

# Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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September 11, 2019

[www.wapgh.org](http://www.wapgh.org)

## September Highlights

A total of (23) twenty-three members and guests were registered for the September 11, 2019 luncheon meeting at Chartiers Country Club. Patrick Kelly was unable to attend and David Podurgiel ran the monthly meeting. He welcomed first-time attendee: Michael Kennedy of the National Weather Service.

## Navigation Committee Report

David Podurgiel provided the following report:

- Allegheny Lock 2 construction continues, there have been a few issues with concrete and curing that delayed 5 days of a scheduled opening but this didn't affect industry. Industry had requested an extra weekend opening for September 27-30 and the Corp worked it into its schedule. Since then I have reached out to industry partners that transit that area and asked if they needed that weekend open, all replied no so on September 9<sup>th</sup> the Corp was informed if they want to cancel that opening so as not to lose days on the back end we are ok with it, we are still awaiting any update to the NTNI.
- Water levels are low and vessels are experiencing rubs on their unbound approaches to the locks, I recommend that anytime this occurs with your vessels that they let the lock personnel know. I have heard back from the USACE that these reports are appreciated and that they are being put into the dredging schedule.
- Captain Michael Graham and I met with the Director of Economic Development, Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County and his staff along with Chief Richard Linn (PGH Water Rescue), Officer Mike Johnson (Fish Commission) and Joe Kirk who wants to start a sailing school at the Point. We were there to discuss as Mariners that this isn't a good idea and raises Safety concerns. As you might know, WAP wrote a letter of non-support and we have Dean Marlin to thank for his professional insight on this.

## Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Mary Ann Bucci provided the following report:

- Adrianna Workman was introduced as the new Administrative Assistant for the Port of Pittsburgh. Adrianna can be reached at [adrianna@portpitt.com](mailto:adrianna@portpitt.com) or (412) 201-7332.
- Mary Ann contributed to an article entitled, "Neglecting Inland Waterways Would Hurt US Economy. The full article can be viewed at

this link: <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/460776-neglecting-inland-waterways-would-hurt-us-economy>

- Scott Harshman is attending the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce Annual Washington DC trip. Guest speakers include: Congressman GT Thompson (PA-15), Congressman Conor Lamb (PA-17), Congressman John Joyce (PA-13), Senator Bob Casey and Senator Pat Toomey of PA. The Chamber is a great partner with the Port in highlighting the importance of the waterways system.
- A tour of the Montgomery Lock & Dam is scheduled for next week. Participants include: Congressman Conor Lamb; Congresswoman Kaptur, Chair of the House Water and Energy Committee; General Spellmon, USACE; and General Whittle, USACE3; also, in attendance will be local representation from the USACE. Industry will be represented by Peter Stephaich, CEO, Campbell Transportation; Mike Toohey, President, WCI; Matt Smith, President, Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce; and Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission.
- PORTS '19: "Connect. Innovate. Transform" will be the fifteenth in a series of international port and harbor development specialty conferences. The conference will begin on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown hotel. The papers and presentations promise to cover a broad spectrum of topics dealing with a multitude of issues facing the ports and harbors community. This will be the first conference held at an inland river port.

### **Legislative Report**

Dean Marlin was unable to attend but submitted the below report:

- The House returned to work September 4. The Senate, September 9. There are now only 2 weeks remaining in this fiscal year to first handle 2020 appropriations - then a raft of other pressing agenda items including gun legislation, ratification of the USMCA (replacing NAFTA) trade agreement, prescription drug pricing and the potential for conflict over formal impeachment proceedings.

### **FY 20 APPROPRIATIONS**

- Although the House has approved the majority of the 12 appropriation bills fy2020, the Senate has only 15 days to mark up 12 annual spending bills and then negotiate with the House for a final agreement and passage - before September 30.
- Because the 2-year bipartisan budget "continuing resolution" deal previously (passed in July and raising the national debt ceiling by \$320 Billion over previous years) - the pressure is likely off of a potential government shutdown - assuming the passage of a "continuing resolution". This will allow for negotiations to extend into November/December without a government shutdown.

### **WRDA 2020**

- The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) has set a date of October 4 for submitting priorities to be included in the 2020 WRDA bill.
- As previously reported, The WCI is pressing for a cost share change of the Inland Waterways Trust fund from 50/50 to 75/25

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- The Senate "EPW" Committee has approved a 5-year "Fixing America's Surface Transportation" (FAST) Act which is primarily a highway reauthorization bill. It is important to note that:
  - Although bipartisan in formation - the FAST Act will require complicated negotiations and multiple committees in both chambers. This House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will not even come out with their own version till next year which more or less verifies previous acknowledgements that nothing will be done before the next election.
  - Additionally, the question in the Senate finance committee remains - how to fund FAST? Federal gas tax? Tolling? Third party investments?
  - The WCI is closely watching this all to ensure that our nation's most important marine highway infrastructure system is duly championed.

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

- Of Note - On August 28 The USDA released a major study on the strategic value of our inland waterways to the US Economy. Although this report is sponsored by and specifically emphasizes agriculture - it makes a significant case for the importance of lower-use Rivers in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River Systems - as integral to the US Economy.

**Coast Guard News**

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**

Michael Graham was unable to attend. Eileen Provins of Campbell Transportation Company provided the following information.

- The Barge Breakaway Seminar will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Floreffe 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. The flyer will be released shortly.
- The next Who Works the Rivers is scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>. A letter was sent to the membership to solicit speakers. One school has confirmed with two more potential schools identified. One school cancelled due to a lack of transportation. Errin Howard and Riverworks Discovery are helping with the search for schools.
- 2020 Education Dates are currently under review.

**October Membership Meeting**

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at the Lafayette Hotel in Marietta, Ohio. This is our annual joint meeting with the Huntington District and the meeting will begin upon the conclusion of the Industry Incident Summit meeting around 11 a.m. Cost of the luncheon will be **\$30. ALL PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN PERSON AT THE MEETING IN MARIETTA.** Please call, email or fax the response form below by Tuesday, October 1, 2019 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** We are proud to announce that Herschel W. "Woody" Williams who is the recipient of the Medal of Honor for valor during the World War II Battle of Iwo Jima will be our guest speaker. His determined efforts allowed our military to take control of the island of Iwo Jima and provide an aircraft air base for our campaign in the South Pacific to eventually end the war, preserve our freedom and protect our country.

Lafayette Hotel, Marietta, OH  
October 9, 2019 @ 11 a.m.

**Menu:**

Roasted Sirloin  
Chicken Marsala  
Whipped Potatoes/Gravy  
Corn  
Cole Slaw/Garden Salad  
Assorted Desserts  
Lemonade, Iced Tea & Coffee Station

**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 Tuesday, October 1, 2019** to:

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