

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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NEW INTERLAKE VESSEL READYING FOR LATE SUMMER DELIVERY

The first US-flagged Great Lakes bulk carrier constructed in almost 40 years is set for its official christening on September 1 in Cleveland, Ohio.

The M/V MARK W. BARKER, named after Interlake Steamship Company President Mark Barker, is wrapping up construction at the Fincantieri facility in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin and recently began sea trials. The River-class, 639-foot, 28,000 DWT self-unloading bulk carrier incorporates a flap rudder as well as bow and stern thrusters for high-level maneuverability. It has 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 is propelled by a single-screw, 18' diameter, Kongsberg controllable pitch propeller. For its electrical power requirements, it features 940 kW ship service diesel generators, 2500 kW shaft generators and a 274 kW emergency generator.

PROGRESS MADE ON NEXT GENERATION OF MSC SALVAGE SHIPS

Austal USA has begun construction on the 6th Navajo-class towing, salvage, and rescue vessel slated to replace the aging workhorse ships in the Military Sealift Command fleet.

The new class of vessels are based on existing commercial towing offshore vessel designs and will replace the Powhatan-class ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships which were constructed in the early 1980s. Each ship in the class is being named in honor of prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

Gulf Island Fabrication is currently constructing the first vessels in the series, the USNS NAVAJO, USNS CHEROKEE NATION and the USNS SAGINAW OJIBWE ANISHINABEK. Bollinger Shipyard is working on the LENNI LENAPE and MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION. Austal has taken orders for the next two ships in the series.

The Navajo-class vessels will provide a wide range of missions including open ocean towing, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide area search and surveillance.

WORK BEGINS ON NEW TRAINING VESSEL FOR MAINE MARITIME

Philly Shipyard, Inc., began cutting steel for the third National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) destined for Maine Maritime Academy, with a late 2024 delivery date targeted.

Construction of five NSMVs to replace aging training vessels at the state maritime academies has been authorized and fully funded. The first vessel in the series will replace the almost 60-year old SUNY training ship EMPIRE STATE VI early next year. The second will relieve the 54-year old TS KENNEDY at Massachusetts Maritime Academy and is expected to be delivered in 2024. The third and fourth newbuilds will replace vessels at Maine Maritime Academy and Texas A&M Maritime Academy. The fifth will go to the California State University Maritime Academy (CMA). Construction for the fifth will begin in 2023 and delivery is set to take place in 2026.

In addition to being a state-of-the-art training and educational platform, each ship will feature modern hospital facilities, a helicopter pad, and the ability to accommodate up to 1,000 people in times of humanitarian need. Adding to the NSMV's capability, it will provide needed roll-on/roll-off and container storage capacity for use during disaster relief missions.

LONGTIME AFSCME PRESIDENT HAS DIED

Gerald McEntee, who led AFSCME as President from 1981 until his retirement in 2012, died at home on July 10 in Naples, FL at the age of 87. An influential labor leader, AFSCME membership under his presidency soared from 900,000 to 1.4 million.

Current AFSCME President Lee Saunders said, "Jerry McEntee was a visionary leader and one of the most fearless, ferocious advocates working people have ever had. Standing up for people who strengthen their communities through public service was his passion and his life's work...As our president for 31 years, he led AFSCME to historic growth, putting in place one of the labor movement's strongest and most aggressive organizing programs. He made AFSCME a political powerhouse, with his innate understanding that political action was essential to giving working people a voice, from the White House down to every city council across the country."

U.S. PORTS SET RECORDS AS WEST COAST LABOR TALKS CONTINUE

Imports set a record high this spring as the nation's major container ports worked to reduce congestion and retailers stocked up before the ILWU labor contract expired, according to the monthly Global Port Tracker report released by the National Retail Federation and Hackett Associates.

"Cargo volume is expected to remain high as we head into the peak shipping season, and it is essential that all ports continue to operate with minimal disruption," NRF Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy Jonathan Gold said. "Supply chain challenges will continue throughout the remainder of the year, and it is particularly important that labor and management at West Coast ports remain at the bargaining table and reach an agreement."

The contract between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association expired July 1, but cargo operations are continuing. NRF and more than 150 groups recently wrote to the White House asking the administration to work with both sides to avoid disruption.

