

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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www.wapgh.org

June Highlights

A total of (36) thirty-six members and guests were registered for the June 12, 2019 luncheon meeting at Chartiers Country Club.

COL Coby Short addressed attendees regarding concern of the recent four incidents of barges hitting into lock gates. Companies were encouraged to review lock transiting procedures. Several other issues were discussed:

- NTSB report on the Jacks Run Breakaway has been issued. Input from companies regarding self-regulation will be sought.
- BG Robert Whittle will be visiting the area in October and efforts will be made to meet with industry leaders.
- Rickey James, Assistant Secretary of the Army, will be presenting the Keynote during the Opening Session of the PORTS '19 conference being held September 15-18th at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh. His visit will provide great opportunities to promote various regional issues.

Navigation Committee Report

David Podurgiel provided the following report:

- The Navigation Committee has worked with the USACE during the Montgomery Lock outage to 'tweak' the NTNI. Communication with the lock has been exceptional, yes, there have been a few hiccups but generally all has gone well. They have gotten ahead of schedule a few times which allowed for longer open weekends to clear the queue.
- Navigation Committee updated the Priority Lockage Guidelines; actually the dust was taken off from 20 years ago. The #1 focus is the 'public' and their needs. We have allowed a few priorities that didn't fit the guidelines; one being an emergency, all priorities only took one hour each.
- Contractor work that will take place to stabilize the Middle Wall Crack at Montgomery: start date is June 25. This work will run through early 2020, 10-12 hours per day, 5 days a week. This could all change, more will be known once the work starts.
- A committee has been put together that includes Industry, USACE, and the Coast Guard to address the rash of breakaways over the last couple years. Progress is being made, I feel everyone is on the same page and truly working together.
- The NTSB report on the Jacks Run Breakaway has been issued and is currently being reviewed. Industry must step forward to provide

self-regulation instead of mandated regulations that institute additional costs to each company.

Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Mary Ann Bucci provided the following report:

- The CMU OSHER class luncheon participants were thanked for all their enthusiasm in learning more about our region's river and transportation system.
- Following a meeting with PENNDOT, \$1.2 million additional funds will be provided under the CMAQ program. There is an initiative to expand the purpose of these funds beyond engines to other equipment.
- Texas Transportation Institute has been hired to complete a comprehensive and dynamic transportation study that would be available by the first quarter of 2020.

Legislative Report

Dean Marlin presented the following report:

- Both the house and Senate are in session till the end of June

FY20 APPROPRIATIONS

- The House Appropriations Committee has passed its markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for FY20 which funds the Corps of Engineers civil works: mission: In Brief:

FY 20 ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS PASSED BY THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE - MAY 28			
	FY 20 PASSED	versus FY 19 Appropriation	versus White House FY 20 proposal
Total Funding for the US Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Mission	\$7.36 Billion	+ \$357 Million	+ \$2.53 Billion
Investigations Account Funding	\$135 Million	+ \$10 Million	+ \$58 Million
Construction Funding	\$2.34 Billion *	+ \$154 Million	+\$1.17 Billion
Operations and Maintenance	\$3.92 Billion	+\$183.5 Million	+\$1.99 Billion
Harbor Maintenance and Trust Fund **	\$1.697 Billion	+147 Million	+ \$732 Million
* \$215 Million designated for priority navigation projects			

- The house bill provides for six new study starts, and six new construction projects to be selected by the Administration
- As importantly - a 10-year, \$1.780 billion user fee (to be paid by commercial operators on the inland waterways) - was excluded.
- The Senate is reportedly moving forward with their markup in the next few weeks.

INFRASTRUCTURE

This \$1.2 Trillion bill which in 2018 was attempted and failed for lack of a funding agreement was, (during an unusably lovely meeting

between Nancy, Chuck and Donald) re-vitalized approximately 1 month ago - this time to a \$2 trillion target.

As they gathered for their second, hopefully equally romantic date at the upscale "how do we fund \$2 Trillion" restaurant - well, they never even sat down let alone looked at the menu.

We now all know that the romance is over. The President decided he was not ready to love Nancy for some obvious reasons. Of course, Nancy says that she really wanted a long-term relationship - but Donald had never really wanted to settle down to begin with.

Never the less - we are all back on the "match.com" - seeking a way to identify, prioritize and fund this highly important problem confronting our nation, our industry and our lives.

SOME RECENT FUNDING SUGGESTIONS AND FINDINGS.

