

The Newsletter of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission

2023 Vol 3 (issue #14)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



It's been a busy and exciting summer for the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. To start, we are very happy to report that the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers have been awarded MARAD's Marine Highway M-79 Designation, which will open new economic development opportunities for those rivers. The PPC partnered with Waterways Council Inc. to bring its media tour to the port district, which helps tell our story of the importance of the river industry and our need to fund our aging infrastructure. Additionally, we welcomed the USACE's new commander, Colonel Nicolas Melin at the Change of Command Ceremony in August, which was followed by the groundbreaking for construction at the Montgomery Locks and Dam. The PPC staff was honored to take part in the christening of the ACNR vessel

David J. Podurciel; a well-deserved honor for one of river industry's biggest advocates.

From the PPC's programming side, we are excited to announce a new partnership with OpenTug, which will providing online logistics solutions to help connect our stakeholders in the port district and beyond. And we are pleased to announce the winners of our 2023 Senator James Ferlo Memorial Small Grants Program.

It has certainly been as eventful few months with much more to come. Please enjoy these stories in this latest edition of the "News Flow" and we wish you a great end to the summer!

Mary Ann Bucci Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers Receive New Marine Highway Route Designation



The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration has approved an application by the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization for the creation of a new United States Marine Highway Route Designation, the M-79, to include both the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers in Pennsylvania and the Monongahela River in West Virginia. The newly designated M-79 route will assist in the movement of goods, strengthen supply chains, and support local economies in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Eligible applicants along this route will be able to apply for future U.S. Marine Highway Program grants.

"This is great news for the region and our inland waterways," said Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director for the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. "President Biden's Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator, Mitch Landrieu, was in Pittsburgh on August 11th for the groundbreaking for the new Montgomery Lock & Dam on the Ohio River that is receiving \$858 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and we're also nearing completion of the lock and dam modernization projects on the Monongahela River. This new M-79 route designation gives us another tool in the toolbox to not only expand existing freight transported on our waterways, but

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3 RIVERS, 3 QUESTIONS

with *Sen. Lindsey Williams*



Lindsey Williams is a member of the Pennsylvania Senate (38th District) and serves on the Transportation Committee and the Game and Fisheries Committee.

1. The Port of Pittsburgh Commission is pleased to have you serve on our Board! As part of that role, you serve on our Small Grants Committee. What do you think of the program as a tool for achieving the PPC's goals? Has your experience with the program given you any insights into the workings of the PPC?

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission's Small Grants Program is a great tool for helping all of the organizations that provide programming and promote the assets of our rivers—from the smallest non-profits to larger for profits. Being on the Grant Committee gave me amazing insight into the programs and projects that are coming up. These applications were incredibly competitive and I learned a lot from reviewing them. I look forward to additional funding going through the Small Grants Program so that the Port of Pittsburgh Commission can help more of these amazing programs come to fruition.

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Marine Highway Route Designation (continued)

also attract potential new freight. We are grateful for the Administration's approval of our application and very appreciative of the vast support that we received for this initiative from both the Pennsylvania and West Virginia congressional delegations, state and local governments and agencies and in particular the City of Morgantown in West Virginia, private industry, and other organizations."

The MHP supports the increased use of America's navigable waterways to relieve landside congestion, provide new and efficient transportation options, and increase the productivity of the surface transportation system. By working closely with public and private organizations, the MHP helps create and sustain American jobs in U.S. ports, shipyards, and aboard vessels while also improving the nation's supply chains.

"The members of the Morgantown Monongalia County MPO are very excited about the designation of the Monongahela River as part of the marine highway network," said Bill Austin, Executive Director for the Morgantown Monongalia MPO. "This designation will help promote the use of the Monongahela for all forms of freight traffic. We hope this will help spur regional business while also reducing the amount of heavy freight traffic on our overburdened roadway network."

The MMMPO is the federally-designated transportation planning agency for Morgantown and Monongalia County. The MMMPO brings together the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Mountain Line Transit, local elected leadership, local government, the business community, and citizens in a regional partnership.



Groundbreaking at Montgomery Locks & Dam Kicks Off Construction for Upper Ohio Project

On Friday, August 11, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) hosted a groundbreaking ceremony at the Montgomery Locks and Dam to kick off construction to update the Ohio River's oldest and smallest navigation facilities, as part of the Upper Ohio Navigation Project. President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$857 million for constructing the new chamber at Montgomery Locks and Dam and \$77 million for designing the new lock chamber at Emsworth Locks and Dams. US Senator Robert Casey has been an advocate for our region's waterways infrastructure, and these funds are a direct result of his diligence and perseverance.

The construction at Montgomery will replace the auxiliary chambers, measuring 56 feet wide by 360 feet long, with locks measuring 110 feet wide by 600 feet long. The new, larger chambers will provide reliable, efficient, and sustainable navigation on the upper Ohio River.

