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President's Letter

I appreciate the trust my peers in MWRA have shown by electing me as MWRA President – for the second time! I am fortunate to be supported by a strong Executive Committee: **John “Jack” Zink**, Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, as the new Vice President, **Juan Flores** of the MS Department of Transportation remains as Secretary, and **Mike Davis**, Pearl River Basin Development District, will stay on as Treasurer. MWRA is a real team effort and I appreciate them all and the time they have committed to spend. Our Past President, **John Hardy** of the Columbus-Lowndes County Port, has been “promoted” to Chairman of the Board. Special thanks are also due to outgoing Chairman **Jeff Ballweber**.

Our Annual Conference in Bay St. Louis was informative and fun – a good combination. Special thanks are due to Conference Chair Jack Zink, who really put together a terrific experience for all of us. I also thank **Joe Baran** of the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission. He spearheaded the very successful Golf Tournament – we had 48 players! Fortunately, he has agreed to chair that same committee for 2009 in Tunica, August 6. **John Almond** of Allen and Hoshall will serve as 2009 Conference Chair. MWRA is very fortunate to have so many productive volunteers!

I welcome any comments or suggestions – just send them to dean@ymd.org. I’ve been asked to have a picture made to use with these newsletters – I’m not sure it’s necessary but I will comply with the protocol.

Sincerely,
Dean Pennington
YMD Water Management District
MWRA President

MWRA Mission Statement:
MWRA promotes the advancement of Mississippi rivers, ports and harbors, coastal and inland waterways, flood control, recreation, water development and management, water supply and all other beneficial uses of water resources.

MWRA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Since the publication of our June 2008 newsletter, we have added the following new members:

AEP River Operations (St. Louis) – Terry Moore
Burk-Kleinpeter (New Orleans) – Bill Giardina
MS Development Authority – Joey Deason
MS Railroad Association – Clifford Thompson
MS Valley Division, USACE – Barbara Petersen
Roy Anderson Corp. – Mark Schloegel
SSA Marine/Logistics – Tom Leatherbury
USGS – Michael “Mickey” Plunkett

GULFPORT INITIATES PUBLIC RELATIONS DRIVE

The Port of Gulfport hopes to feel out the public mood surrounding its massive expansion. A web site has been launched to inform Gulfport residents and solicit input on the final port expansion plan, designed “to reclaim the port’s capacity and competitiveness.”

“We are now listening to the community, making sure we rebuild the port in a way that preserves its longstanding local support,” said Port Director Donald Allee. Port officials said the web site is part of “a comprehensive community involvement campaign that is a critical step in producing a final port restoration plan.” The port also started a direct-mail campaign and phone research to gauge the public temperature concerning the planned expansion.

The Port of Gulfport is the third-busiest container port along the Gulf of Mexico and 17th among all U.S. ports. The Port is vital to the state’s economy and port leaders believe the plan to double its capacity could make South Mississippi a major player in international trade. With the recent boom in maritime shipping and plans to widen the Panama Canal, the Port of Gulfport says it must expand to stay competitive.

The Sun Herald, August 20, 2008

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Nicholas Cage and the rest of the film crew are shooting scenes for “The Bad Lieutenant” at The Hollywood in Bay St. Louis, where the MWRA Annual Conference was held.

Congratulations to the **Tenn-Tom Council** on its successful hosting of an Intermodal Transport Symposium in Tupelo. It focused primarily on the future of container-on-barge opportunities along the Tenn-Tom corridor.

Kinder Morgan Energy partners recently announced a \$12.8M expansion at the **Amory Port**. The company leases the port from the City of Amory and handles material loading and unloading. With the expansion, Kinder Morgan will receive carbon products by barge, rail and truck.

Congratulations to **Hanson Professional Services**, named by *Engineering News-Record* as one of the Top 500 Design Firms for 2008. Hanson came in at No. 210, and this is the 21st consecutive year the firm has received this honor.

Henry Cote, Director of the Yazoo County Port Commission, was recently featured in the *Delta Business Journal*, August 2008 in its Special Report: Yazoo County section.