- A Gas Tax increase - would only be a short-term solution. States are also looking at a "quiet" gas tax increase. Republicans tend to support this.
- A Vehicle Miles Traveled tax
 - o A new study from the Libertarian Reason Foundation argues that the individual states and congress should utilize toll financing (versus gas taxes.) They propose to exempt any state from the 1956 ban on interstate tolling - charge per-mile traveled that would replace fuel taxes and revenue
- Tolls - A major poll indicates that 55% of us prefer tolls and other user fees versus taxes as a way to improve infrastructure investment.
- Private/Public Partnerships - The US Army Corps of Engineers announced a pilot program for engaging P3 Private/Public Partnerships - but to this date no proposals have been submitted for approval. Maybe by the end of the summer?
- State Government Financing - A recent national study indicates that state governments are now paying less toward infrastructure (as a share of their GDP) than in 50 years. - Not keeping pace with economic growth. Instead they have increased spend by 30% on air and mass transit systems.
- Hybrid Suggestions
 - o Pete DeFazio (D - Oregon and Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee) - In an attempt to attain Presidential Support is suggests lowering the cost of an infrastructure bill by limiting it to surface transportation only.
 - o One candidate (Senator John Delaney) suggest raising gas tax 15 cents and indexing it. Simultaneously rolling back the 2017 corporate tax rate from current 21 percent (versus previous 35%) - to 27 %
 - o And on

- One proven method for identifying and resolving needed infrastructure issues is to restore Title I Earmarks Funding. However, an attempt to do so was recently voted down a Senate Caucus subgroup by 28-12

SPECIAL REPORT: THE COMMITTEE FOR SAVING AND REVIVING LOW USE RIVERS

- As of April, the Level of Service on Allegheny River Lock #4 was reduced from 16 hours to 10 hours. This was done after an appeal to once again exercise criteria which the Inland Marine Transportation System's (IMTS), Level of Service (LoS) regulation makes available to the USACE in order to defer a reduction for qualitative reasons - was denied.
- This denial not only initiates alarming and irreversible consequences to the commercial and recreational interests on the Allegheny River - but also for the Monongahela and approximately 19 other "Low-Use" rivers in the United States.
- In response, our Association has formed a committee to investigate and advocate for the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers - and ultimately all other low use rivers in the Nation. This committee is comprised of our NAV Committee (Dave Podurgiel, Ryan Newton, Shane Checkan), our Strategic Planning Committee (Dave McQuiston, James Guttman), President Pat Kelly and Dean Marlin
- The USACE Pittsburgh District has agreed to introduce an off-hour schedule request system (notification process) that will hopefully enable commercial lockages on the off-scheduled locks on the Allegheny to occur well within their 24-hour mandated notification system. This was recently announced as part of the "Notice to Navigation Interests" of 4.28.19.
- We have also requested that the entire IMTS - LoS regulation system be reviewed at Division Headquarters. Our 17-point addendum soundly refuting the LoS regulation as a threat to this nation's commercial and socio-economic well-being has been forwarded - but we have no answer yet.
- On June 19 our Committee will be meeting with Colonel Short and designated staff to mutually review progress toward restoring a commercial/user, community and constituent friendly access to "low-use rivers" in the Pittsburgh District - and on our inland waterway system in the United States.

Coast Guard News

LT Christie Smith introduced the following new CG representatives:
ENS William Russell will replace LT Shawn Simeral and LCDR Stephen Miros will replace CDR Fran Smith.

The **attached** report was reviewed.

Army Corp of Engineers

The **attached** report was reviewed.

National Weather Service

The **attached** report was reviewed.

Education Committee Report

The Man Overboard Seminar has been confirmed for July 11, 2019 at the Clarion Hotel. The flyer has been sent to membership and several copies were made available at the registration desk. The "Who Works the Rivers" fall date is October 3rd.

The Barge Breakaway Seminar will be held on October 17th at the Florefffe Fire Hall. Based upon the recent increase in breakaways within our region, member companies are strongly encouraged to reach out to all non-member companies to participate in this seminar. The Coast Guard confirms that attendance to such a course is considered an advantage in the case of a breakaway investigation.

July Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 2019 **aboard the Gateway Clipper Fleet's Princess**. Cost of the luncheon will be **\$30**. Registration will begin at 11:45 a.m. and lunch served promptly at noon. Please call, email or fax the response form below by Friday, July 5, 2019 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Meeting Response Form

Gateway Clipper Fleet/Princess
July 10, 2019 @ Noon

Picnic Menu:

- Kansas City BBQ Ribs
- Grilled Chicken Breast Sandwich
- Corn on the Cobb w/lime and cilantro
- Quarter Cut Potato Wedges w/melted cheddar and smoky bacon
- Hannah's Famous Macaroni Salad
- Broccoli & Cauliflower Salad
- Pound Cake with Fresh Strawberries and Whipped Topping

Cost: **\$30/per member**

_____ YES, I will be attending

_____ No, I will not be attending

****Special Dietary Requirements:** _____

NAME: _____
(Please print)

COMPANY: _____

Please respond **by Friday, July 5, 2019** to:

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