

## The Newsletter of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission

2024 Vol 1 (issue #16)

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As we look forward to Spring, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission is already off to a busy start for 2024.

We are pleased to feature the new Commander of the USACE Pittsburgh District, Col. Nicholas Melin, as our guest this issue for our 3 Rivers, 3 Questions segment.

PortPitt staff members Matt Pavlosky and Scott Harshman had a very successful visit to Washington DC participating in the annual Waterways Council Inc Capitol Hill Fly-in, walking the Hill and meeting with legislative staffers to keep the inland waterways top of mind in DC ensuring that the funding for navigation upgrades remains on schedule.

The Allegheny River has been voted Pennsylvania River of the Year for 2024 in a competition organized by the Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers. This is important as we work with the Save the Allegheny River (STAR) coalition to raise awareness and prioritize the operations of the Allegheny River.

Also, I would like to call your attention to the Coast Guard's Industry Day coming up on March 1 (more details in the newsletter). On behalf of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission, Happy Spring, everyone!

*Mary Ann Bucci* Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission

### US Coast Guard MSU Pittsburgh to Host Industry Day on March 1st

The USCG Marine Safety Unit Pittsburgh will host an "Industry Day" on March 1st, 2024, at the Allegheny County Emergency Services Building in Coraopolis, PA. MSU Commander Eric Velez and his staff will facilitate the event where various leaders, experts, and operators in the marine transportation and security industry meet to discuss policies and issues impacting the field. Amongst the topics to be covered include; an update from the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Elizabeth Lock and Dam removal, trends in Third Party Organizations/Towing Safety Management Systems (TPO/TSMS), OSRO Response/GUIE, as well as district updates and awards presentations. The day's full agenda can be found on Page 6 of this newsletter.

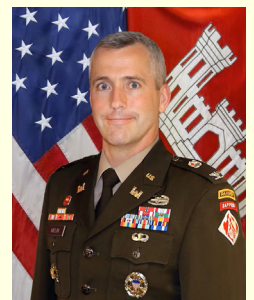
The event will start with a networking meet & greet at 8:30am, and education sessions will begin at 9:00am. Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided at no cost.

A link to register for the event can be found here: [2024 Industry Day Invitation and RSVP](#).



### 3 RIVERS, 3 QUESTIONS

with *Col. Nicholas Melin*



*Col. Melin assumed command of the Pittsburgh District of the US Army Corps of Engineers on August 4, 2023. He previously served as the division chief for Oceania, South, and Southeast Asia in the Directorate for Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J-5) on the Joint Staff.*

**1. Colonel Melin, welcome to the Pittsburgh District! Let us know what your experience has been so far, and how are you getting acclimated to the region?**

My family and I love Pittsburgh! Since we arrived last July, we have been really impressed with how much the community around our three rivers has to offer. We got the opportunity to enjoy pickle hoagies and pickle margaritas at Picklesburgh, take in a Pirates game (which they won in the 9th inning) at the most beautiful ballpark in America, see the

continued on page 2 . . .



### PortPitt sponsors WCI Capitol Hill Fly-in

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission was a proud sponsor of the Waterways Council Inc.'s Annual Capitol Hill Fly-In on February 7th. PortPitt staff members Scott Harshman and Matt Pavlosky were pleased to be joined by industry stakeholders such as American Consolidated Natural Resources,



Campbell Transportation Company, Inc., Colona Transfer, Industry Terminal & Salvage, and Nicholas Enterprises. These companies take pride in representing the needs and issues of our entire Port District. In all, the two PA delegations from the Port of Pittsburgh District made 11

Hill visits and met with congressional offices from Pennsylvania & West Virginia to educate and discuss the needs of the inland waterways.

Among the top legislative priorities for the coming year are to enact appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024 Energy & Water Development and related agencies, to fulfill WCI's request in the Water Resources Development (WRDA) Act of 2024 that ensures that IJA-funded inland waterways construction projects remain 100% federally funded, as well as securing the full amount supportable by annual diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) when congress begins working on the FY25 appropriation bills.



As we work to rebuild our infrastructure and continue to promote the efficiency, safety and quality of our inland waterways system, these visits with our elected officials and their staff members are integral to educate, maintain relationships, and to sustain a strong inland waterway network.



