

The Newsletter of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission

2024 Vol 4 (issue #19)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Well, the first snow of the season has fallen and the bustle of the holiday season is upon us. As always, it seems as though 2024 has gone by in a flash, and now, 2025 is just right around the corner. There will be newly elected officials coming into office, and so our annual Washington DC Hill Walk this February will focus on informing newly elected officials and their staffs regarding our work and the overall needs of the Pittsburgh District. Construction will remain a factor on our rivers, as work will be coming to a close on the lower Mon Project, while the Montgomery Locks and Dam Project will be in full swing, and the work necessary to find continued funding for the completion of the Upper Ohio Project will remain a top priority.

As for this edition of the Newsflow, I'm so pleased to see that Gretchen Chamberlain of ACBL, who is also the current president of the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh, is featured in our 3 Rivers, 3 Questions spotlight. She has really grown in this industry and has taken on numerous leadership roles amongst our partner organizations. In addition, we will provide a WRDA update, with the long-awaited 75/25 cost share for the Inland Water Trust Fund now becoming a reality which will help to lessen the financial burden on our industry. Also, our own cybersecurity specialist, Nate Turer, has provided an article to help keep you safe and informed while navigating those digital pathways.

Wishing all of you a safe, joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!



U.S House Passes WRDA 2024

We were so excited here at the Port of Pittsburgh Commission to learn last week that a final agreement had been reached on the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA) by the U.S. House and Senate leadership. The House passed WRDA on December 10th by a vote of 399-18. The Senate is expected to pass it as well in the next couple days. The Pittsburgh region has some of the oldest in the nation lock & dam infrastructure along our waterways and passing WRDA on a two-year cycle is critical to projects not only in our region but across our country.

Key provisions within WRDA that are important to our region include:

- The cost-share adjustment for capital improvements from the current 65 percent general revenues and 35 percent Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) to 75 percent general revenues and 25 percent IWTF. This inclusion in the final WRDA 2024 will safeguard the expedited completion of these necessary and overdue projects including here in the Port of Pittsburgh District with the Upper Ohio River Navigation Project. It will also help to ensure sooner realization of the economic and environmental benefits to the region and the

continued on page 2 . . .



3 RIVERS, 3 QUESTIONS

with *Gretchen Chamberlain*

Gretchen Chamberlain is the President of the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh (WAP) and Sales Director at ACBL.



1. Gretchen, we're pleased to feature you in "3 Rivers, 3 Questions"! Tell our readers a bit about you and your experience in the Pittsburgh river industry.

I'm so glad to take part in this. Thank you! Well, I started in the river industry in 2001 with an internship at Premier Marine. I was working with Rex Woodward, Lisa Lubas Dave Gallup, and we were contracted for Memco Barge Line. I was given the chance to dabble in everything: sales, dispatch, safety, you name it! As I look back on it, I'm so grateful to those who helped me along the way, like Pam Weiss and Mike Brazier, Troy Krebs, Pat McCarthy . . . there are so many more and too many to name. It was around that time that I met Mary Ann Bucci at the Port of Pittsburgh, who has truly been my mentor. She really helped me become

continued on page 2 . . .



WRDA (continued)

nation.

- Authorization of a Feasibility Study for the Allegheny River.
- Language preserving the current levels of service at locks and dams along the Allegheny River until completion of the Feasibility Study.
- Additional guidance to the Army Corps of Engineers for using remote lock and dam operations including for the Lower Mon Project.

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission recently sent letters to our western PA congressional delegation urging them to support final passage of WRDA 2024 and thanking them for their continued focus on helping to both improve the movement of freight on our waterways and modernize our aging lock and dam infrastructure.



Corps of Engineers Awards Contract for New Lock Chamber at Montgomery Locks and Dam

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District has awarded a nearly \$770 million contract to construct a new 110-foot by 600-foot lock chamber at Montgomery Locks and Dam in Monaca, Pennsylvania. The contract was awarded to Trumbull-Brayman Construction Corporation, Joint Venture of Pittsburgh.

This work is part of the Upper Ohio Navigation Project, which includes constructing new primary lock chambers at the Emsworth, Dashields and Montgomery locks and dams.

