maryland Marine, Inc. Each vessel pushed a 60,000-barrel empty barge measuring 600 feet long by 54 feet wide. Though there was little wind, tows still had to “crab” into the breeze and hold up high on the bridge fenderworks, dropping the tow into the slot as they entered the guidewalls. Even under these relatively “easy” conditions, the level of experience and finesse required to make the transit without incident was readily apparent.

The tour followed a day-long meeting, during which various proposals and alternatives concerning safety of navigation through the span were discussed. Over the next several months, these partners, along with the inland barge industry, will determine the type of fenderworks structure that should remain to protect the railroad bridge until it is replaced.

The Galveston Causeway Railroad Bridge was deemed a hazard to navigation in 2001 by the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, making it eligible to receive Truman-Hobbs funding for its replacement. The funding, however, has been slow to come from Congress, and puts replacement of the railroad bridge 4 to 7 years behind that of the adjacent vehicular bridge. The disparity between the 105-foot span of the railroad bridge and the 300-foot span of the completed vehicular bridge is expected only to exacerbate an already perilous situation.

The partners who will share varying degrees of ownership in the fenderworks while the railroad bridge awaits replacement include: Galveston County, Burlington Northern Railway, the Port of Galveston, Centerpoint Energy and the City of Galveston. The touring group included **Jacob Patnaik**, head of the Coast Guard’s bridge design group in Washington, D.C.; **Steve Milsap** and **Don Lozano**, of Burlington Northern Railroad Structures Group; and **Mike Fitzgerald**, Galveston County engineer.

Our thanks go to **Cpts. Jim Guidry, Ed Reiox and Gary Reed** of Kirby Corporation, and **Cpts. Teddy Cheramie and Dwight Whittington** of Higman Barge Lines/Maryland Marine, Inc.

Photo courtesy of Mike Fitzgerald

Late-Breaking Update...

At this writing, there is no funding appropriated for the Galveston Causeway Railroad Bridge replacement project in fiscal year 2005. Since the site was designated a hazard to navigation in 2001, only \$1.5 million has been allocated towards the project’s \$35 million price tag.

Damaging incidents continue to occur at the bridge, but with ever-increasing frequency. In just the last six weeks, the bridge has sustained two more serious hits. One was caused by a tow operator attempting to avert a collision with a disabled recreational craft that was trapped inside the fenderworks. In 1998, a very similar scenario ended with a fatality.

The continuation of these incidents results in mounting costs for everyone, from the agencies charged with bridge repair, to the companies that incur vessel damage. Even more costly and pervasive, however, are the transit delays that result each time the passage is closed for recovery and repair.

MARSEC continued from pg. 4

by private industry contributions along with a significant grant from the Department of Justice. An anonymous private donation of \$50,000 to the industry-led Communications Work Group will cover contract pricing for the Dialogic system over the next 5 years, but administration and management costs must be funded from the subscription charge of \$150 per company. The

annual charge entitles subscribers to a limited number of contacts within the company for one year.

For further information or to subscribe, visit the AMSC website at www.amsc-hougal.com/support/subscription.pdf, or contact **Capt. Alistair Macnab** at the Greater Houston Port Bureau: 713.678.4300.

Convention Highlights

The 99th Annual GICA Convention held in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 18-20 was a huge success! It was another year of record attendance and financial support collected through sponsorships. Highlights included:

- Presentation of the Dale Miller Award to **Allen Billiot** of Blessey Marine, for saving the life of an Exxon employee who fell overboard on Christmas Day, 2003.
- Presentation of the GICA's Lifetime Membership Award to **Munson Smith**, a Victoria attorney who has been involved with the navigation district since its inception, served the GICA as a board member and president, and developed the bylaws the organization continues to abide by today.
- Special recognition of **Les Sutton**, recently retired, for his many years of service and exemplary dedication to the association.
- Recognition of **Mike Measells**, for his assistance with traffic issues and efforts to reopen Port Arthur after storm closures.
- Several gestures of appreciation bestowed on the GICA's executive director, **Raymond Butler**, for his tireless work on behalf of industry and the association. Colorado Lockmaster **Simon DeSoto**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers **Col. Steve Haustein**, Coast Guard **Rear Adm. Bob Duncan**, and outgoing GICA president **Larry Barbish** were among those to recognize Butler.
- A presentation on the newly-formed Waterways Council, Inc., which resulted from a merge between the Waterways Work! and Dynamo organizations, by **John Doyle**.