### 3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Col. Melin (continued)

Christmas Tree lighting at the City County Building, and most recently sled down some of Mount Lebanon's steepest hills! The community here is so warm and welcoming that my kids are already becoming die-hard Yinzers.

I have been tremendously impressed by the critical role that the Pittsburgh District of the Army Corps of Engineers plays in supporting the region. The team is directly impacting people's lives every day. Our 23 locks and dams along the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio keep commerce moving, enable recreation, and support an economically vibrant maritime economy. The 16 multi-purpose reservoirs the District operates keep people safe in their homes by mitigating the risk of flooding, while also providing world class recreational sites that are open to all. Our biologists and scientists work hard to keep the waters of the Three Rivers clean and able to support diverse ecosystems.

I could go on and on about this region and the Pittsburgh District. There is no place my family and I would rather be, and no better job that I could possibly have!

**2. There is quite a lot going on in the District in terms of projects, the Charleroi Locks and Dam are nearing completion on the Mon River, and the Upper Ohio Navigation Project has received initial funding and is moving toward construction. Please give us your thoughts on these projects, and what can be anticipated for 2024?**

This is a tremendously important year for inland navigation – and one where our industry partners and the general public will see many changes. On the Lower Monongahela, we will be opening the new chamber at Charleroi Locks and Dam after almost two decades of construction. It is the newest lock in the United States. The new chamber will both increase the capacity that can be passed in a single lockage and increase lockage speed. We will also completely remove Elizabeth Locks and Dam. The removal of the dam will begin in July and be completed in December. The lock will be removed over the following two construction seasons. When finished, there will be 30 miles of uninterrupted navigation between Charleroi Locks and Dam and Braddock Locks and Dam. This will increase the speed of transit for the entire Monongahela navigation system and provide over \$200 million in annual benefits to the region.

As we navigate these upcoming changes on the Mon (no pun intended), it is important for stakeholders to be aware of some near-term and long-term impacts. When we start removing Elizabeth Locks and Dam in July, there will be a period-of-time where navigation will be suspended as the river level stabilizes. We understand the impacts of stopping navigation and are working to keep the navigation suspension as brief as possible. As the dam is being removed between July and December,

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### 3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Col. Melin (continued)

boaters and commercial traffic will need to continue to use the lock chamber at Elizabeth until such time as the navigation channel is safe for traffic. We will be forthcoming with information regarding the progress of the removal and make that information readily available to all. Finally, those who live and work along the Monongahela will experience a long-term change in pool levels. From Charleroi to Elizabeth, the level of the Mon will drop approximately 3.2 feet. From Elizabeth to Braddock, the pool will rise approximately 2 feet from where it has been since approximately 2008. Thank you in advance for your patience as we make some big changes along the Mon in the upcoming year!

As we get closer to completing efforts along the Mon, we are simultaneously launching the recapitalization of the first three Locks and Dams on the Ohio River. This project, which we call the Upper Ohio Mega-Project, will build new, expanded lock chambers at Montgomery, Emsworth, and Dashields Locks and Dams. These are the three oldest and smallest lock chambers along the Ohio River. Work at Montgomery Locks and Dam has already started on a few preparatory contracts, and we have issued the solicitation for construction of the new lock chamber. This project has received over \$800 million in dedicated funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and we hope to award the contract later this year. While construction work at Emsworth and Dashields Locks and Dams will not begin until Montgomery Locks and Dam is completed years from now, the design effort for Emsworth is underway.

The Upper Ohio project is a transformative initiative for the region, which will both upgrade our inland navigation system and safeguard its reliability for commercial and recreational activities for the next century.

### 3. What are some of your other goals specific to the Pittsburgh District, in terms of objectives and initiatives which may be new to this District?

Probably my biggest goal in my first year in command is to build relationships with all our great stakeholders in the region. It takes partnership and collaboration to deliver safe, navigable waterways. Getting to know our stakeholders from industry, regional and local governance, and communities along the rivers will help the Pittsburgh District team to deliver quality projects safely, on-time, and under budget.

On a personal note, it is the greatest privilege of my career to command the Pittsburgh District of USACE – directly serving the American people where they work and live. I hope to bring my excitement and optimism to every project we work on with our great partners in the Pittsburgh area!



