PILOT GROUPS HONORED FOR SERVICE DURING HURRICANES

The Brazos Pilots’ Association and the Canaveral Pilots’ Association were recognized by the Coast Guard for outstanding performance during Hurricanes Harvey and Mathew, respectively.

Brazos Pilots’ Association President, Captain Billy Burns, along with Al Durel (Operations Director for Port Freeport), were honored by the Coast Guard with the Public Service Commendation for their service during the events of Hurricane Harvey. RADM Paul Thomas, Commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District, presented the award to the Greater Houston-Galveston Port Coordination Team on February 2, 2018. “The dedication by both Captain Burns and Mr. Durel to the Port Coordination Team during the preparation for, and response to, Hurricane Harvey was instrumental in the timely reopening of the Freeport Harbor Channel,” said Paul Kresta, Port Freeport Commission Chairman.

The Port Coordination Team is a group of area port representatives that work together to keep communication flowing throughout the maritime and industry communities. The team works closely with the Coast Guard during heavy weather and emergency events to relay critical information both to and from maritime community and industry partners. Captain Burns, who has been a Brazos Pilot for 20 years, began working with the Port Coordination Team upon its establishment in the early 2000s.

On January 8, the Canaveral Pilots’ Association was presented a Public Service Commendation Award from the Commander of the Coast Guard Seventh District for “outstanding leadership and dedicated service to the maritime industry and the public” during their assistance in reopening Port Canaveral in October 2016 following Hurricane Matthew. Canaveral Pilots’ Association Co-Chairmen Captain Ben Borgie and Captain Brendan McMillin accepted the award on behalf of the association.

The award citation states that the Canaveral Pilots “played a vital role in assessing the damage to the Port Canaveral waterways and waterside infrastructure.” The citation went on, “Demonstrating keen initiative, the Canaveral Pilots coordinated with local partners to secure a commercial tug and utilize its echo depth sounder to conduct a base line assessment of the depth of the channel to determine if any shoaling had occurred. Tapping into their decades of experience and knowledge of the waterway, the Canaveral Pilots diligently surveyed all aids to navigation and identified missing or damaged aids.” The award concluded by saying the pilots’ “tireless and meticulous efforts were paramount in the Coast Guard’s ability to reopen the port within 24 hours.”

The Public Service Commendation recognizes private citizens whose courage and initiative substantially contribute to successful completion of U.S. Coast Guard missions.
NAV SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS 5TH SESSION

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) held the fifth session of its Navigation, Communications, and Search & Rescue Sub-Committee (NCSR5) from February 19-23 at IMO Headquarters in London. Captain Jorge Viso, APA President, served on the International Maritime Pilots’ Association (IMPA) delegation, while Paul Kirchner, APA Executive Director-General Counsel, and Bill Cairns, APA Navigation Technology Director, participated as members of the U.S. delegation.

The principle issues on which IMPA and APA were focused were the ongoing efforts by IMO to develop guidelines related to e-navigation. This included work on developing the Maritime Service Portfolio (MSP), which includes piloting as one of the listed Maritime Services. NCSR has agreed that IMPA is to have primacy in coordinating the pilotage Maritime Service. This is critical because it places the description of the communication needs of pilotage services under the purview and control of IMPA and its member pilot associations.

In other areas, NCSR furthered its effort on standardized navigation displays (so-called “S-Mode”) and formally proposed to establish a correspondence group on this item. Bill Cairns is a continuing participant in this effort. The sub-committee also agreed on interim Guidelines for Harmonized Display of navigation information received via communications equipment.

It is only through active participation by both the IMPA and U.S. delegations at these key IMO meetings that APA is able to help influence the debate on issues of interest to U.S. pilots.

APA representatives again attended the annual e-Navigation Underway International Conference, held January 24-26. APA was represented by NAVTECH Chair and Columbia River Pilot, Captain Paul Amos; Captain Jonathan Samuell, Houston Pilots and NAVTECH Vice Chair; Paul Kirchner, Executive Director-General Counsel; and Bill Cairns, Navigation Technology Director.