The existing 56-foot by 360-foot auxiliary lock chamber will be removed and replaced with a 110-foot by 600-foot primary chamber.

“Completing the new lock chamber’s plan marks a significant achievement for the district’s team,” said Col. Nicholas Melin, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District. “This project is vital to ensuring safe and reliable navigation on the upper Ohio River. With the contract awarded, we are ready to advance this critical infrastructure for the region and the nation.”

Montgomery Locks is a critical element of national supply chains, enabling the transport of 12 million tons of goods annually on barges into and out of the Port of Pittsburgh. The locks are nearly a century old and are at an increased risk of failure that would severely disrupt these supply chains.



3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Gretchen Chamberlain (continued)

actively involved with the industry through networking and stressed the importance of the relationships established through organizations like the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh.

In 2002 I applied for the Traffic Club of Pittsburgh scholarship, and this really put me on the map. That led to an internship with Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Company, and later, a job with AEP Memco, as a junior sales associate. After a brief departure from the industry, I returned to American Commercial Barge Lines (ACBL), then worked locally for Marion Hill Associates, where I got to learn a whole different side of the industry--marine construction and commercial diving, and I was able to broaden my knowledge as a result of their service offerings. That experience ultimately led me to ACBL, where I currently work as Sales Director.

2. Congratulations on your appointment as the President of the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh (WAP)! Tell us about some exciting things going on with the organization? Why is it important to be a WAP member?

2024 has been quite an impactful year on our three rivers. Beginning with the demolition of the Elizabeth Dam at Lock 3, the resulting low water situation, and the overall impact on the commercial industry, not to mention the marinas and personal property, etc. on the Lower Mon.

Additionally, the removal of the USCG MSU Pittsburgh Patrol boats has certainly had an impact on the navigation of our waterways, as the USCG remains crucial to the safety and security of our rivers. We must prioritize finding solutions to these issues for waterway users, whatever is most efficient, environmentally friendly, and then look for funding.

Also, we continue to monitor the US Steel / Nippon Steel acquisition. US Steel has been such an advocate for our rivers, and those jobs are so important. All of these issues impact our rivers and those who use it.

It’s so important to keep people informed. WAP is working to roll out a new website for its members in order to bring the organization into 21st Century. Members will have many new features such as an online member directory, providing new ways interact and to do business. Plus, the added functionality to register for events via the website such as our HAZWOPER trainings and our Man Overboard seminars.

continued on page 3 . . .



3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Gretchen Chamberlain (cont.)

3.. You are certainly active in our industry and it shows you care about its future. What are some of your goals and hopes long-term for the Port of Pittsburgh District?

Continuing to build WAP's membership is vital, and part of that is building partnerships with organizations like the Traffic Club of Pittsburgh, and of course, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission! We also work closely with "We Work the Waterways", a workforce development program under IRPT that helps introduce high school students to careers on the waterways. Those students could be part of our next-generation workforce. As our existing workforce approaches retirement, introducing new workers is the key to our future.

Raising awareness of our issues to those beyond our industry is so important, especially to those locally who are even remotely touched by our work on the rivers. Pittsburgh was once the nation's busiest port on the inland river system, and I want to see us back there again! I feel we're all doing such good work out there, and there are so many good people in this industry, and it's such a family. I'm grateful for the education, knowledge and years of support from that family, and I want us all to succeed.

I might be biased, but I believe that the Waterways Industry is one of the hardest working, most influential and overall great group of people. I am honored to be a part of it!



Holiday Season Scams & Frauds by Nate Turer

Happy Holidays and a big wish that you are staying warm from your friends at the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. The holidays are often characterized as a season of giving and charity, however this is often exploited by the grinch-es among us. This year going into the holiday season you should be cognizant of phishing and scam activities specifically targeting the merry and bright. Charities raise, on average, about a quarter of their online revenue for the year online during this time, with Americans donating \$484 billion a year. This impressive generosity becomes a target for scammers. So, when you or your company are looking to make donations to causes close to you this year, please consider these factors and take these steps.

The following signs can be heavily indicative of a scam, and any transaction should be avoided if these are present:

continued on page 4 . . .

