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 319 N. 4th St., Ste. 650, St. Louis, Mo. 63102
 Ph: 314, 241-7354 Fax: 314, 241-4207
 www.waterwaysjournal.net
 General Email: info@waterwaysjournal.net

H. Nelson Spencer
 Chairman
 nelson@wjinc.net

Nelson Spencer Jr.
 Publisher
 spence@wjinc.net

John S. Shoulberg
 Editor/Associate Publisher
 john@wjinc.net

David Murray
 Senior Staff Writer/WJ Editorial
 david@wjinc.net

Frank McCormack
 Gulf Coast Correspondent
 frank@wjinc.net

Shelley Byrne
 Ohio River Valley Correspondent
 shelley@wjinc.net

Capt. Richard Eberhardt, Wendy Larimer, Jim Myers, Keith Norrington, Judith Powers, Jim Ross, Jeff L. Yates
 Contributors

Zac Metcalf
 Account Executive
 zac@wjinc.net

Dee Dee Whittaker
 Account Executive
 deede@wjinc.net

Susie Jensen
 IMX Sales/Account Executive
 susie@wjinc.net

Andi Kozak
 Operations Manager
 andi@wjinc.net

Alan Thorn
 Graphic Designer/Production Manager
 alan@wjinc.net

Kim Waterhouse
 Graphic Designer
 kim@wjinc.net

Pat Platter
 Circulation / Accounts Receivable
 pat@wjinc.net

Julie Fisher
 Accounts Payable
 julie@wjinc.net

Tracey Bohms
 Data Manager (IRG/IRR)
 tracey@wjinc.net

Cindy Bequette
 Customer Service/Shipping
 cindy@wjinc.net

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WJ Editorial

The Inland Waterways State By State

The National Waterways Foundation has just released a series of waterways profiles for 17 states. The NWF's research partner, Cambridge Systematics Inc., aggregated and crunched data (up to 2018) from the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, state agencies, the Federal Highway Administration and Bureau of Labor Statistics. The updated profiles were inspired by profiles originally produced for a waterways section of the Chamber of Commerce in 2011 that similarly aggregated publicly available data and grouped them together in one place in graphic displays. States covered include Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

The graphic displays are designed to be easily available tools for waterways advocates, members of Congress, state legislators and other policy makers. They provide a granular, on-the-ground single take of the impact and importance of inland waterways to each state's economy and transportation.

We learn that Kentucky, for instance, moved 108 million tons of freight valued at \$11.9 billion over its 1,590 miles of inland waterways in 2018 and through its 11 public ports, replacing what would have otherwise been trips by 2.7 million trucks over

its roads. (One of the many benefits of water transportation is less road maintenance due to fewer truck trips.)

There can be revelations even for those familiar with their states. It may be no surprise that 49 percent of Louisiana's outbound cargo shipped by water is crops, but did you know that 30 percent of its outbound water cargo is related to chemical manufacturing? Or that 54 percent of its inbound waterborne cargo is related to primary metal manufacturing?

Waterways and ports have an outsized impact on state revenues. In 2018, Minnesota's 260 miles of waterways moved 12 million tons of freight valued at \$3.2 billion, supporting an astonishing 460,000 jobs and generating \$16 billion in taxes.

The new state inland waterways profiles and data methodology used can be found at www.nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org/Research.html.

In our high-information age, easy-to-assimilate graphics like these are important tools for waterways advocates and their audiences. They may be a quick read, but they represent many hours of painstaking work. We hope they will become a resource to improve coverage of the waterways by other media outlets. Kudos to the National Waterways Foundation and Cambridge Systematics Inc. for furthering support for our vital inland waterways and inland ports.

Washington

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

necessary to support Coast Guard district commanders in the execution and management of ATON services within the Shallow Draft Waterway System," stated a posting on a Coast Guard blog.

"The shallow draft system is present in all nine Coast Guard Districts."

According to the statement, recommendations will not determine what individual ATON to add, keep or remove, but may shape policy for the next generation of waterway system management and design.

All ATON activities remain under the purview of the local district commander.

The assessment is part of the Coast Guard's effort to make navigable waterways of the United States safer, more efficient and resilient.

Comments can be submitted via the tool posted at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ShallowWaterWAMS, which is to remain available until November 1.

Questions can be emailed to CG-NAV@uscg.mil using the subject line: "Shallow Draft WAMS."

QMED Consultation

The Coast Guard is seeking mariners with Merchant Mariner Credential endorsements as Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED) to help validate information gathered as a part of a JobTask Analysis (JTA).

"This is a unique opportunity for you to provide insight into your job as a QMED or as a supervisor of QMEDs and contribute to Coast Guard examination improvements," a posting on a Coast Guard blog stated.

"The Coast Guard will use the results of the JTA in consultation with industry to evaluate and update examination content for QMED endorsements."

According to the blog posting, the initiative is to validate real-world occupational tasks carried out by mariners conducting JTAs.

Currently, it added, the Coast Guard is working on a JTA of QMED ratings with members of industry with QMED experience to identify tasks QMEDs are responsible for while signed on a vessel.

Mariners will be asked to validate the QMED tasks and report how frequently they complete the tasks.

Mariners who hold endorsements as QMED will receive an e-mail from JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil containing a link to the survey and its dates.

Links will have a unique identifier to record responses, which will remain anonymous.

Questions regarding the survey can be directed to JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil.

Autonomous Vessels

The Coast Guard is seeking input on the introduction and development of automated and autonomous commercial vessels and vessel technologies on U.S. flagged commercial vessels and in U.S. port facilities as well as input on barriers to the development of autonomous vessels.

Comments must be received by October 13 and can be submitted via the federal portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

"The Coast Guard views public participation as essential to understanding the emerging automated and autonomous commercial vessels and vessel technologies, how vessel owners and operators foresee implementing such technologies, and the Coast Guard's role with regard to such technologies," the *Federal Register* notice stated.

For additional information, contact Ted Kim at 202-372-1528.

Great Lakes Pilotage Committee

The Great Lakes Pilotage Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet September 1 in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to discuss Great Lakes pilotage matters.

Open to the public, the meeting is scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. EDT at the Hotel Ojibway ballroom, 240 W. Portage Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., 49783.

Comments and supporting documentations should be submitted no later than August 24.

Attendees will be required to follow as closely as possible COVID-19 safety guidelines promulgated by the Centers For Disease Control, including social distancing and wearing masks when in an enclosed space, according to the Coast Guard.

For additional information, contact Ellen Engleman Connors at 202-578-2815.

FLOODS Act

U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) introduced the Flood Level Observation, Operations and Decision Support (FLOODS) Act to improve the forecasting and communication of flood, tornado and hurricane events by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Co-sponsored by Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), the bipartisan bill would establish a National Integrated Flood Information System to coordinate flood research at NOAA.

S. 4462 was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, which is chaired by Wicker.

OPC Homeport

The Coast Guard announced the homeport of future Offshore Patrol Cutters (OPCs) will be Naval Station Newport, R.I.

"NAVSTA Newport provides strategic operational reach and significant logistics support to our service, helping secure our national interests in the Atlantic," Coast Guard Commandant Karl Schultz said.

As the Coast Guard's top acquisition priority, OPCs are to provide the majority of its offshore presence, bridging the capabilities of the 418-foot National Security Cutters and the 154-foot Fast Response Cutters.

Their missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security and defense operations.