

President's Letter

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Mississippi Legislature for their support of the Mississippi Multi-Modal Fund and Multi-Modal appropriation. All four modes – ports, airports, rail and public transit – have used this money to upgrade infrastructure or for other worthwhile intermodal work. Under the guiding hands of **Sen. Billy Hewes, III, Rep. Bill Miles** and MDOT Executive Director **Larry “Butch” Brown**, Mississippi has set the national standard for intermodal cooperation and mutual support. The utilization of these funds has resulted in more jobs, more trade, and more Mississippi transportation destinations for incoming cargo. Of course none of this would have been possible without the vision and support of our Transportation Commissioners: **Wayne Brown, Bill Minor** and **Dick Hall**. Speaking for MWRA, I believe our sixteen ports are one of the state's greatest assets and we are most fortunate that both the Legislature and MDOT recognize their importance. We



are blessed with water highways on three sides of our state – and all of us are glad to see their importance realized and maximized.

MWRA will no longer be mailing hard copies of the newsletter – from now on, three copies a year will be sent electronically. The issue that includes registration information about the Annual Conference (June) will come as a hard copy to facilitate registration. We are in the process of adding the email addresses of all of our members to facilitate electronic

“Legislative Alerts.” The membership update forms you recently completed will also be used to update the MWRA Directory.

Your comments and questions are always appreciated. Please feel free to contact me directly at jhardy@cldlink.org or the office at insightltd@msn.com.

John Hardy, MWRA President
Lowndes County Port Authority

Chisolm Retires from MDEQ

MDEQ Executive Director Charles Chisolm announced his retirement November 6, effective by the end of the year. He has worked in Mississippi environmental protection for more than 35 years. After earning his master's degree in environmental engineering from Mississippi State, he worked briefly for U.S. Steel and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prior to joining the environmental agency. He is licensed as a professional engineer in Mississippi.

Chisolm has been recognized by the Mississippi State University College of Engineering as a Distinguished Engineering Fellow. He received the 2004 Engineer of the Year award from the Mississippi Engineering Society and was named the 2003 Conservationist of the Year by the Mississippi Wildlife Federation.

“Charles Chisolm's retirement will be a great loss to the people of Mississippi. In his 37 years at the Department of Environmental Quality, he has exhibited excellence, energy, good judgment and unwavering dedication to growing Mississippi's economy in an environmentally responsible way,” Governor Haley Barbour said.

Members in the News

Ergon and Bunge have broken ground for a new ethanol facility in Vicksburg, Mississippi. This \$100 million investment signifies their commitment to developing alternative and renewable fuel options for the country. The facility will be the largest ethanol plant in the Deep South, producing 60 million gallons of ethanol per year. This means 2 million barrels of crude oil will not need to be imported from overseas, and farmers from the region will supply the corn.

Rep. William "Bill" Miles, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, was recently honored as Itawamba Agricultural High School Alumnus of the Year. A member of the class of '55, he credits the school with providing him with the inspiration and guidance that led him through an extremely successful career in journalism. He has earned admiration and respect from MWRA members for his support of the multi-modal initiative in Mississippi.

Allen and Hoshall has reached an agreement with Myriad Entertainment for all civil, mechanical, piping, fire protection and electrical engineering on a project to design its proposed \$1.9 billion resort in the Mississippi Delta. Congratulations to MWRA Board Member **John Almond, P.E.**, and Michael Young, P.E., who will be directing these engineering services.

Yellow Creek Port is again in the news! Gov. Haley Barbour officially opened the Skyline Steel Pipe Group facility near Yellow Creek Port in Tishomingo County (**Eugene Bishop** is Port Director) August 22 during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new \$17 million state-of-the-art steel processing facility manufactures rolled and welded pipe. The facility currently employs 40 workers, with 60% in highly skilled metal trades positions. The company invested approximately \$17 million in the facility to produce spiral-welded pipe used primarily in heavy construction such as buildings, bridges and wharves.

Neel-Schaffer, Inc., has recently issued a report on the installation of comprehensive traffic signal synchronization in the Baton Rouge, LA, area. Following Hurricane Katrina, this city absorbed over 100,000 evacuees, leading to major traffic jams on every major traffic artery day and night. The primary aim of the project was to computerize, synchronize, and control 479 city/parish-owned or -maintained traffic signals to coordinate traffic on interconnecting corridors. **David Bowman** represents Neel-Schaffer on the MWRA Board of Directors.