The theme for this year’s conference, held as always aboard a ferry on a roundtrip between Copenhagen and Oslo, was purportedly “the realization of the Maritime Service Portfolios,” although there were clearly other agendas and priorities at play.

For instance, during a session on autonomous and unmanned ships, a presenter from a major Danish shipping company reported on what he claimed was a successful test of a remotely operated assist tug in Copenhagen harbor. He stated that many tug masters, after initially objecting, now prefer remote operation. Captain Paul Amos interjected by noting that before becoming a pilot he was a tug master for many years, and he doubted any experienced tug operator would think that doing that job remotely would be practical or safe.

This same speaker also suggested that advances in remote monitoring technology would allow pilots to do their jobs from ashore and that many pilots prefer this approach. This assertion was challenged by IMPA President Captain Simon Pelletier, who asked “what pilots agree with this approach?” When the speaker suggested it was the Danish Pilots, Captain Pelletier asked the Danish Pilots in attendance if this was the case. The Danish Pilots in the crowd made clear they did not agree with the speaker’s views.

WORLD MARITIME DAY 2018

IMO issued a notice stating that the theme this year for World Maritime Day is "IMO 70: Our Heritage - Better Shipping for a Better Future" commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Convention establishingIMO. World Maritime Day will be celebrated in late September 2018. For more on this and other IMO events visit: www.imo.org/en/About/Events/WorldMaritimeDay/Pages/WMD-2018.aspx
Coast Guard Improvement and Reform Act of 2017 (H.R. 1726). This legislation, which passed the House on June 26, 2017, is broadly intended to reorganize and “clean up” certain maritime-related statutory provisions within Title 46 of the U.S. Code. Section 205 of the bill, however, is more substantive. This section would increase the number of mariners authorized to serve on the 14-member Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee (MEDMAC) from 4 to 5. As this would give mariners a stronger voice on MEDMAC, APA supports this legislation.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Authorization Act of 2017 (H.R. 2825). The Coast Guard authorization legislation, with several provisions of interest to pilots, is included in this comprehensive DHS bill. In particular, Section 5213 would nullify the current regulation requiring mariners to complete a recertification course in order to maintain a radar endorsement to a merchant mariner credential. Section 5411 directs the Coast Guard to establish, maintain and operate a system, using existing LORAN-C infrastructure, to serve as a backup to the Global Positioning System. This legislative provision, while directing the Coast Guard to establish such a system, does not authorize any additional funding for the Coast Guard to do so. APA supports these provisions in H.R. 2825, which passed the House on July 20, 2017 and was sent to the Senate.

Puerto Rico Humanitarian Relief Act of 2017 (H.R. 1908). This legislation, introduced on October 5, 2017, would establish a 5-year moratorium on the application of the Jones Act to coastwise voyages to and from Puerto Rico. H.R. 1908 was an attempt by long-time opponents of the Jones Act to capitalize on recent hurricanes that devastated Puerto Rico. Fortunately, the bill received very little support and no action has been taken since its introduction.

SECURE America Energy Act (H.R. 4239). There is one provision in this broad energy production legislation that is of interest to many in the maritime industry. A provision within this bill, which was reported out of committee in November 2017, would exempt from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) “any activity proscribed by MBTA that is incidental to the presence or operation of an otherwise lawful activity.” In the view of many legal observers, the MBTA—which was enacted early in the 20th century to combat the illegal poaching of migratory birds—has been inappropriately and unfairly applied to criminally prosecute those in the maritime, agricultural and energy industries.

Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017 (S.1129). This Senate bill, which was reported out of the Commerce, Science and Technology Committee in June 2017, contains a provision similar to one in H.R. 2825. Specifically, Section 511 of S. 1129 directs the Coast Guard to “eliminate the requirement that a mariner complete an approved refresher or recertification course to maintain a radar observer credential.” APA supports this bill.

Open America’s Waters Act of 2017 (S. 1561). As he has done in most every Congress for many years, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) introduced legislation that would eliminate the requirement that a vessel be U.S.-built, U.S.-owned and U.S.-operated in order to qualify for the U.S. coastwise trade. As in years past, Senator McCain has not been able to find a single senator to co-sponsor his anti-Jones Act efforts.

