

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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### **CREW SAFE AFTER FIRE ON RRF SHIP**

All crewmembers are safe onboard the Ready Reserve Force vessel M/V CAPE HENRY after an engine room fire was extinguished during the early morning hours on Monday. The 40-year old vessel was at San Francisco's Pier 96 beginning the process of shifting into Full Operating Status after receiving orders to activate. The San Francisco Fire Department was notified about the fire around 3:30 a.m. Reports indicate it was quickly contained and the CO2 system was deployed. The flames were extinguished at 3:44 a.m. No one was injured though one crewmember was brought to a local hospital for observation as a precaution.

### **WSF MEMBERS SHOULD VERIFY CONTACT INFO FOR UPCOMING VOTE**

In advance of an upcoming vote for members sailing in the Washington State Ferry fleet, affected mariners are asked to make sure their contact information is current – *mailing address and e-mail*. If your contact information has recently changed, you will need to fill out a change of address form with Headquarters to ensure you receive the communications that will provide instructions and access for voting online.

Members sailing in the WSF fleet will vote on whether or not to support a dues increase proposal that would reinforce the Union's ability to provide sustainable future representation. The new proposal has been structured to better align the unit's dues more equitably with similar bargaining units. The referendum will be put before WSF members in good standing in an online vote to take place from September 1-30. Only WSF members – not applicants – can vote in this upcoming referendum.

WSF members who are not on Dues Check-Off must make sure their dues are paid through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter in order to be eligible to vote. Member dues must be current before midnight on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to participate. WSF members are urged to make sure their personal (not work) email address is on file with the M.E.B.A. Those members who did not receive the multiple survey emails between April and May should contact Headquarters to make sure we have your correct email (and mailing address) information on file. WSF Rep. Eric Winge will keep members informed and can be contacted to answer additional questions.

### **STEEL CUT ON FIRST GREAT LAKES NEWBUILD IN 35 YEARS**

The construction of the first Great Lakes fleet newbuild in over 35 years began this week as steel was cut on a self-unloading bulk carrier being built at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding for M.E.B.A.-contracted

Interlake Steamship Company. Interlake believes this will be the first Great Lakes newbuild for any company there since 1983, and the first for Interlake since 1981. The River-class, 639-foot, 28,000 DWT self-unloading bulk carrier is being constructed at the Fincantieri facility in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.

“The first cut of steel is a major milestone that signifies we, along with Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding, are ready to begin production on this historic project,” said Interlake President Mark Barker. “We are extremely proud to build our company’s first ship since 1981 on these freshwater shores with the hardworking women and men who help power our industry and with American-made steel from the iron ore we carry on our U.S. flag fleet vessels. It’s a true Great Lakes success story.”

The vessel will incorporate a flap rudder as well as bow and stern thrusters for high-level of maneuverability. All aspects of the vessel will have a low environmental impact to the Great Lakes and to those who work aboard. It will be designed for 7,800 shaft horsepower produced by two sixteen-cylinder Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) diesel engines that are EPA Tier 4 and IMO Tier III certified. It will be propelled by a single-screw, 18’ diameter, Kongsberg, controllable pitch propeller. For its electrical power requirements, it will have a 940 kW ship service diesel generator, two 2500 kW shaft generators and a 274 kW emergency generator.

### **GREAT LAKES STUDY SAYS ICEBREAKING SHORTFALL HAS COST OVER \$1 BILLION**

The Lake Carriers Association (LCA) says that the U.S. economy lost more than \$1 billion in business revenue and 5,421 jobs due to inadequate icebreaking capabilities on the Great Lakes during the 2018-2019 winter season. The LCA represents 13 companies that operate vessels on the Great Lakes including M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company.

Their conclusion was drawn by extrapolating data from an economic model put forward by a Great Lakes economic impact study. With robust icebreaking capabilities paving the way for commercial shipping, LCA says U.S.-flag Lakers could have carried 4 million additional tons of iron ore and 879,210 additional tons of coal. In other words, they say, Lakers could have done an additional 860 trips delivering iron ore to steel mills and 21 trips delivering coal to power generation plants. They determined that the economic loss translated into \$125 million in taxes lost by the federal government along with \$46 million lost by state and local governments. LCA noted that the tax money lost would have paid for a new Great Lakes icebreaker.

The Coast Guard has only one Great Lakes heavy icebreaker, and otherwise makes do with a fleet of 1970s-era icebreakers that are struggling to shoulder the required workload. The Senate Coast Guard Authorization bill calls for funding a new heavy icebreaker but the language is not mirrored in the House version of the bill and prospects appear poor at this time for a newbuild to receive the necessary appropriation in this Congressional cycle.