Teri Goodmann accepts dedication of the 99th Annual Convention to Vernon Berhhorst, while Gary LaGrange looks on. Berhhorst was unable to attend due to illness.



Allen Billiot of Blessey Marine (l) accepts the Dale Miller Award for saving a life on the waterway. The award was presented by Howard Hawthorne (r).

- Presentation of critical land-loss issues by **Sidney Coffee**, speaking on behalf of America's Wetland, and **Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson** speaking on behalf of Coastal Texas 2020.
- An outlook on future industry developments from Kirby Corporation president and CEO, **Joe Pyne**.
- Exploration of critical issues in the Eighth Coast Guard District by Rear Adm. Bob Duncan, who focused on vessel inspections and automatic identification system (AIS) requirements.
- A panel presentation by the Corps of Engineers on the beneficial uses of dredged material across the three Gulf Coast districts.
- A panel discussion on promoting the waterways industry and addressing the issues, including guest speakers **Debra Colbert**, **Teri Goodmann**, and **Greg Trauthwein**.
- An in-depth presentation on the Corps of Engineers' new project prioritization system, *Expert Choice*.

Planning efforts are already well underway for our next convention, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association. It will be held August 8-10 in Victoria, Texas, so make plans now to attend! Program details and registration information will be published as plans are finalized.

The 100th Annual Convention of the GICA will be held August 8-10, 2005 in Victoria, Texas

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Coast Guard Hosts Demonstration of New Orleans VTS

Members of the three Mississippi River Pilot organizations, **Cpts. Chris Reider, Rusty Belsome, and Doug Grubbs**, chairman of the Lower Mississippi River Navigation Safety Advisory Committee; along with **Capt. Mike Marshall** of TECO Barge Lines, **Matt Hozhalb** of AWO, and **Robert Douville** of TRICO Marine; as well as **Joe Cocciara** and **Raymond Butler**, both of the GICA, attended an evaluation and demonstration of the newly-outfitted Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) in New Orleans.

Lt. Cmdr. Mark Kasper, George Petras, Doug Blakemore and **Capt. Frank Paskewich** hosted the day-long demonstration and orchestrated seven scenarios that proved the system met all nineteen of its stated objectives. Automatic identification systems were the highlight of the demonstration, and showed to be very effective in managing traffic flow during abnormal situations. The new system is anticipated to be fully operational by the end of the year.

“I was most impressed with the capabilities of the system and the personnel that will staff it,” said Raymond Butler.

The center is located on the thirty-first floor of One Canal Place, which provides an excellent view of traffic on the river at Algiers Point. Once the center becomes operational, both the Gretna Light and Governor Nicholls Light, which have been manned since 1936, will become unmanned sites, controlled remotely from the VTS center.

A large part of the value we receive from VTS is the outstanding leadership and focal point they provide in coordinating response to emergencies on the waterways. The VTS also serves industry by communicating traffic issues and enlisting input of marine stakeholders in determining the best course of action for all concerned. They often are the “one-stop-shop” for information on current conditions at bridge and other structural locations along the waterway.

The GICA thanks Capt. Frank Paskewich for inviting industry to participate in this evaluation and for welcoming our input.

Sponsors Put GICA Over the Top

Thanks to the generosity of the many sponsors who stepped up to the plate to sponsor our convention, the GICA enjoyed another record-breaking event! Proceeds from the Annual Convention, along with membership dues, provide the funds necessary to fuel our efforts year round.

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West Side Calhoun County
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Wyndham New Orleans
at Canal Place

Coast Guard's Public Service Awards Presented

The Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee (HOGANSAC) presented the Coast Guard's prestigious Public Service Award to two members of the Houston maritime community at its meeting on October 5. Receiving the awards were **Capt. Jim Coonrad** of the Galveston-Texas City Pilots, and **Capt. David Foret**, chair of the Navigation Safety Committee.



Capt. Jim Coonrad with Capt. Rick Kaser

Capt. Coonrad was recognized for his work during his term as presiding officer of the Galveston-Texas City Pilots. He was especially helpful as a member of HOGANSAC's Navigation Safety Committee, by identifying several specific opportunities for improving deep and shallow draft vessel interaction on the ship channels. Coonrad has been extremely effective in his role due to his proactive and most cooperative spirit. We will miss his leadership, but continue to enjoy working on the waterway with him. Jim's wife, **Beverly**, attended the award presentation, which was made by **Capt. Rick Kaser**, U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Houston.



