

President's Letter



As we go to press with this newsletter, we are also preparing for the **“Water: The River of Life” meeting** and tribute to outgoing Public Service Commissioner Bo Robinson. This will be held on the campus of **Mississippi State University December 5-6**. Special thanks go to MWRA Chairman of the Board Jeff Ballweber and to Shirley

Bounds of the Public Service Commission, who has worked on this project with “boundless enthusiasm.”

MWRA has undertaken a different kind of initiative – the development of a PowerPoint to tell the MWRA story. Researched by our Executive Director Deirdre McGowan and coordinated with Caron Mann of Mann and Associates public relations and advertising agency, MWRA is poised to present it to legislators and potential members. I would especially like to thank the *ad hoc* committee: Dean Pennington, YMD Water Management District, Jeff Ballweber, Chairman of the Board, and especially Mike Davis of the Pearl River Basin Development District, who both served on the Committee and supplied many of the photographs.

I also want to thank Capt. Jack Zink of the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, who has agreed to chair the 2008 Annual Conference in Bay St. Louis. He is already hard at work making plans. We will keep you up to date as those evolve.

John Hardy, MWRA President
Columbus-Lowndes County Port Authority

INSIDE

Calendar 4

Members in the News 2

New Members 2

SeverCorr 2

DMR Clearing Debris 2

Yazoo Pumps 3

Capt. Engram Memorial 3

Vicksburg on a Roll! 3

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Carl Middleton has joined the staff of **Neel-Schaffer, Inc.** in Jackson after working for the Department of Transportation for 39 years. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University.

Several MWRA members were elected for two-year terms to the Board of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council, including **Wayne Parrish**, MDOT, **John Hardy**, Lowndes County Port Authority (also elected to the Executive Committee), and **Mark Shepard**, Alabama State Port Authority. Past Chairman is Eugene Bishop, Yellow Creek Port Authority.

Construction continues on a barge terminal on the Tenn-Tom Waterway that will serve SeverCorr Steel. **Kinder Morgan Terminals** has contracted to build and operate the terminal, which should be

operational in early 2008.

The first international shipment to originate at the **Port of Amory** was loaded and shipped to Rotterdam via New Orleans. The cargo was wood pellets used as an energy source in homes and businesses – made from recycled wood waste.

Ron Coles, PE, was recently appointed as the alternate U.S. representative for PIANC (Permanent International Association of Navigation Congress) Inland Navigation Commission. Coles is Vice President of Hanson Professional Services, Inc. in Nashville and was a speaker at the 2007 MWRA Annual Conference.

With a land purchase at hand, **Natchez-Adams County Port** should feel the impact from the addition of a \$3.4 billion synthetic fuels plant with direct employment of 200-300. Rentech plans to use petroleum coke,

a byproduct of oil refineries, coal and biomass, to produce synthetic gas.

Dean Pennington, PhD, of the YMD Water Management District, was named to represent the interests of MWRA on the MS Department of Environmental Quality Advisory Committee.

MWRA welcomes new members to the Board of Directors: **Wayne Mansfield**, Executive Director, Warren County Port Authority; **Greg Deakle**, Executive Director, Itawamba County Port Authority; **Hunter Arnold**, Waggoner Engineering; **Henry Cote**, Yazoo County Port Commission; **Steven Edwards**, Director of Intermodal Planning, MDOT; **Wayne Parrish**, Director, Freight, Rails, Ports and Waterways, MDOT; and **Don Waldon**, (Interim) Director, Tenn-Tom Waterway Development Authority.

MWRA Welcomes New Members

MWRA is especially glad to welcome new members from the freight forwarding community: Sheldon Bernstein, **Irwin Brown Co.**, Gulfport; Benjamin Jabbour, **V. Alexander & Co.**, Memphis and Terry Liner, **Liner Services International**, **Diamondhead**. Ron Coles, P.E., **Hanson Professional Services**, Nashville and Don Woodruff, Jr. of **Taylor Machine Works**, Louisville, have also become MWRA members. Welcome to each and every one of you!

SeverCorr Status Report

The new steel production facility in Lowndes County has met or exceeded expectations. What was anticipated to be a \$600 - \$700 million project is now expected to top \$1.3 billion.

John Correnti, CEO of SeverCorr, said that to be able to be making steel less than two years after breaking ground was a tribute to the dedication and hard work of the entire team. SeverCorr produces steel for use in the automotive, building, agricultural, pipe and tube, and appliance industries. The plant is located on a 1,400-acre mega-site, allowing for future growth of the company, its vendors and suppliers. At the celebration held in mid-October, Mike Wagner, Chief Commercial Officer for SeverCorr, stated, "We have just finished a barge of hot roll coils within the last week."

"The demand for steel in the world is still at good levels, and with the value of the dollar, it allows us to look at export opportunities, which we currently are doing," Wagner said. "...We've been happy with the support we have gotten from the Legislature...."

(Mississippi Business Journal, October 22, 2007)

DMR Clearing Debris

Authorities hope to have most of the waterways in south Mississippi clear of Hurricane Katrina debris by the end of the year. Workers with the State Department of Marine Resources already have pulled more than 213,000 cubic yards of debris from waters on the Mississippi coast, according to the agency.