Ports saw a surge in activity this spring as a slowdown in cargo from Chinese factories closed by COVID-19 gave them a chance to clear built-up congestion. Retailers bringing in seasonal merchandise and importing other goods early to avoid any problems related to the contract negotiations may have also contributed to volume.

U.S. ports covered by Global Port Tracker handled 2.4 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units – one 20-foot container or its equivalent – in May, the latest month for which final numbers are available. That was up 6 percent from April and up 2.7 percent year over year. It also set a new record for the number of containers imported in a single month since NRF began tracking imports in 2002, topping 2.34 million TEU this March. Ports have not yet reported June numbers, but Global Port Tracker projected the month at 2.25 million TEU, up 4.8 percent from the same month last year. That would bring the first half of the year to 13.5 million TEU, a 5.4 percent increase year over year.

GLOBAL PIRACY AT LOWEST LEVEL IN DECADES

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) issued its latest global piracy report finding the lowest number of reported incidents for the first half of any year since 1994. IMB's latest global piracy report details 58 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships – down from 68 incidents during the same period last year. In the first six months of 2022, IMB's Piracy Reporting Center listed 55 vessels boarded, two attempted attacks and one vessel hijacked.

Despite no crew kidnappings reported during this period, violence against and the threat to crews continues with 23 crew taken hostage and a further five crew threatened.

Of the 58 incidents, 12 were reported in the Gulf of Guinea, ten were armed robberies, the other two were piracy.

Vessels continue to be targeted and boarded by local perpetrators when transiting the Singapore Straits, which account for over 25% of all incidents reported globally since the start of the year. The perpetrators were successful in boarding the vessels in all 16 incidents reported. While considered low level opportunistic crimes, crews continue to be at risk with weapons reported in at least six incidents.

Although no incidents were reported there since the start of the year, the threat of piracy still exists in the waters off the southern Red Sea and in the Gulf of Aden, which include the Yemeni and Somali coasts. Even though the opportunity for incidents has reduced, the Somali pirates continue to possess the capability and capacity to carry out incidents.

REVISED MARITIME ADVISORY STRESSES DANGERS IN GULF OF GUINEA

The Maritime Administration has updated a Maritime Advisory to warn U.S.-flag interests of threats to shipping in the Gulf of Guinea.

U.S. Maritime Advisory 2022-007 warns that pirates, armed robbers, and kidnapping for ransom (KFR) groups continue to operate off Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe, and Gabon. The Advisory notes that these nefarious parties are targeting a variety of vessels including tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger vessels, and vessels supporting oil drilling/production. These groups have boarded vessels up to 275 nautical miles from shore, and it is not uncommon for them to fire upon vessels during boardings and attempted boardings. KFR groups generally kidnap senior crew members to include the Master, Chief Engineer, and any Western or foreign crew members. Kidnapped crew members are normally taken ashore in the Niger Delta region where KFR groups demand ransom payments in exchange for the safe return of the crew members. Supplemental information may also be found at the MarAd Office of Maritime Security website at <https://go.usa.gov/xUKsb>.

RENEWED FOCUS ON BATTLING PIRACY IN GULF OF GUINEA

The Government of Nigeria and shipping stakeholders including the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) have launched a new strategy to end piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG). Despite a 60 percent decline in piracy-related attacks, following increased counter-piracy efforts, all reported crew kidnappings in 2021 were reported in the GoG. The strategy establishes a mechanism to periodically assess the effectiveness of counter-piracy initiatives and countries' commitments in the Gulf. It will identify areas of improvement and reinforcement in order to eliminate piracy, secure trade routes, reassure traversing crews, and support local communities.

Piracy activity in the GoG has posed a severe threat to seafarers and local communities for over a decade. In 2020, 40 percent of piracy attacks, and 95 percent of crew kidnappings occurred in the region. However, attacks decreased by nearly 60 percent in 2021, following the establishment of Deep Blue, the Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Maritime Safety Agency (NIMASA) anti-piracy project, and increased international counter-piracy operations in the GoG.

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, August 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

Tuesday, August 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, August 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, August 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, August 12 – Honolulu@1100.

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*M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
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can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.*

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated 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. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.