

TR NEWS

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Inland Waterways: Opening the Channels

3 Introduction **Inland Waterways: Opening the Channels**

Robert W. Portiss

Inland waterways historically have played a key role in the growth and development of the nation's economy, and current needs and projections call for the revitalization and expansion of waterways services.

4 **Just About Everything You Need To Know About Transportation You Can Learn on the Erie Canal**

Catherine T. Lawson

The Erie Canal brought new dimensions to the planning and building of inland waterways, not only providing connections for the young nation to expand westward but also promoting economic activities, improving mobility for goods, and opening new opportunities for passenger travel. As the author shows, the history of the canal offers practical lessons for transportation planning on the role of education, the use of financing strategies, the impact on economic activities, and the opportunities to serve passengers.

10 **Measuring the Service Levels of Inland Waterways: Alternative Approaches for Budget Decision Making**

David V. Grier

Federal budget proposals would focus limited funds for waterways operations and maintenance on projects that serve the greatest volume of commerce and would reduce funding for projects that do not meet a specified threshold. Ranking waterways in terms of cargo ton-miles favors mainstem projects, this author points out, noting that the new metric of system ton-miles, which measures a waterway's contribution to the whole system, reveals the commercial importance of tributary waterways. However, the impact of a project in terms of transportation savings may be an even more appropriate measure in allocating funds to maintain the aging infrastructure.

18 **River Efficiency, Fuel Taxes, and Modal Shifts: Tennessee Valley Authority Model Assists Policy Makers**

Larry G. Bray, Chrisman A. Dager, Ronald L. Henry, and M. Carolyn Koroa

Studying ways to measure the economic and social costs of the intermodal traffic shifts that would result from closing a waterway lock for reconstruction, the Tennessee Valley Authority developed a model for estimating river efficiency and fuel tax collections—key data for river system policy, the authors note. Efficiency ratings rank the Ohio River first, closely followed by the Lower Mississippi, but the model also shows that tributary navigation feeding mainstem traffic generates 50 percent of total fuel tax collections.

23 **Bringing the Ocean to Oklahoma: Waterway Is Economic Engine for Region**

Robert W. Portiss

24 **Safety Statistics That Make a Difference: U.S. Coast Guard, American Waterways Operators Partner for Results**

Douglas W. Scheffler and David H. Dickey

The U.S. Coast Guard and The American Waterways Operators—the association for the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry—have produced the first of a series of reports on key safety statistics, covering crew fatalities, oil spills, and vessel casualties for 1994 to 1999, pointing the way to “result-oriented action.” Sound analysis, open dialogue, and nonregulatory solutions are the hallmarks of the initiative, which seeks to promote and maintain downward trends in waterways incidents, according to the authors, who have been involved in the cooperative effort.



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Cover: Tug pushes coal barges through Coffeeville Lock, located on the Tombigbee River near Coffeeville, Alabama. The river is part of the Black Warrior–Tombigbee River system (photo by Adrien Lamarre, courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, South Atlantic Division).

features articles on innovative and timely research and development activities in all modes of transportation. Brief news items of interest to the transportation community are also included, along with profiles of transportation professionals, meeting announcements, summaries of new publications, and news of Transportation Research Board activities.

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**31 Improving European Waterways Navigation:
Danube Corridor Offers Key to Economic Development**

Reinhard Pfliegl

The inland waterways of Europe have vast, unused capacity. National and international initiatives are addressing technical, operational, legal, and commercial issues with the goal of integrating inland navigation in Europe. With the Central Eastern European countries joining the European Union, transport volumes are expected to grow rapidly, particularly along the Rhine-Main-Danube waterway linking ports on the North Sea and the Black Sea, this author reports. Inland navigation is seen as a low-cost, environment-friendly, energy-saving mode that can absorb increases in traffic and contribute to the European market, but much work remains.

**36 Point of View
Waterways Option Saves an Industry: Marine Links
Are Good for General Motors, Good for the United States**

Gregg M. Ward

Marine links proved vital in supplying several industries threatened by the highway congestion caused by border security measures after September 11. The United States should continue to develop the cross-border water freight option, according to the author, a participant in a successful ferry barge effort.

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**38 New TRB Special Report
Assessing the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
Improvement Program: TRB Study Committee
Recommends Reauthorization, Retooling**

Nancy P. Humphrey

Responding to a Congressional request, a TRB study committee evaluated the effects of a 10-year-old program that funds local and regional efforts to comply with the Clean Air Act Amendments by targeting transportation-related sources of emissions. Citing the many qualitative—but hard-to-quantify—benefits of the program, the committee recommended continuation but also several modifications that would target a wider range of transportation-related emissions and that would encourage better documentation of regional program results.

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COMING NEXT ISSUE



Feature articles track developments in rail passenger transport, including high-speed rail projects in Florida and California, adding capacity through shared-use rail corridors, Washington State's rail program, and more. All aboard!

Single-track line between Everett, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia, carries Cascades Talgo train on wooden trestle over river.