A Bill to Exempt Puerto Rico from the Jones Act (S. 1894). Like its House counterpart, S.1894 is based on a false premise that the Jones Act and U.S. flag shipping was inhibiting the flowing of goods and supplies to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of last season’s hurricanes. For this bill, Senator McCain did manage to find three co-sponsors, but these senators were from the landlocked non-maritime States of Arizona, Oklahoma and Utah. Fortunately, in both the Senate and the House, there continues to be very broad and bipartisan support for the Jones Act. A diverse coalition of lawmakers from both chambers and both parties recognize the national security value of having a robust industrial shipbuilding base, a fleet of U.S. flag vessels, and a strong contingent of U.S. merchant mariners to crew vessels in times of national emergency.
NOAA SETS SURVEYING PRIORITIES FOR 2018

NOAA’s hydrographic survey ships are preparing for the 2018 hydrographic survey season. The planned survey projects include:

**Alaska**

*North Coast of Kodiak Island* – Last surveyed in 1932, this project focuses on areas with insufficient surveys for safe navigation, particularly along the corridor of vessel traffic transiting from Kodiak.

*West of Prince of Wales Island* – These complex waterways are critical to the economic success of local coastal communities on Prince of Wales Island. This survey project updates previous surveys dating back to 1916.

*Tracy Arm Fjord* – Frequently visited by cruise ships and tourist vessels, modern surveys will increase maritime safety and address the needs of the maritime pilot community.

*Lisianski Strait and Inlet* – This navigationally complex area experiences a large volume of marine traffic, with the vast majority of the inlet last surveyed in 1917.

*Southwest Alaskan Peninsula* – This survey project updates nautical charting products to support the increase in vessel traffic in Unimak Passage.

*Morzhovoi Bay* – With parts of the bay last surveyed in the 1920s, this survey project focuses on areas with insufficient surveys for safe navigation.

*Point Hope and Vicinity* – Vessel traffic is increasing each year as sea ice recedes. Seventy percent of the area remains unsurveyed.

**Pacific Coast and Puget Sound**

*Puget Sound, Washington* – This high traffic density area includes several ferry routes. Current surveys of the area consist of partial bottom coverage and in some areas, lesser coverage.

*Channel Islands and Vicinity, California* – This survey project provides data for crucial nautical chart updates and also data used in habitat mapping in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

**Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River**

*Mississippi River, Louisiana* – The ports of the southern Mississippi River represent the largest port complex in the world and one of the most heavily trafficked waterways in the United States. This survey project supports new, high-resolution charting products for maritime commerce.

*Louisiana Coast* – This survey project addresses concerns of migrating shoals and exposed hazards in the vicinity of the Atchafalaya River Delta and Port of Morgan City.

**Approaches to Houston, Texas** – The current chart coverage of the area between Galveston Bay and Sabine Bank Channels shows numerous reported wrecks and obstructions. This survey will identify changes to the bathymetry and resolve position uncertainty in known hazards.

*Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Florida* – This survey project provides updates to nautical charting products of the area and supports marine habitat research projects through the National Center for Coastal Ocean Science and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

**Atlantic Coast and Puerto Rico**

*Approaches to Chesapeake Bay* – This multi-year survey covers the approaches to Chesapeake Bay to support the safety of commerce and monitor the environmental health of the region.

*Approaches to Jacksonville, Florida* – The Port of Jacksonville entrance channel is in need of updated charts to meet the needs of larger ships.

*Puerto Rico* – NOAA will return to the island of Puerto Rico and conduct surveys to update the nautical charts in critical need of revisions following Hurricane Maria.

The 2018 field season will begin in April. That is when NOAA’s four hydrographic survey ships—*Thomas Jefferson, Ferdinand Hassler, Rainier*, and *Fairweather*—and private survey companies on contract with NOAA will tackle their assigned survey projects.


NOAA ANNOUNCES “WEATHER-READY NATION AMBASSADOR” PROGRAM

NOAA recently announced its Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) Ambassador™ initiative. According to the agency, the WRN Ambassador program is an effort to formally recognize NOAA partners who are improving the nation’s readiness, responsiveness, and overall resilience against extreme weather and water events.