### PortPitt Welcomes New Board Members

The Governor's office has appointed the following new commissioners to the PortPitt board:

- **Conor Lamb**, former Congressman and attorney at Kline and Specter, will be the new PortPitt Chairman.
- **Dr. Quintin Bullock**, President of the Community College of Allegheny County
- **LaShawn Burton-Faulk**, Executive Director of the Manchester Citizens Corporation.
- **Dan Alwine**, Vice-President, Government Affairs for the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce.
- **David Coder**, former Greene County Commissioner and prior PortPitt board member.
- **Greg Bernarding**, Business Manager for the Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council.

### Allegheny River voted PA River of the Year 2024

We are happy to report that the Allegheny River has been chosen by public vote as Pennsylvania's 2024 River of the Year! The award was announced by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as the Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers. The Allegheny River was nominated and campaigned for by Three Rivers Waterkeeper who will receive a \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund various River of the Year activities.



Three rivers in PA were nominated, and the Allegheny River received 41% of the 20,259 votes cast. This program engages our communities by providing an opportunity to showcase all the nominated rivers and the great work being done in Pennsylvania on these natural resources.

The 325-mile Allegheny River, one of the three rivers that meets at the point in Pittsburgh, is just as much a part of the nature of western Pennsylvania as it is part of our economic backbone. The locks and dams on the Allegheny were constructed in the early 20th century and make possible not only commercial navigation, but also a variety of recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. It also provides drinking water for more than one million people. The Allegheny Islands Wilderness is a seven-island, 372-acre preserve that boasts old-growth hardwoods and prolific bird populations.



### Gone Phishing? by Nate Turer

It's a new year, and that means another year of vigilance for cyber and financial fraud. But we're here to help you through that. In this newsletter we'll be talking about online banking. More so than ever we are conducting our business online. For many at this point, cashing checks via their cell phone, transferring funds via app, or managing finance without

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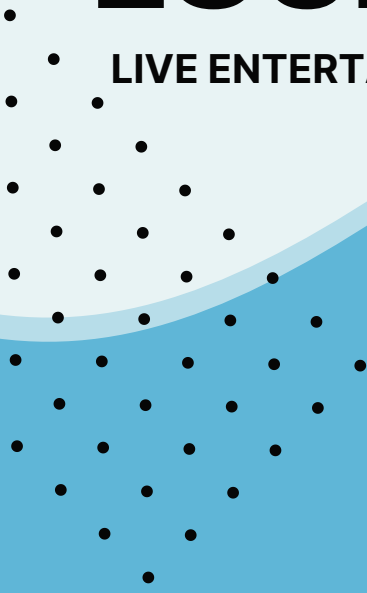


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# ARDC PRESENTS 8th ANNUAL LOCK KICKOFF

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**pennsylvania**  
FISH & BOAT COMMISSION

## **BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE COURSE**

**AT CARNEGIE SCIENCE CENTER**  
1 ALLEGHENY AVE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

**FEBRUARY 17, 2024**  
**8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

### **PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Please email Officer Michael Johnson at [miejohnson@pa.gov](mailto:miejohnson@pa.gov) to register.

This certification course is a fun and interactive way for the first-time boater or seasoned boater to learn basic boating regulations and requirements along with in-water activities relating to lifejackets and self-rescue. This classroom course has a certification exam at the end. Anyone 11 years of age and older with an interest in learning the basics of boating, practicing in-water skills, and earning a boating safety education certificate is welcome to attend. Individuals under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

*This event is free and open to the public.*

*Parking in any of Carnegie Science Center's associated lots will be covered and passes will be provided at the conclusion of the course, courtesy of Carnegie Science Center.*



## USCG MSU PITTSBURGH INDUSTRY DAY

Location: Allegheny County Emergency Operations Center  
Facilitators: LT Sean Dolan, Mr. David Fox  
Date: March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024  
Time: 0830