Teaching the Next Generation About Our Region's Maritime Community



On October 22nd, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission participated in the We Work the Waterways event at the Gateway Clipper Fleet with Scott Harshman and Nate Turer representing the PPC at this event which strives to educate high school students about the maritime community.

More than 200 local students and teachers engaged with maritime professionals to learn about career opportunities, maritime supply management, logistics, safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and the strategic importance of Pittsburgh's waterways and their impact on the economy, jobs, and the quality of life here in southwestern PA.

At the PortPitt station, students were given an opportunity to spin our Prize Wheel and answer trivia questions about the category it landed on for a prize. We had a lot of engagement and interest about the rivers, the city, and the Port Commission itself. PortPitt's table was run by Nate Turer, while Scott Harshman participated as a speaker in a separate large group discussion. The event concluded with a served lunch and a river cruise aboard the Gateway Clipper Fleet for all involved, showing off our three rivers to the young people who had just learned so much about them.

PortPitt is a proud supporter and financial sponsor of this educational and workforce development program through the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh and the Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals trade association. We greatly appreciate the Gateway Clipper Fleet and all of the organizations and individuals who participate in this event which is held twice a year.

To learn more about opportunities to participate in future We Work the Waterways events, please reach out to Robert McCallister, Administrative Director, Waterways Association of Pittsburgh, 412-512-3060, or rmccallister@wapgh.org.



Holiday Scams (continued)

- If a charity offers you an assured sweepstakes winning in return for your monetary donation. This is not only a scam, but is a crime.
- If a charity attempts to pressure you into giving by sending you a receipt for a donation you did not make, this is an attempt to put pressure on you to give them money to correct some form of nonexistent mistake. This is a scam!
- High pressure tactics. Scammers often rely on a sense of urgency to force their victims into handing over money. Calls or emails saying that the money has to be given immediately or bad things may occur, or put immense pressure on you to give in this moment are attempting to separate you from your money before you can do your due diligence, and should be disregarded.
- Do not give your donation via cash in the mail, gift card, Moneygram, Zello, Cashap, Western Union wire transfer, or cryptocurrency. These forms of monetary transfer have less oversight and security than a payment via credit card or check.
- Remember, scammers and criminals can spoof or manipulate their caller ID. Do not inherently trust a call just because it shows a known organization on the caller ID.
- Verifying that a charity is real and legitimate can sometimes take some of legwork. If you receive a cold call or email from a known charity you know of or has “name brand” recognition, go directly to their website from a search engine and look to give there, rather giving your card info over the phone. When receiving emails from a charity always be critical of the email body itself and follow the same steps you would for checking if it is a phishing email. Steps like confirming whether the

address it came from looks legitimate. When hovering over links, do they go where they say they do? Strange misspellings or improper graphics are additional warning signs.

- When dealing with or seeking out a new charity to support, research them through a service such as [give.org](https://www.give.org), which is the Better Business Bureau’s Giving Alliance; or other services such as [Charity Watch](https://www.charitywatch.org) or [Candid](https://www.candid.org). These services may indicate whether your donations to them are tax deductible, but this can also be found through the IRS’s tax-exempt organization search tool on their website.

Sadly, scammers often find their way to Whoville, so if you find yourself receiving these calls or emails you can report them to the following:

Federal Trade Commission – They will share this information with law enforcement as needed and may use your report to help bring cases against bad actors.

[ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov) – The FTC or the United States Government will not contact you for payment, request transfer of money to “keep it safe” or require verification codes from you.

PA Department of State –
BPOA - Pennsylvania Licensing System at pals.pa.gov

Federal Bureau of Investigation through the Internet crime complaint center for fraud involving the internet.
Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [IC3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)

As always, do not hesitate this holiday season to reach out to me, Nate Turer, at Nate@PortPitt.com or 413-735-1458 with any questions regarding scams, fraud, or security. From all of us here at the Port of Pittsburgh Commission, Happy Holidays!

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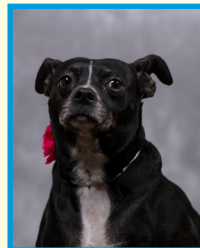
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GOOD THINGS FLOW FROM HERE