The WRN Ambassador initiative is intended to help unify the efforts across government, non-profits, academia, and private industry toward making the nation more ready, responsive, and resilient against extreme environmental hazards.

If any pilot groups or individual pilots are interested in the WRN Ambassador program, more information is available at: [www.weather.gov/wrn/ambassadors](http://www.weather.gov/wrn/ambassadors)
Expansion of Drug Screening to Include Semi-Synthetic Opiates (MSA 01-18)

This Marine Safety Advisory (MSA) is to ensure mariners, marine employers, and sponsoring organizations are informed of recent changes to the Department of Transportation (DOT) Drug Testing requirements that are found in 49 CFR Part 40. As the U.S. Coast Guard requires DOT 49 CFR Part 40 drug test per 46 CFR 4.06-20(b) and 46 CFR 16.201(a), this MSA seeks to broadly communicate important changes effecting mariners, marine employers, and sponsoring organizations.

The DOT promulgated its final rule (82 FR 52229) amending the drug-testing program regulations to add hydrocodone, hydromorphone, oxymorphone, and oxycodone (the most common prescription drugs of abuse) to the “Opioids” section of the drug-testing panel. Beginning January 1, 2018, in addition to the existing DOT drug testing panel that tests for marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates, mariners in safety-sensitive positions will also be tested for the four additional semi-synthetic opioids named above. Some common names for these semi-synthetic opioids include OxyContin®, Percodan®, Percocet®, Vicodin®, Lortab®, Norco®, Dilaudid®, and Exalgo®.

If a mariner tests positive for any of the semi-synthetic opioid drugs after December 31, 2017, then as with any other drug test result that is confirmed by the laboratory, the Medical Review Officer (MRO) will conduct an interview with the mariner to determine if there is a legitimate medical explanation for the result. If the mariner has a valid prescription, it must be provided to the MRO, who will then determine if the prescription is valid. If a legitimate medical explanation is established, the MRO will report the result to the marine employer as a negative. If not, the MRO will report the result as positive.

When a marine employer or sponsoring organizations receives a positive drug test result from an MRO, the marine employer or sponsoring organizations is required by 46 CFR 16.201(b) to remove the mariner from performing regulated safety-sensitive duties and provide a list of qualified Substance Abuse Professionals (SAP) to the mariner. In accordance with 46 CFR 16.201(c), marine employers and sponsoring organizations are required to report positive test results of credentialed mariners to the U.S. Coast Guard.

For marine employers and sponsoring organizations there is no need to make any changes if their current drug testing policies that refer to adhering to “DOT 49 Part 40.” However, if the marine employer or sponsoring organizations lists the sub-categories of drugs tested under the 5-panel are listed “Opiates (codeine, heroin, & morphine)” and/or “Amphetamines (amphetamine, methamphetamine, MDA, MDA, MDEA), then the marine employers or sponsoring organizations need to change “Opiates” to “Opioids (codeine, heroin, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone)” and “MDEA” will need to be removed from the list under Amphetamines. Likewise, if cut-off levels are listed in current policies, employers must update those cut-off levels. Again, employers may simply delete the cut-off levels completely and be in compliance if the DOT policy refers to adhering to “DOT 49 Part 40.”

Mariners should also consult with their prescribing physician to discuss their safety-sensitive responsibilities in order to determine if continued use of these medications is appropriate. Mariners should ensure their prescribing physician knows what type of regulated, safety-sensitive work the mariner performs and discuss whether prescribed medications could impact transportation-related safety-sensitive work. Mariners, marine employers, and sponsoring organizations may find additional information and guidance regarding these changes at: www.transportation.gov/odapc/frpubs.

This Safety Advisory was developed by the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis. Questions or comments should be sent to: DAPI@uscg.mil

The National Maritime Center released a number of important Notices since the start of 2018.

HOMEPORT 2.0 - At the end of 2017, the Coast Guard launched HOMEPORT 2.0, which should make it easier for mariners to track their merchant mariner credential (MMC) applications. Among the specific improvements is the ability of mariners to obtain the status of MMC applications by searching Mariner Reference Number sand Application IDs.