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3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Sen. Lindsey Williams (continued)

2. Amongst the state committees on which you serve, are the state Transportation Committee, as well as the Game and Fisheries Committee. Let us know what those roles entail and how you believe they mesh with the mission of the PPC?

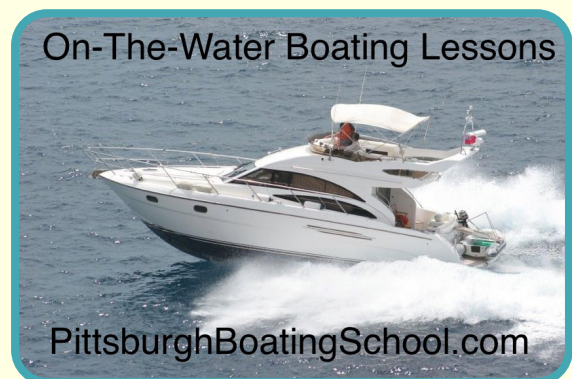
The State Transportation Committee and Game and Fisheries Committee both deal with topics and legislation that directly impact the PPC. That includes holding hearings and taking testimony from experts and stakeholders on how we all use our waterways. The Transportation Committee deals with commercial uses and travel, while the Game and Fisheries Committee ensures that our waterways are areas that we can all use for recreation. Together, my work on these committees can help to ensure that our policies at a state level enhance the work being done here at the PPC.

3. The eastern portion of your district (PA-38) follows the Allegheny River, which has become a focus for the Port of Pittsburgh Commission in terms of revitalization and addressing infrastructure issues to support existing industry and economic development. Tell us about the importance of the rivers to your district and its constituents?

The Allegheny River is really the heart of this District—it connects the north and south boundaries of D38 and it connects the suburban and City portions of the district. The River also connects our past to our present—we have begun a real rediscovery of our rivers and the need for people to have meaningful access to them, instead of restricting them to pure commercial usage. Our river communities are working to bring the river back into the heart of the neighborhood, from creating new trails, to supporting programming that supports kayaking and canoeing programs for students who wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to experience our waterways. We are in a renaissance of our waterways, and having the support of the PPC has been critical to advancing these programs.



On-The-Water Boating Lessons



Groundbreaking at Montgomery (continued)

Built in the 1930's the Emsworth, Dashields, and Montgomery locks and dams have reached the end of their operational lifespan and are experiencing structural aging. They also need larger chambers for today's larger barge tows. Maintenance activities on these smaller locks can cause navigational bottlenecks if the locks are closed to perform the work. Studies have shown that the economic impact of a one-year closure at Montgomery Locks and Dam would cost the U.S. economy nearly \$180 million. The roughly 12 million tons of cargo would require over 100,000 rail cars or 400,000 trucks to compensate for the closure.

Transporting bulk commodities on the waterways is less expensive than trucks and rail. Approximately 15 to 20 million tons of goods, valued at more than \$2 billion, pass through the upper Ohio River system annually. The Corps of Engineers expects the Upper Ohio Navigation Project to generate more than 28,000 jobs during construction and 5,300 jobs annually after completion.

The event featured the following speakers: United States Senator (PA) Robert Casey, Senior Advisor to President Biden and White House Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jaime Pinkham, Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis, USACE Pittsburgh's Colonel Nick Melin. Additionally, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and our own Executive Director, Mary Ann Bucci, helped to symbolically turn the shovels for the new project.



ACNR River Towing Christens Repowered M/V David J. Podurgiel



For more than 30 years, David J. "Pod" Podurgiel has navigated the rivers of the Port of Pittsburgh. And as of May 10th, 2023, he'll have some familiar company, namely the newly-christened m/v David J. Podurgiel which is owned and operated by American Consolidated Natural Resources (ACNR). Over the span of those 30+ years, Podurgiel has worked his way up the ranks from working as a deckhand, to pilot, to his current position of vessel operations manager which he's held since December 2012. He has also volunteered his time with the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh, where he served as navigation chair and, currently, is the president.

The christening ceremony was held May 10th, 2023 in West Elizabeth, Pa., and included a welcome from ACNR's President Michael Somales, along with an invocation from Craig Wolfley, the former Pittsburgh Steelers offensive lineman and Podurgiel's friend and described as a fellow "brother in Christ." The event was attended by approximately 40 of Pod's friends, family, and those working with him in our industry. "I am both honored, and humbled that ACNR River Operation recognized me with the naming of the vessel. Throughout my career I have had the privilege of working for great mentors like Michael Somales and Deanne Orr, along with a myriad of coworkers from deckhands to captains. And, I was blessed that my parents who are 96 and 94 were able to share in this day, along with my wife Laura and sister Kim", said Podurgiel.

