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February 16, 2007

Lieutenant Commander Lloyd Banks  
COMDT (G-PWM-1)  
Office of Ocean and Transportation Policy  
100 Second Street, SW, Room 1406  
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Lieutenant Commander Banks:

I would like to nominate the Maritime Navigation Safety Association (MNSA) for the Harbor Safety Committee of the Year Award. Following is MNSA's statement of purpose: "The objective of the Maritime Navigation Safety Association, Inc. is to promote communications among the mariners who share waterways from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico, and to provide a forum that addresses the maximum usage of these waterways emphasizing navigational safety and the environment." MNSA is a well respected Association whose membership is comprised of maritime professionals who equally represent all navigational concerns of both deep-draft and shallow-draft operations. MNSA often assists the Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard on special projects and reviews new facility permits.

Over the past year, MNSA is proud to have played a role in many important operations that affect navigation on the lower Mississippi River. Many of MNSA's efforts are not known outside of their Board because proactive positions are taken that help industry avoid problems before they occur. MNSA and its Board were very involved in restoring navigation on the Mississippi River and its feeder waterways after the devastating effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Shipping interests throughout the world were amazed at how quickly operations safely resumed. MNSA's membership was counted on to relay safety issues to the Coast Guard, and the unique mix of deep-draft and shallow-draft knowledge paved the way for several initiatives, including the delivery of fuel, freshwater, and assets that relocated people stranded by flood waters.

MNSA also provided assistance to the Coast Guard in a project that removed power lines over the Mississippi River at Mile 89.2 Above Head of Passes. The power lines were a potential hazard to vessels with large air drafts, such as cruise ships or container ships, especially when the river stages were high. Entergy's power lines were removed after one cruise ship diverted to another port because of the fear of arcing between the power line and the highest fixed point of the vessel.

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The removal project was a complete success largely because of a high level of cooperation and open meetings held to inform navigation interests of the removal operation.

MNSA was directly involved in working out a compromise between the Coast Guard and the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) on restrictions for the lower Kenner Bend Anchorage at Mile 113.3 to 114.3 Above Head of Passes. The compromise was important to navigational safety because, rather than closing the Anchorage, it allowed vessels to anchor with a restriction that cargo cranes not be used. Because vessels would no longer pose a threat to the airplanes whose flight paths crossed directly over the Anchorage, the FAA accepted this compromise.

MNSA has also worked to improve safety at the mouth of the Mississippi River and in the Passes of the Mississippi River delta by reaching out to commercial fishermen and shrimpers, recreational boaters, and supply boats that commonly use this reach of the river. MNSA closely coordinated with the Coast Guard on this project to establish a safer maritime environment and increased the knowledge of proper communications between deep-draft vessels and other users unique to this reach of the Mississippi River.

MNSA also assisted the contractors working on widening the Huey P. Long Bridge. This bridge crosses the Mississippi River at Mile 106.1 Above Head of Passes. MNSA recognized the need to work closely with the required work barges that are often attached to the bridge piers inside of the deep-draft channel. This project will take several years to complete, and MNSA will continue to assist those involved with safe passage through this treacherous reach of the Mississippi River.

MNSA continually monitors river surveys and dredging operations, reviews all facility and barge fleeting permits, and communicates closely with users on the lower Mississippi River.

Based on the above accomplishments, please consider the Maritime Navigation Safety Association for this much-deserved award.

Very truly yours,

GULF STATES MARITIME ASSOCIATION

  
Sean M. Duffy, Sr.  
President and CEO