Capt. David Foret with Capt. Rick Kaser

Capt. David Foret was honored for his valuable work as chair of the Navigation Safety Committee. With his leadership, we have realized several tangible accomplishments, including setting up an audit protocol for safe berthing and access at docks along the ship channel. This goal had not been achievable by industry working alone. Foret's committee has also reduced vessel breakaway incidents on the channel by 75% since initiating its "Breakaway Evaluation" campaign. David's wife, **Tava**, also attended the award presentation.

The GICA congratulates Cpts. Coonrad and Foret for sharing their time and talents to improve navigation safety for all of us working the ship channel.

From the Wheelhouse

Port of Corpus Christi Implements Additional Security Measures

On October 12, the Port of Corpus Christi Port Commission approved an amendment to Tariff 669 – Access Control. This amendment is required in order to comply with the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, Coast Guard Regulation 33 CFR 105 and the Port Authority Facility Security Plan. The changes in the Tariff will significantly improve the security aspects for entry into restricted areas of the Port, but also establishes additional requirements for Port users.

The Tariff amendment requires that:

- All persons entering restricted areas of the Port more than 5 times in a 90 day period must obtain a Port-issued identification card. The card will be issued only after the applicant passes a fingerprint criminal history background check.
- The Port-issued identification card must be prominently displayed at all times while the individual remains in the restricted area.
- Privately owned vehicles, taxis and other conveyances-for-hire must have a registration decal in order to drive into restricted areas. Clearly marked government or commercial vehicles requiring access for authorized commercial purposes do not require decals.

Due to the costs associated with conducting the fingerprint criminal history background check and processing the identification card, a fee of \$65 will be imposed. The fee for annual renewals or replacement cards is \$25. Identification cards will be issued at the Port Police and Security Department, 1002 East Port Avenue, Monday through Friday from 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m. All persons requesting a Port-issued identification card must appear in person with:

- A current and valid government-issued identification card (driver's license, passport, state-issued identification card, etc.).
- A letter, on company letterhead, from a company authorized to conduct business at the Port, stating that the applicant is employed by the company and requires access into specifically-named restricted areas.
- Cash, cashier's check, money order or company check good for the requisite amount. If a company has an account in good standing with the Port, the applicant may bring a purchase order or other form of

billing. If a company will be paying the ID card fee, the payment may be a lump sum for all applicants, accompanied by a list of applicant names.

Applicants who have passed a criminal history background check within the past 7 years as a condition of their employment or as a condition of obtaining an occupational license will be charged the renewal fee of \$25. Applicant must show proof that a criminal history background check was conducted.

The Port will recognize identification cards issued by port industries or other Texas ports if:

- The issuance of those cards was based on a criminal history background investigation, and,
- A memorandum of agreement between the Port Authority and the port industry or Texas port for mutual recognition of identification cards is signed by both parties.

Please see the Port of Corpus Christi web site (www.portofcorpuschristi.com/Tariffs.html) for complete details on the tariff amendment, which also addresses access by visitors and ships' crews, and prohibition of certain items. If you have questions, contact Chief of Police and Security, **Luther Kim**, at 361.885.6180 or via e-mail: luther@pocca.com.

Coast Guard Improving Markings in Two Critical Areas

The U.S. Coast Guard has recently completed marking improvements in San Antonio Bay, and plans are underway for additional improvements along the inbound Bolivar Alternate Route.

The San Antonio Bay improvements were completed in July with the help of user input. Mariners navigating the area suggested placing additional buoys to decrease the space between navigation aids, increasing the size of the buoys and placing them in a straight line, and moving day markers in a straight line further away from the channel.

As a result, 5 additional buoys were placed, dayboard sizes were increased, and buoys were relocated 40 feet outside the channel. Buoys serving as gated pairs with light structures were also increased in size. Lights 32, 39 and 43 still require slight relocation for consistent alignment. Recent reports from the Coast Guard's servicing unit show aids to navigation discrepancies have significantly decreased along the route since improvements have been made.

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Port of Galveston Establishes Flat Rate for Barge Dockage



In a move to encourage increased use of dock facilities by barge operators, the Port of Galveston recently reduced tariff dockage rates for non-self-propelled inland waterway hopper barges (covered or open).