### Agenda Items

0830 - 0900	Meet and Greet	
0900 - 0925	Opening remarks by CDR Eric J. Velez, Commanding Officer, MSU Pittsburgh	
0925 - 0950	Mr. Steven Douglass, USCG Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise.	TPO/TSMS, Trends for 2024
0950 - 1015	USCG Sector Ohio Valley Command Staff	Upcoming changes to Sector in 2024
1015 - 1040	Break	
1040 - 1105	Mr. Sam Dinkins, Technical Program Manager Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)	Water Quality Testing
1105 - 1130	Award presentation, Tiki Boat Captains	
1130 - 1300	Lunch, Provided by Port of Pittsburgh.	
1300 - 1325	Mr. Bill Krulac and Brian Feist, McCutcheon Enterprises	OSRO Response, GUIE
1325 - 1350	Mr. Steve Frost and Ms. Claire Murphy	Elizabeth Lock and Dam Removal Project
1350 - 1425	Closing Remarks	



## Gone Phishing? (continued)

stepping foot within a physical building are part and parcel of life. However, this convenience does bring risk. This isn't to say you should not be using these services or tools, but just the opposite. After all what is the point of technology if not to improve and simplify our lives? But along with that we must remain vigilant for the following scams.

Firstly, let us discuss the old school scam of "check kiting." This was more common in the days before networked banks. It works by writing a check from one account with insufficient funds to another account, and then using that money, which we'll call the "float," even though it only exists on paper. This may be done in a circular fashion using multiple banks and may or may not be done with the expectation of having the correct money in the original account by the time it all clears. This scam took advantage of the time it would take a check to clear. This same principle of kiting is the current key to a growing, and very serious scam that uses an individual's online financial accounts in place of the bank from the example. Should this be attempted on you, you will receive in your account a transfer from someone you do not know, likely in a large amount, potentially thousands. From this you will then be contacted by a person claiming to have transferred the money to you by mistake and will ask for you to return it to a different account. They may beg and claim they need it for food or their children, or even offer a reward for its quick return. Your account will say you have the money in it, and if you return it to the specified account, all may seem well. However, what will happen is in a few business days you will log into your account and find yourself short the amount you received, leaving you high and dry.

So, what happened here? The money you received was stolen, via credit card, compromised account, or some other means. When the money entered your account, you were credited it on transfer, and when you returned it back, the money came from your legitimate account. When the rightful owner of the money issued a chargeback or reported the theft, PayPal, or whatever processor you were using, reversed the first trans-

action as it was stolen money. However, the money you sent was not stolen, and likely has been removed from the ecosystem. This scam allows a criminal to turn stolen money that is likely to be confiscated, into legitimate "stable" currency. The "float" in this case was the initial money, which for our purposes doesn't exist. So, you were paid with fake money, or illegitimate money, and repaid it with real money. To avoid this scam is simple, if you receive payment out of nowhere, note down the amount you received, record it, and ensure you have the money to cover that amount in your account including the stolen funds. Expect it to be removed from your account within several business days once the original stolen funds are reported. Depending on the amount of money you may want to report the transaction to the platform or your financial institution. Do not send money to a different account.

If you or your business are selling services using an online marketplace there is another variation of this scam, where the attacker will purchase a product or service, then overpay purposefully with a credit card, PayPal, or other service. Upon overpayment they will demand a refund of the difference to a different account or format. What is happening here is the same as before: they have paid with stolen money, and by giving them money back, you turn the stolen money into real money. What to do in this case is to cancel the transaction in its entirety.

If you fall for a scam, it is important to report it and talk about it. Scammers are professionals and use well researched and tested methods to attack their victim. There is no shame in being tricked. Victims are just that. The previously mentioned scams should be reported to the State Attorney Generals office, as well to the Federal Trade Commission. These reports help law enforcement and security professionals in combating scammers, as well as understanding the threat environment. If a scammer is attempting to blackmail you, report it immediately to the FBI at [IC3.Gov](https://www.fbi.gov/intercept).

If you have any further questions regarding scams or fraud, feel free to reach out to me at [Nate@PortPitt.com](mailto:Nate@PortPitt.com).

## OUR PORTPITT TEAM



**MARY ANN BUCCI**  
Executive Director

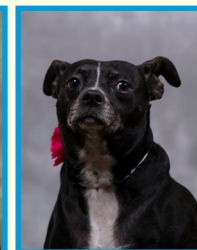
**SCOTT HARSHMAN**  
Marketing & Program Manager

**MATT PAVLOSKY**  
Public Relations Manager

**MIKE BRINZA**  
Operations Manager

**NATE TURER**  
Logistics & Cybersecurity

**MICHA**  
PortPitt Mascot



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