REPORT: WATER SUPPLIES THREATENED

The U.S. Forest Service has recently completed a study on the Southeast's already precarious water supplies. The study looked at four major river basins that run through Alabama, the Carolinas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. These river systems are among the most biologically diverse in North America. Adding to the strain on the water supply is the Southeast's population growth, which has led the nation in recent years. New development is expected to displace some 12 million acres of forest by 2020.

"Over the last century, high-quality water has been supplied at relatively low cost in the region," said Forest Service scientist Steve McNulty, who conducted the study. "That is poised to change." Parts of the Southeast had one of the worst droughts on record last year, and conditions have only slightly improved (despite the drenching of the region by Tropical Storm Fay).

(An example of the impact on Mississippi is manifested in the current litigation, *Hood ex. rel. Mississippi v. City of Memphis, Tenn.*)

The Sun Herald, July 13, 2008

COASTAL SYMPOSIUM IN OCTOBER

The Mississippi-Alabama Bays and Bayous Symposium will be held October 28-29 at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi. The two-day event will provide a forum for the exchange of technical yet practical information among scientists, resource managers, elected officials, community leaders, marine industries, community-based organizations and individuals. Presentations will focus on living estuarine resources; natural hazards resiliency and the ocean's role in climate; coastal community action and stewardship; water resources: supply and quality, habitat management and restoration; and extension, outreach and education. For more information and registration, visit <http://masgc.org/baysandbayous>.

MWRA BOARD ACTIONS

The following actions of special note were taken at the MWRA Board of Directors meeting August 6, and subsequently ratified at the MWRA General Membership Meeting:

Election of Officers – The election was as reported in the President's letter. In addition, **Greg Deakle**, Executive Director, Itawamba County Port Authority, will serve as Membership Chair, **Betty Ann White** of the Jackson County Port Authority/Port of Pascagoula will serve as Public Relations Chair, and **Peter Nimrod**, **Mike Tagert** and **David Work** will continue to monitor and report on state and federal legislative issues for MWRA.

It was agreed to combine the MS Water Resources Research Institute meeting (usually held in April in conjunction with USGS, MDEQ, MWRA and the Public Service Commission) with the MWRA Annual Meeting at Harrah's (The Grand) in Tunica August 5-7, 2009. If this endeavor is successful, the 2010 Annual Meeting will be back on the Coast.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Neel-Schaffer on its 25-year anniversary! Founded in Jackson, MS, in 1983, Neel-Schaffer has grown from a fledgling 20-employee, two-office organization to a full-service engineering firm with over 355 employees located in 30 offices throughout seven states.

The new company started with its corporate headquarters in Jackson, MS, and a small satellite office in Hattiesburg. It soon found its niche in the engineering industry by fulfilling clients' needs that were often overlooked by larger firms. As the company has evolved, emphases have included a tradition of offering continuing education opportunities, keeping abreast of innovative strategies, taking advantage of technological advances and encouraging an entrepreneurial atmosphere. Heartfelt congratulations!

Calendar of Events

2008

- October 28-29 **Bays and Bayous Symposium**, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi.
<http://masgc.org/baysandbayous>
- October 28-30 **Mississippi Transportation Institute**, Pearl River Resort, Choctaw, MS.
kthurman@mdot.state.ms.us
- November 5-7 **National Waterways Conference**, Royal Orleans, New Orleans.
www.waterways.org
- November 11-14 **Gulf Coast Hurricane Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Rebuilding Conference**, Mobile. kelly.j.barnes@usace.army.mil.

2009

- February 5 **Mississippi Intermodal Council Breakfast with Legislators**,
Old Capitol Inn, Jackson, 7:30 AM. insightltd@msn.com
- April 29-May 1 **Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals Annual Conference**,
Drake Hotel, Chicago. Details to follow.
- August 5-7 **Joint MWRA-MWRRI Annual Conference** (with USGS, MSDEQ, and PSC),
Harrah's Grand, Tunica. Details to follow.
- September 14-15 **SmartRivers**: Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc. plans to organize a trip
to Vienna, Austria. MWRA members (and spouses) welcome.
Stay tuned!



Mississippi Water Resources Association
Post Office Box 4200
Jackson, MS 39296-4200

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51 Years of Dedicated Service!