Effective immediately, the dockage rate for such barges is \$50 per day at any pier or wharf operated by the Galveston Wharves. Before the change, dockage fees for barges of all types were assessed by the same method applied to ocean-going vessels – either per foot of length, or by GRT.

“Until Imperial Sugar shut down its import terminal operations at the end of 2002 (when refining operations in nearby Sugar Land ceased), most of the barge traffic we saw was related exclusively to that facility,” said **Capt. John Peterlin**, Senior Director of Marketing and Administration for the Port of Galveston. “Our rates just weren’t competitive for mooring inland barges or for other fleeting operations in the Port of Galveston areas of Galveston Harbor,” he said.

In August 2003, River Materials, LLC began operating the former Imperial Sugar facility as a general purpose bulk terminal, and was interested in bringing more barges in. “That’s when we became much more aware of the barge docking rate issue,” said Peterlin.

The River Materials lease has since been assigned to Agriliance LLC, a national fertilizer distributor that was in search of a deep water port facility. The company needed a place that could accommodate the inbound ships and barges carrying its product, as well as the transfer of product to rail for inland distribution. The lower dockage rates provide additional incentive and give the company a competitive edge.

The Port of Galveston is looking for more opportunities to link ship, barge and rail transportation. A cooperative relationship with the Port of Victoria, for example, seeks to facilitate distribution of Gulf Coast agricultural products around the world!

The Agriliance LLC Galveston Bulk Terminal (GBT) is directly served by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company, and the Union Pacific Railroad, and operates the highest-speed water-to-rail transfer facility on the Gulf Coast. Export bulk cargos can be transferred at the facility from barges to ships (as is done with the Port of Victoria partnership), and import cargos can be transferred directly from vessels to railcars, or the GBT warehouse for storage and onward transport. For more information, visit www.portofgalveston.com.



Markings continued from pg. 8

Plans for improvements along the Point Bolivar Houston Ship Channel Alternate Route are also complete. They include increasing buoy size and lighting them, and establishing a directional leading light to identify the center of the channel. The leading light will not tell the mariner whether he or she is left or right of the centerline, but will appear more intense when on the centerline.

Our thanks go to **LCDR Brian Hofferber** of the Eighth Coast Guard District, Aids to Navigation Branch, for his diligence in addressing our navigational concerns. Thanks are also due to the vessel operators who provided input throughout the process.

Belle Chase Railroad Bridge Gets Radio Assistance

Thanks to Maryland Marine alerting the GICA to several near misses at the Belle Chase Railroad Bridge, the railroad bridge operator is now equipped with a VHF radio. Previously, mariners had to rely on the highway bridge operator to relay information. Now, they can communicate directly with the railroad bridge operator to request openings.

Our thanks go to Maryland Marine for their diligence in reporting issues at the bridge, and to Eighth District Coast Guard Bridge Office supervisor **Marc Redford** for delivering an expedient solution.

From the Wheelhouse

Plastic Line Plays Foul

The picture below shows pieces of discarded plastic line that became entangled in dredge cutter heads while maintenance work was underway at a Houston dock. This particular pile of old lines cost the dock owner about \$70,000 in downtime and additional dredging costs. And it's not inexpensive to remove from our *wheels*, either.

Much of this problem is beyond our control, but we do contribute every time a line falls overboard or slips away from dockside moorings. For the benefit of all, please exercise care in keeping these lines onboard or discarding them appropriately.



Discarded lines mean trouble for dredges in Houston

Falling Rates for Self-Reporting May Force Extreme Measures

Our self-reporting rate for aids to navigation (ATON) knockdowns has dropped by more than a third, from 22.22% in August to 13.6% in September. These rates, which are far lower than highs reached in previous months, have combined to drag our year-to-date reporting rate to 27.1%. The highest year-to-date rate recorded is 44%.

With winter approaching, the most difficult time of the year for navigation is upon us. If our reporting rates stagnate at this level, or worse – decline further, the Coast Guard will be forced to consider more extreme measures in order to recoup some of their repair and replacement costs.

One alternative under consideration for particularly vulnerable locations like the Galveston Causeway Railroad Bridge, is installation of surveillance equipment. VTS

is already employing similar technology with installation of a television camera tower on Bolivar Peninsula. This relatively inexpensive resource, combined with Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), will enable much more effective monitoring of incidents along the Houston Ship Channel.