The repowered and renamed m/v David J. Podurgiel was originally built as the Donna Lee II in 1986 by Superior Boat Works, Greenville, Miss., for Consolidation Coal Company. It was acquired in 2020 by American Consolidated Natural Resources. The vessel is a 56- by 22-foot dinner bucket boat built exclusively for barge shifting and fleetting. The funding for this project was made possible by a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant from the Port of Pittsburgh Commission.

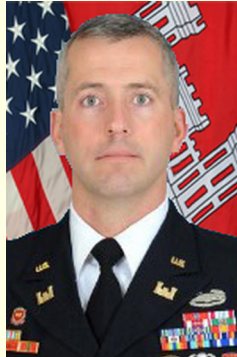
The PPC staff was glad to help celebrate in Pod's event, and congratulates him on this well-deserved honor.



USACE Pittsburgh District Welcomes New Commander and Deputy District Engineer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District transferred leadership during a Change of Command ceremony Friday, Aug. 4, at 10 a.m. at the Senator John Heinz History Center, 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh.

Colonel Adam Czekanski, commander of the Pittsburgh District since July 2021, transferred command to Colonel Nicholas Melin. Major General William Graham, Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works and Emergency Operations, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, presided over the ceremony.



Col. Nicholas Melin

Melin comes to the Pittsburgh District following an assignment as the division chief for Oceania, South, and Southeast Asia in the Directorate for Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J-5) on the Joint Staff. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil and Mechanical Engineering from West Point, a Master of Military Art and Science from the United States Army Command and General Staff College, a masters degree in Strategic Studies from Madras University and a Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science from Oxford University. Melin served in key leadership positions such as commanding a Security Force Assistance Battalion. He is a registered Professional Engineer in Missouri.



Brian Trzaska

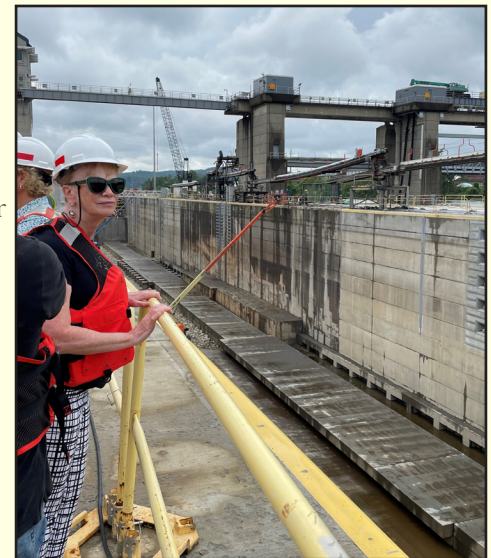
Joining Col. Melin's staff is Brian Trzaska, PE, as Deputy District Engineer for the Pittsburgh District. Prior to his joining the Pittsburgh District, Trzaska served as Chief of Israel Construction in Tel Aviv, Israel, and Chief of Design in Anchorage, Alaska. He is a registered Professional Engineer in Oklahoma. He has bachelor of science in Civil Engineering from Oklahoma State and Master of Building Construction

from Auburn University. The Port of Pittsburgh welcomes Colonel Melin and Mr. Trzaska and looks forward to our continued partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District.



WCI Picks Port of Pittsburgh for Annual Media Tour

The Waterways Council, Inc., along with Campbell Transportation Company, and the Port of Pittsburgh Commission, sponsored a media tour in Pittsburgh on August 9-11, to spotlight our river industry as well as the infrastructure issues in the Port of Pittsburgh region. Over the three days, the group began with a tour of the Emsworth Locks and Dams aboard a Campbell Transportation Towboat to demonstrate the locking of a commercial vessel. This was followed by a Thursday tour of the construction site at the Charleroi Locks and Dam, which is nearing completion in June of 2024. The event concluded on Friday, at the site of Montgomery Locks and Dam to celebrate the groundbreaking for the new Montgomery Locks and Dam.



Cherrie Felder, Chair of Waterways Council, Inc., reviews the progress being made at the Charleroi Locks & Dam as part of the Lower Mon Project just outside of Pittsburgh, PA on August 10, 2023.

Amongst the participants over the course of the three-day event, hosted by the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and WCI, were: Dustin Davidson, Director and Jennifer Armstrong, Government Relations Director, WCI Board

of Directors participants, Chairperson and Vice President of Channel Shipyard Companies, Cherrie Felder, Peter Stephaich of Campbell Transportation Company, and Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director of the PPC. Also attending was Angela Grett of the Ingram Barge Company.

Representatives of the media included: David Krapf, Editor, WorkBoat Magazine; Eric Haun, Editor, Marine News; Jeff Yoders, Associate Editor, Engineering News Record; Shelley Byrne, Reporter, Waterways Journal; and local media including the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Pittsburgh City Paper.