This included 90,000 cubic yards of debris removed from Hancock County and 70,000 cubic yards from Harrison County. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has paid \$177 million to help clean some 365 square miles of Mississippi's coastal and inland waterways.

(The Clarion-Ledger, October 8, 2007)

Corps Supports Yazoo Pumps

The Yazoo Backwater Project is a proposal to build a pump station to drain wetlands, farmlands and forests north of Vicksburg. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says the pumps would reduce flooding by as much as 4½ feet in the region. On November 13, over objections about waste and environmental degradation, the Corps' report stated that the \$220 million pump project in the lower Mississippi Delta region would be good for the environment and a benefit to the national economy.

However, the Environmental Protection Agency says the pumps would harm the environment and says it might issue a rare veto. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also opposes building the pumps, and it has said it may ask the White House's Council on Environmental Quality to review the proposal.

Frank Worley, spokesman for the Corps' Vicksburg District, said environmental concerns should be relaxed because the agency has included reforestation efforts.

(The Clarion-Ledger, November 14, 2007)

In Memoriam – Capt. Bob Engram

MWRA lost a very special Board of Directors member November 3, Capt. Robert Curtis Engram.

During his time in the Navy, he was Commander of the Seabee Base in Gulfport and served on numerous ships. Upon his retirement from the Navy, he became Port Director for the Port of Gulfport and subsequently joined Ryan-Walsh Stevedoring Company as Assistant Port Manager. He went on through several promotions to President of Mississippi Operations.

In these capacities he was responsible for the development of international trade and traveled extensively to develop trade through the ports under his jurisdiction. When gaming became a reality in Mississippi, the late Gov. Kirk Fordice appointed Capt. Engram as one of the first three gaming commissioners. He pushed for permanent structures in association with gaming facilities and became known as the “father of infrastructure.”

He will be sorely missed by all of us at MWRA who worked with him and appreciated both his professional insights and his commitment to our vision.

(Sun Herald, November 6, 2007)

Vicksburg's on a Roll!

On the agenda for Vicksburg is a \$3.7 million project known as the Yazoo River Diversion Canal. The project is one of two major undertakings intended to get more use out of the Port of Vicksburg. As it stands now, barges hauling various cargoes have to be separated to bring them up the narrow harbor channel, two or sometimes one at a time. “This widening will save as much as 16 hours per tow in and out of Vicksburg. It will cut our time in half, at least,” said Roger Harris, vice president of operations at Magnolia Marine Transport. The company barges about 25,000 barrels of oil a day to Ergon, Inc.'s refinery on the harbor.

Financing came through state and federal grants, county-issued bonds and contributions from private businesses, including Ergon. A \$100 million ethanol plant being built by Ergon and Bunge North America at the harbor helped pave the way for the widening. When the plant opens next year, it will take in thousands of tons of barged-in grain and ship out millions of gallons of ethanol. New Executive Director of the port, Wayne Mansfield, said 3 million to 4 million tons of cargo flow through the port every year. Vicksburg is a Foreign Trade Zone, duty free, which should help getting more material coming in to Vicksburg and more going out.

The second project under way at the port is a \$3.4 million T-dock at the port itself, which will replace a 30-year-old dock that is worn out. A crane on the new dock will help unload and load dry goods more quickly.

Also at the port, a front-end loader dumps scoops of small iron briquettes into metal train cars headed for the SeverCorr steel mill, where they will be mixed with scrap steel and melted.

Clearly, “Vicksburg's on a roll!”

(The Clarion-Ledger, November 3, 2007)

Calendar of Events

2008

- January 13-17 **TRB Annual Meeting** in Washington D.C.
Hotel information is tied to registration: www.TRB.org
- February 7 **Mississippi Intermodal Council Breakfast with the Legislature**,
Old Capitol Inn, Jackson, 7:30 AM. Information: insightltd@msn.com
- March 11-13 **Budget Summit: National Waterways Conference** at Holiday Inn on the Hill.
For more information: www.waterways.org
- April 2-8 **Gulf Coast Trade Alliance Annual World Trade Day**, Beau Rivage.
Includes special section on logistics and transportation – sponsored by MDA.
Information: lcleveland@mississippi.org
- April 9-11 **IRPT Annual Conference**, Hotel Monteleone, New Orleans, LA.
Information requests to admin@irpt.net Hotel reservations: 504-681-4414 at \$189.
- April 15-16 **MWRRI / MWRA / USGC / MDEQ Water Resources meeting**, Hilton-Jackson.
Reservations: 601-957-2800 at \$114. Information: kbrasher@cfr.msstate.edu
- August 6-8 **MWRA Annual Conference**, Hollywood Casino, Bay St. Louis, MS. Information
requests to insightltd@msn.com Hotel reservations: 1-866-758-2591 at \$105.
- August 26-28 **Tenn-Tom Waterway Development Opportunities Conference**, Marriott's Grand
Hotel, Point Clear, AL. Information: azaiontz@tenntom.org or 662-328-3286

2009

Spring

SmartRivers: Exact date to be determined: Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc. will organize a trip to Vienna and/or Budapest for the conference, followed by three days in Venice. MWRA members (and spouses) welcome. Stay tuned!

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

First Class

51 Years of Dedicated Service!