Email attachments to NMC - The NMC has made clear that it continues to work to ensure that most mariner transactions can be done via email. In January, NMC issued a notice advising mariners that it would not be able to accept any email attachment larger than 10MB, and that “any attachments larger than 8MB be split into multiple emails.”

Direct submission of Medical Certificate Applications to the NMC - The Coast Guard has established a new option for submission of merchant mariner medical certificate applications (CG-719K). Beginning on February 1, mariners may submit medical certificate applications directly to the NMC. If mariners choose to submit medical certificate applications directly to the NMC, the applications can be submitted to: D05-SMB-MEDAIP-TEAM@uscg.mil

Presently, the option to submit applications directly to the NMC is limited to medical certificates. Merchant Mariner Credential applications/renewals cannot be submitted directly to the NMC.

For a complete list of all NMC announcements, including year-by-year archives, visit: www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/National-Maritime-Center-NMC/announcements/
APA NEWS

WASHINGTON STATE GOVERNOR PROCLAMATION MARKS 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF PILOTAGE ACT

On January 30, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee signed a Proclamation establishing that day as “150th Anniversary of the Pilotage Act Day.”

The Proclamation states that Washington State pilots have “successfully handled nearly 250,000 vessel assignments; more than three decades have passed without a major incident in Puget Sound; Puget Sound Pilots were available on time to board ships on arrival at the Port Angeles Pilot Station 99.99 percent of the time, providing nearly perfect service to shipping; and this unparalleled safety record has earned Puget Sound recognition from the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port as the safest major port in the Nation.”

The Proclamation also lauded the Puget Sound Pilots for having as its mission “to ensure against the loss of lives and loss of - or damage to - property and vessels, and to protect the marine environment.”

The Pilotage Act was signed into law by the Honorable Marshall F. Moore, Governor of the Washington Territory, on January 30, 1868. The Act established the pilotage requirements for the Juan de Fuca Straits and the Puget Sound.

From left to right: Sheri Tonn (Pilotage Commission Chair), Linda Styrk (Puget Sound Pilots Executive Director), Captain Eric vonBrandenfels (Puget Sound Pilots President), Joshua Berger (Governor’s Maritime Sector Lead), Eleanor Kirtley (Pilotage Commissioner), Captain Michael Anthony (Pilotage Commissioner), and Jamie Bever (Pilotage Commission Executive Director)

ELECTIONS, SELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

The following pilots’ associations announced new officers:

- Crescent River Port Pilots’ Association: Captain E. Michael Bopp (President), Captain James E. Crammond (Vice President), Captain Daniel T. Larson (Secretary), Captain Thomas F. Bryan (Director) and Captain Eric M. Short (Director).
- New Jersey Sandy Hook Pilots: Captain John Oldmixon (President), Captain Edward Sweeney (Vice President), Captain Brendan Foley (Secretary), and Captain Paul Klein (Treasurer).
- New York Sandy Hook Pilots: Captain John DeCruz (President), Captain Robert Miller (Vice President), Captain Winfield Winters (Secretary), and Captain Timothy Murray (Treasurer).
- Southeast Alaska Pilots’ Association: Captain Kathleen Flury (President), Captain Frank Didier (Vice President), and Captain John Herring (Secretary).
- Southwest Alaska Pilots Association: Captain Peter Garay (President), Captain Michael O’Hara (Vice President), Captain Donal Ryan (Secretary/Treasurer), Captain Eric Eliassen (Director), Captain Jeffrey Pierce (Director), Captain Andrew S. Wakefield (Director) and Captain Ronald Ward (Director).
- Houston Pilots: Captain Mark W. Mitchem (President), Captain Greg J. Brown (Executive Committee), and Captain Robert C. Roberts (Executive Committee).
- Biscayne Bay Pilots Association: Captain Jonathan D. Nitkin (Association Chairman), Captain Christopher S. Marlow (Association Vice Chairman), Captain James M. Harhart (Corporate Vice Chairman), and Captain Geoffrey J. Pool (Association Secretary/Treasurer).