

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Press Release

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15 Barge Breakaway From The M/V J. ANDREW ECKSTEIN

ST. LOUIS – At 10:30 p.m. on August 1, 2004, while transiting southbound on the Upper Mississippi River, the M/V J. Andrew Eckstein's port face wire parted from the vessel's 15 grain barge tow causing all 15 barges to float uncontrollably down river. As a result, the Poplar St. Bridge and MacArthur Bridge were struck by an undetermined number of barges causing one (MAC611) to sink at mile marker 179.0. In order to minimize further damage to the various structures along the riverfront, five towboats belonging to Riverway Harbor Services, Osage Marine, and Lewis & Clark Marine assisted in safely retrieving the remaining 14 grain barges. In response, the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP), St. Louis, in the interest of navigational safety, temporarily restricted the times commercial river traffic could transit between mile markers 178.0 and 180.0 on the Upper Mississippi River.

To date, the Marine Safety Office St. Louis is continuing to work closely with Okie Moore Diving and Salvage Co. to facilitate the recovery of barge MAC611. Okie Moore Diving and Salvage Co. has successfully re-floated the vessel and will affect temporary repairs today. Following temporary repairs, Marquette Transportation Company will arrange for the transportation of the vessel to a shipyard where permanent repairs will be affected.

The Captain of the Port, St. Louis will allow river traffic to resume normal operations following the safe removal of barge MAC611.

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