MWRA Board Member **Tom Bryant, P.E.**, has recently been named Chairman of the MS

Public Relations Committee of the American Council of Engineering Companies. Their major objectives are to Enhance Communications with Members; Influence Policy; Create a Positive Public and Client Perception; Attract and Retain Young Professionals, and Collaborate with Others on Specific Projects. Bryant is a Managing Principal at Pickering, Inc.

Both **Eugene Bishop** of Yellow Creek Port and **Deirdre McGowan**, MWRA Executive Director, were elected to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council Board of Directors. **Tom Griffith** was elected President.

On October 17, **Port Itawamba** celebrated its 20-year anniversary, reflecting "20 years of growth and success." One of six ports located along the Tenn-Tom Waterway, Port Itawamba stands out due to its ability to offer combined services, which include a rail spur, 60-ton bridge crane, wireless inventory warehousing system, and additional hard-surface storage area. The Port Director is **Carol Farris Upton**. MWRA extends congratulations to Carol and to those who have translated vision into reality at the port.

PEER Reviews Ports Situation

In response to a legislative request, the PEER Committee has reviewed the impact of Hurricane Katrina on Mississippi's commercial ports, and has attempted to identify an effective strategy to rebuild them and direct possible future expansion.

PEER found that prior to Katrina, Mississippi's proportion of U.S. waterborne tonnage was approximately 2%. The Gulf ports handled 76% of that tonnage, followed by the Mississippi River ports (19%) and Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway ports (5%). The Gulf ports handled 54% of the state's domestic waterborne cargo tonnage and 100% of the state's international waterborne cargo tonnage. The estimated loss of assessed value at these three ports totals approximately \$99.9 million. At the end of 2005, these ports were handling approximately 31% of their pre-Katrina levels of tonnage.

PEER found factors limiting possible expansion to include: major competition from ports in surrounding states; comparatively poor funding base, and problems with railways and other intermodal connectors. Opportunities for growth of the ports should result from projected growth in domestic and international waterborne tonnage, particularly Latin American trade; undeveloped land area and facilities available for development; and opportunities markets such as gaming and cruise lines.

PEER recommended that the Legislature create a Mississippi Commission on Public Ports within the Mississippi Development Authority to provide ongoing policy direction.

Mississippi Business Journal, October 2-8, 2006

Ferry Service Begins

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) selected Hornblower Marine Services, Inc. of New Albany, Indiana to secure and provide ferry service between Henderson Point in Harrison County, MS and Bay St. Louis, MS. Funding for the ferry service as well as the preparatory work for the access and landing sites comes from Emergency Relief (ER) funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration. The ferry service will be free to the public with no fare during the bridge construction period. MDOT's Director of Intermodal Planning, **Ray Balentine**, and MDOT Director of Ports and Waterways **Jim Moak** have both worked hard to make the ferry service a reality. Service began November 1.

MDOT Executive Director **Larry L. "Butch" Brown** said that restoring transportation for the public is a critical need. "Because of the cooperation of local, state and federal government, the goal of ferry service will be reached and MDOT is proud to make it happen," said Brown.

Calendar of Events 2007

- February 7 **MWRA Board of Directors Meeting**, 4 PM, Edison Walthall Hotel,
and **MWRA / Mississippi Intermodal Council Dinner**, 6 PM
Contact: insightltd@msn.com
- February 8 **MWRA / Mississippi Intermodal Council Breakfast with Our
Legislators** – Old Capitol Inn – Contact: insightltd@msn.com
- April 11-13 **IRPT Annual Educational Meeting**, Peabody Hotel, Memphis
Contact: admin@irpt.net
- April 24-25 **MWRRI Annual Water Resources Meeting**
(co-sponsored by MWRA, USGS and DEQ), Hilton-Jackson
Contact: insightltd@msn.com
- August 8-10 **MWRA Annual Educational Meeting**, Hilton-Jackson
Contact: insightltd@msn.com
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Mississippi Water Resources Association
Post Office Box 4200
Jackson, MS 39296-4200

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