More Photos from the Waterways Council, Inc. Media Tour



Mary Ann Bucci and Sen. Robert Casey



PA Lt. Gov Austin Davis



Sen. Casey with media



Mitch Landrieu and Scott Harshman

Port of Pittsburgh Commission Announces 2023 Small Grants Program Awards

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission is pleased to announce twelve applicants that will receive grants to promote our region's three rivers, safety on the water, improve safety, and provide for the future of our waterways in terms of education and jobs.

"Our goal was to find projects that promote stewardship, advocacy, outreach and education, safety and/or environmental measures, and increase awareness of our rivers and their impacts, and the use of new concepts and ideas." said Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission.

The twelve local applicants were awarded funding are:

- Blawnox-Glenover VFC
- Elizabeth Borough VFC
- Friends of the Riverfront
- Homestead Borough
- Marion Hill Associates
- Pittsburgh Intermodal Terminals
- RiverWise (Beaver County)
- Sense of Connection
- Venture Outdoors
- Verona Borough
- Vigilant Hose Co. (Port View)
- Waterways Association of Pittsburgh

Bucci added, "We play an important role as an advocate for our region's waterways. While our primary focus is on the commercial users, as they primarily fund the operation and infrastructure of our rivers, we recognize the growing impact of the recreational use of our waterways."

Projects are slated to begin in Fall 2023 and the applicant will have two years to complete their projects. The PPC will monitor project activities with reporting and site visits during the contract term.

Malvertisement Scams by Nate Turer

"Did you that know you've won a Free iPad, courtesy of publishers clearing house, in a competition run by hot singles in your area? Claim it by clicking [HERE!](#)"

While over the top in this example, we are constantly bombarded by advertisements and panels trying to get our attention while browsing the internet. These ads will tell you that you've won something, of dating opportunities, killer deals, or may try and "alert" you of issues with your computer, all of which will try and entice you to click on them. The best-case scenario is the ad is for a bad service. The worst case scenario is that interacting with it will invite malware onto your system. We call these "Malvertisements" as they are malicious and may invite malware onto your systems.

While self-control in the face of a free iPad is a good start. I recommend installing adblocking and popup blocking software to your organization's computers. These can be accessed via the "extensions" option of your browsers and are often free. Consult your IT staff on organization-wide deployment. If you are using Microsoft's Edge browser, enabling of "strict" security settings will also prevent web trackers. Firefox and Chrome have similar settings as well. Not only will configuring blockers help protect you from malvertisement, but it will also give you a better browsing experience.

If you have clicked on these sorts of advertisements in the past or are worried, please consult with your organization's IT staff, or utilize a free malware scanning application such as Malwarebytes or if using windows, your systems inbuilt security scanner and tools. These can be accessed by clicking your START menu, typing "MRT" and hitting enter. As always do not hesitate to reach out with any questions pertaining to security or the web.

Nathan Turer, Logistics & Cybersecurity Analyst
nate@portpitt.com



Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission FISH & BOAT WITH A WATERWAYS CONSERVATION OFFICER

Saturday, September 9, 2023
1:00 - 4:00 PM
North Park Lake

North Park Lake Boathouse
10301 Pearce Mill Rd
Allison Park, PA 15101

Join Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Waterways Conservation Officers alongside instructors from Venture Outdoors for an afternoon of free fishing and boating. No prior experience or fishing license is needed to participate, all equipment will be provided.



PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUESTED
Scan the QR code to register.

For more information, contact Waterways Conservation
Officer Michael Johnson at miejohnson@pa.gov.



FishandBoat.com



Port of Pittsburgh Commission Begins Partnership with OpenTug



The Port of Pittsburgh Commission has begun a partnership with OpenTug, a leading provider of digital logistics solutions. OpenTug gives shippers unparalleled direct access to inland transport services, by creating the first digital connection directly to barge, terminal, and transload providers. Their software, OpenTug Port Connect, gives ports a discovery platform to help terminals, warehouses, transportation providers, and shippers make connections faster and get more business done. OpenTug does this through a digital application that blends marketing, communication, and booking into one seamless experience.

The portal will offer river stakeholders looking do business within the Port of Pittsburgh a whole new level connection and information regarding facilities and companies which will replace the existing PPC’s web directory listing of river operators and services. The PPC and OpenTug are currently developing the new portal platform, and expect to have a formal launch including a press release and a virtual demonstration of the platform in September 2023.



HIRING EVENT

Are you looking for an exciting career opportunity?

If you're ready to learn more about a thrilling [career on the inland waterways](#), then come on out and meet our team!

DOUBLETREE HOTEL
340 RACETRACK RD.
WASHINGTON, PA 15301

AUGUST 29,
2023

3:00 PM
7:00 PM



AUGUST 30,
2023

9:00 AM
3:00 PM

SEE YOU THERE!



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



GOOD THINGS FLOW FROM HERE