To date, the Coast Guard has been fairly lenient on offenders who self-report ATON incidents, and does not typically enforce the full extent of penalties available under law. If we must resort to surveillance to improve our rather dismal self-reporting rates, however, you can expect stronger enforcement of penalties when non-reporting offenders are positively identified. The C.F.R. specifically states that failure to notify the Coast Guard “...shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$2500 or less than \$500, or by imprisonment for not less than 30 days nor more than one year, or both...” The C.F.R. also calls for the convicted mariner to have his license suspended or revoked.

If the financial and professional repercussions are not enough incentive to self-report ATON allisions, consider the recent incident involving a recreational vessel that ran over a destroyed navigation aid at night which had drifted from the Houston Ship Channel. The craft sustained serious damage, and its occupants suffered injury. We're not just talking dollars and cents anymore – we're talking about the safety of vessels and the lives of people on them.

We owe the Coast Guard many thanks for meeting industry needs on countless occasions, especially those involving navigation restrictions and waterway reopenings. An honest and whole-hearted effort on our part regarding self-reporting of ATON allisions will go a long way in maintaining the positive relationship we've built – one that all too often works in our favor. Please stress the critical nature of this situation with your vessel captains and crews. It is the responsible thing to do... and the right thing to do. Let's work together to improve reporting rates for our partners at the Coast Guard.

Coast Guard Establishes Website for AIS Information

The Coast Guard has activated an internet site that includes complete information on vessel Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). The site also includes a form for reporting problems with AIS equipment. Most of our industry's vessels will be required to carry this equipment by year-end. Learn more at: www.navcen.uscg.gov/enav/ais/default.htm.

Container on Barge Concept Could Keep Oregon Agriculture a Viable Commodity

An article appearing on Oregon's bend.com website reveals that agriculture producers in the state are beginning to realize the advantages of waterway transportation, as competition from foreign growers makes cost considerations increasingly important. A study conducted by **John Kratochvil** of the Oregon Department of Agriculture points directly to that concept as a solution for agricultural exports coming out of the state.

The study, officially released at a meeting involving port officials, agriculture exporters, shipping companies and barge operators, compares cost and availability of truck, rail and barge service to agricultural shippers. The article concluded that, "When all factors are considered, a system of barge traffic between inland ports and larger west coast ports with overseas connections could keep the export of Oregon agricultural products viable."

"My research indicated that freight traffic in the western U.S. can be shifted from highway to water, generating significant savings for agricultural shippers," said Kratochvil. "As a result, a robust, profitable water transportation system can help to keep our ag products competitive in world markets."

The article goes on to state that U.S. agricultural shippers are not using waterborne transportation as much as their counterparts in other parts of the world. For example, 41% of cargo in the European Union is transported via water, compared to only 7.3% in the United States. Conversely, Europe moves only 28% of its cargo by highway trucking compared to 44% in the U.S. And only 8% of European cargo moves by rail, compared to 40% in the U.S.

"The greatest challenge to implementing weekly containerized barging service is a mindset developed beginning in 1956 when the U.S. interstate system was authorized," said Kratochvil, whose study concludes that greater utilization of such waterways as the Columbia River, the Puget Sound, and the coastal Pacific waters in between may hold the key for more efficient movement of Oregon's agricultural products. Ninety percent of Oregon's agricultural production is destined for points outside the state, making transportation costs a major factor in the success of this \$10 billion industry.



Dalton Hobbs, administrator of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, said there is definite interest in establishing a barge system to facilitate economical export of the state's farm products, though farmers and shippers want guarantees that the barge service and ag products, respectively, will be available. There was also discussion of making better use of return trips by ships and barge lines that call on the Port of Portland, but often leave empty. These vessels could instead be loaded with containers destined for major west coast ports en route to points overseas.

Kratochvil's study also endorses the concept of sustainability as it pertains to waterway transportation, stating, "It is obvious that the coastal waterways are sustainable and that the inland waterways, replenished by rainfall and ice melt, are in a greater sustainability category than the highways. It is common knowledge that the western states are in need of bridge repair, as are the road surfaces."

The article concludes as follows:

"With a network of Pacific Northwest waterways already present, agricultural shippers in Oregon are taking another good, hard look at moving their product the way cargo used to be moved before the highways and railways were established."