“A dynamic fleet of icebreaking assets is absolutely critical for our regional and national economy, especially our domestic steel and power generation industries which were hit hard this past winter season,” noted Interlake Steamship Company President Mark Barker. “Robust icebreaking capabilities enable the Coast Guard to deliver on its mission to facilitate the flow of commerce across our Great Lakes.”

LCA Board Chairman Mark Pietrocarlo said, “The economic impact on our customers and the supply chain they enable is significant and points out the need for a new icebreaker for the Great Lakes. Given the lost tax revenue the economic model calculated for the federal government, the payback period to the Treasury for the vessel is two years. Infrastructure investment isn’t just about fixing the roads, we also need to maintain our marine highways.”

### **SEN. PORTMAN IS 2019 GREAT LAKES LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR**

Ohio Senator Rob Portman (R) has been named 2019 Great Lakes Legislator of the Year, an annual honor presented by the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (GLMTF). The award is given to a legislator who has advanced waterborne commerce on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. GLMTF is a labor/management coalition that includes the M.E.B.A.

GLMTF President John Baker said, “GLMTF is especially grateful that Senator Portman played a key role in passing the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act as part of the Coast Guard Authorization bill. While preserving a role for the states and the Environmental Protection Agency, it charged the Coast Guard with primary responsibility for implementing and enforcing vessel regulations. Senator Portman negotiated language that overwhelmingly passed the House and Senate.”

“I’m honored to be named the 2019 Great Lakes Legislator of the Year by the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force,” said Portman. “As co-chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, I will continue to lead the fight to protect our Great Lakes while ensuring our shipping industry in Ohio and across the region remains competitive.”

### **WATERS NEAR IRAN DESIGNATED AS EXTENDED RISK ZONE**

Following the incidents in the Gulf of Oman, and specifically the Strait of Hormuz, the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) has designated the area as a Temporary Extended Risk Zone. Seafarers who are subject to attack in the zone are entitled to a bonus and doubled death and disability compensation.

The ITF Seafarers’ Section Chair David Heindel said, “These are trying times for the industry and seafarers in particular, who are simply trying to provide income for their families. While this is a sensitive political issue and today has only affected tankers and potentially British flagged vessels, it was our desire that the IBF show leadership and move quickly to reflect the concerns of the seafarers transiting this region.”

### **SPOOFING, GPS INTERFERENCE AMONG THREATS TO SHIPPING IN PERSIAN GULF AREA**

Commercial shipping interests are already wary from an overactive Iranian Navy that has been blamed for a series of limpet mine attacks in or near the Strait of Hormuz as well as vessel seizures. Now the U.S. has issued a revised advisory calling for U.S.-flag shipping to stay vigilant against GPS interference and spoofing attacks in that area.

Advisory 2019-012 warns that, in addition to other threats, vessels operating in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman may encounter GPS interference, bridge-to-bridge communications spoofing, and/or other communications jamming with little to no warning. In at least two incidents over the last three months, vessels reported GPS interference as well as spoofed bridge-to-bridge communications from unknown entities falsely claiming to be U.S. or coalition warships.

U.S. shipping interests were provided with a checklist of recommendations to utilize for vessels in that area and were reminded to contact the proper authorities if suspicious activity is observed.

### **CG PROPOSAL WOULD EASE PIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FUEL OIL TRANSFERS**

The Coast Guard is seeking input on a proposal that would change requirements for those permitted to serve as person in charge (PIC) for fuel oil transfers on an inspected vessel. Under the proposal, only a letter of designation (LOD) would be necessary for PICs overseeing fuel oil transfers on inspected vessels rather than the currently required Merchant Marine Credential with a Tankerman-PIC endorsement, which would be made optional.

The Coast Guard notes that thousands of towing vessels are currently transitioning from being uninspected vessels to becoming inspected vessels. This proposal would allow a PIC currently using the LOD option on one of those uninspected vessels to continue to use that option to perform the same fuel oil transfers once the vessel receives its initial Certificate of Inspection.

The comment period continues until Oct. 15, 2019 and input can be submitted electronically at <https://www.regulations.gov> using the docket number USCG– 2018–0493.

For further information contact the Coast Guard’s Cathleen Mauro at (202) 372–1449 or by email at [Cathleen.B.Mauro@uscg.mil](mailto:Cathleen.B.Mauro@uscg.mil).

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, September 2 – **LABOR DAY**

Tuesday, September 3 – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Wednesday, September 4 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, September 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, September 6 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*