More states with access to coastal or inland waterways might be wise to examine this perspective, especially in light of cost factors that can make or break an industry competing in the global marketplace.

Industry Loses Leader in Brownsville

Raul Besteiro, director and CEO of the Port of Brownsville, passed away November 14 of a heart attack. He was in Houston for medical tests when he awoke in the early morning hours with shortness of breath. He died en route to the hospital.

Besteiro is fondly remembered by many in the Brownsville area, as evidenced most eloquently by recollections of **Rep. Solomon Ortiz** for *The Quorum Report*. "He touched the lives of thousands of young people in Brownsville as an educator in his early years," said Ortiz. "He understood that so many of the lives he touched in education had little hope of finding meaningful work in the Valley after graduation, so he turned his considerable talents to developing the primary economic engine in Cameron County, the Port of Brownsville."

Ortiz recognized Besteiro as a force within the business community in persuading Congress to pass NAFTA, and called him a "powerful ally" in efforts to improve economic conditions in the Rio Grande Valley.

Prior to his post at the Port of Brownsville, Besteiro was a teacher, principal and superintendent of Brownsville Independent School District. His civic and professional involvement was extensive throughout his career, including service as: chairman of the board of the International Bank of Commerce for Cameron County; vice-chairman of the Brownsville and Rio Grande Railroad; a member of the Institutional Development Board at the University of Texas at Brownsville; a member of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership; president of the board of the Historical Brownsville Museum; unit chair of the Salvation Army and Red Cross; and a member of the United Way South Texas and American Cancer Society. He was inducted into the Legends of Texas Hall of Fame in 2001, and was honored as a "Distinguished Alumnus" by the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

"That man's life focused around promoting and helping Brownsville," **Mayor Eddie Trevino, Jr.** told the *Valley Morning Star*. Besteiro leaves behind a wife, **Guillermina**, a son, five daughters and six grandchildren. He was 69 years old.



Mark Your Calendar!

January 20-21
American Waterways Operators
Southern Region Annual Meeting
New Orleans, LA
703.841.9300
www.americanwaterways.com

January 29-February 1
Passenger Vessel Association
MariTrends 2005
Tampa Marriott Westside
Tampa, FL
www.passengervessel.com

February 10-11
Coosa-Alabama River
Improvement Association
Rome, GA
334.265.5744
www.caria.org

April 4-6
American Association
of Port Authorities
Spring Conference
Washington, D.C.
703.684.5700
info@aapa-ports.org
www.aapa-ports.org

April 21-22
American Waterways Operators
Spring Convention
Washington, D.C.
703.841.9300
www.americanwaterways.com

August 8-10
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn.
100th Annual Convention
Holiday Inn
Victoria, TX
Contact Raymond or Nita Butler
281.996.6915
wrbutler@hal-pc.org
www.gicaonline.com

Maritime Internship Program Seeks Scholarship Donors

The Center for Ports and Waterways at the Texas Transportation Institute is initiating a Maritime Internship Program. A maritime intern would be a student with knowledge in maritime issues who is selected to assist a congressman, senator, committee staff or agency at either the state or federal level.

Initially, the program will be open to students on Texas A&M campuses in College Station, Galveston and Corpus Christi. The positions will most likely be with U.S. Congressional offices from the Texas coastal districts.

For students working with congressional offices, the program provides the opportunity to develop a working knowledge of the legislative process and the role congressional offices play in formulating policy. For students working with agencies, the program affords an inside look at how policy is formed and regulations are established. Interns can also improve their communication and leadership skills, while building a network of friends and colleagues that will last a lifetime.

Interns will be recognized for their contribution with a minimum salary of \$500 per month from the employing office. To help offset additional expenses (primarily apartment rental), each intern will receive a program scholarship of \$2500 for a full semester or \$2000 for the summer term. Academic credits may also be awarded depending on the student's major and degree plan.

The program is seeking donors to help fund the scholarships mentioned above. Why would the marine industry want to provide such scholarships? The most obvious reason is to complement a quality education with practical experience. There are, however, longer-term benefits. Placing a maritime intern in a congressional office raises the sensitivity of that office to the concerns of the maritime industry. It also begins to build a cadre of Capitol Hill staffers who will understand and be sensitive to the needs of the maritime community.

For further information, please contact **Jim Kruse**, Director of the Center for Ports and Waterways, at 713.686.2971 or via email: j-kruse@ttimail.tamu.edu.