



The Captain's Corner

This past Monday marked a major milestone for the NMC, the MLD Program and the U.S. Coast Guard when the entire NMC staff moved into our new office spaces in Martinsburg, West Virginia. I extend a personal thanks to the exhaustive efforts of the NMC Move Coordinators and to Mr. Jeff Brandt for overseeing the transition from Arlington, then to the temporary spaces, and finally to our new facility.

With the move behind us, our focus will shift to the credential production processes and transitioning the remaining 13 RECs to centralized operations. Transition planning has been underway for a long time and we're making good progress on finalizing the details. We're learning our lessons from the transitions of New Orleans, Anchorage, Juneau and Baltimore. We have made changes to our processes using these lessons, which have already resulted in some impressive performance improvements. In November, the REC Chiefs and NMC staffs met at a week-long offsite to share best practices and continue transition planning. This month we'll be meeting representatives from the Maritime Academies and union schools to establish batch processing procedures and establish the first of Credentialing Trusted Agents. Now that we in our new facility, we will be focusing on our production processes to make continuous improvements to our operations.

The eyes of individual mariners, the marine industry, Congress, and Senior Coast Guard leadership are upon us and we are being challenged to make substantial improvements to the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program. I know all of you are committed to making the MLD program a world-class operation and this is our opportunity. I ask that you focus on our core purpose, our core value, and our vision for the future.

Happy New Year.

David C. Stalfort
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard



New Civilian Employees:

Keife L. Duffy, NMC-3
Lesa M. Dutra, NMC-4

New Contract Employees:

Keith Hammond, NMC-3
Joanne Helsley, NMC-3
Karla Johnston, NMC-3
Samantha Largent, NMC-3
Lillian Phipps, NMC-3

Angela Locke, NMC-4
Dawn Murray, NMC-4

*Welcome to NMC West Virginia -
Open for Business!*

NMC staffing 71% of full strength

Position Announcements

Marine Transportation Specialist, GS-12
NMC-2, Closing Date: January 11th

See USA Jobs <http://www.usajobs.gov/>
Search: NMC, US Coast Guard



RECorner

Welcome to the New Year!

We are quickly approaching the timeframe where we will begin the transition process for the remaining RECs, beginning February 2008 with Toledo, OH and St. Louis, MO respectively. To assist with this event, an Action Plan was set into motion which incorporated the expertise and feedback of the REC Chiefs that participated in the REC TEAM in early November 2007.

The Action Plan included distribution of five major work group deliverables to the responsible and proper owner experts for refinement, correction and completion of a final finished work instruction product. The deadline for final submission is quickly approaching where NMC will collect, approve and add them to the REC Transition Book.

Additionally, the NMC has scheduled the Maritime Academy "bulk" processing meeting to be held 28JAN08 thru 30JAN08 at the new National Maritime Center. This meeting will focus on answering the questions posed and utilizing the information obtained during the REC TEAM meeting. Its primary mission will be to develop a first draft proposal, in a work instruction format, which identifies a standardized process to handle bulk applications from Maritime Academies and other industry schools. The meeting will also focus on getting schools to obtain trusted agent status and assist in creating a streamlined process.

I encourage you all to continue working successfully together with an open mind in order to resolve some of these difficult transition issues.

On a final note, regrettably, Larry Griffin declined the REC Operations Chief job for personal reasons. We will now have to re-advertise the position. This is a critical position at a critical juncture in our transition process so, please, if you know of any strong candidates out there - advise them to update their resumes and apply!

Thank you for your continued support.

CDR Craig S. Swirbliss,
Chief, Operations & Oversight Division (NMC-1)



News From the NMC

With the departure of Mr. Kerlin, the process to hire a new Deputy Director is underway. In the interim and effective December 21, 2007, Captain Stalfort has announced that Mr. Ike Eisentrout will be the Acting Deputy Director of the NMC.

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The NMC relocation process is finished. Effective January 7, 2008, all divisions of the NMC are operating at the new NMC building.

Behind the Scenes

Beyond the paperwork and regulations, there is a human element to the MLD process. The following is meant to highlight the regional workings of the RECs. Other RECs will be featured in upcoming issues.

REC New Orleans

The New Orleans area is defined by weather and environmental challenges. It is hot, humid, and the rainiest city in the continental US. It is prone to hurricanes, high winds, and flooding. The REC is located well inland, in Mandeville, Louisiana, to protect it from storm damage.

New Orleans is a busy maritime hub, with a coastal port along the Gulf of Mexico, and an inland port, with a major towing industry along the Mississippi River. It is a popular destination for cruise ships and charter boat fishing.

Most common licenses: New mariners seeking entry level credentials, and lower-level licenses and MMDs, and then many mariners with 5-plus issues seeking renewals or upgrades.

Most common vessels in port: Non-US flag Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs), tugboats, tank ships and freighters, and large state-of-the-art US Flag Offshore Supply Vessels (OSVs) and crew boats.

Favorite local seafood dish: Crawfish or shrimp, any way you can cook it.

Local motto: "Louisiana - where men can cook and women can explain football."

REC Toledo

Located in northwest Ohio, on the Lake Erie shore, the Toledo area is most known for commercial and charter boat fishing activities. The REC is busiest in the winter months, when the Great Lakes freeze and fishing and sailing activities mostly cease.

Most common credentials: Entry-level MMDs, 100 Ton Master, Masters/Mates Any Gross Ton (AGT), and First Class Pilot (FCP).

Most common vessels in port: Lakers with an occasional salty.

Al Campolongo, REC Toledo, said it might not be the most exciting town but if you drive a 100-mile radius, you can find at some time, everything you can find in New York City.

Favorite local seafood dish: Take your pick: Walleye or Perch.



Captains of the Maritime

By James Watson
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

Mariners have a long history of serving and saving people as a matter of duty in peace and war. They also have a long history of suffering the perils of the sea, occasionally neglecting good seamanship, and periodically becoming targets or corrupted by international adversaries. The Coast Guard's charge to protect and guide mariners is essential for America's safety, security and prosperity.

The Coast Guard's charge today is the same one given by Alexander Hamilton in 1790. His statement, "...keep in mind that your countrymen are freemen, and, as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of a domineering spirit..." in the context of the rest of the charge, recognizes the maritime community as an independent, but critically important Coast Guard partner at all times.

Hamilton recognized the need to create a federal, multi-mission seagoing service to secure mariner's trust and support of the U. S. Constitution. The Coast Guard's charge essentially requires treating civilian mariners with the same firmness and spirit used to command a Coast Guard cutter or sector shore unit.

Today merchant mariners take USCG required courses and get USCG licenses. They operate USCG approved and inspected vessels using USCG maintained navigation systems. When they are in distress Coast Guard rescues them. Coast Guard monitors their drug and alcohol use and disciplines them much like the Coast Guard disciplines itself. Coast Guard marine inspectors ensure mariners comply with rigid standards, and mariners respect the authority they wield.

Unlike commercial aviation, railroads, and the highway transportation industry, maritime looks to a single, seagoing service as federal regulator, safety and security provider. Annually Coast Guard conducts hundreds of exercises involving the full, voluntary cooperation of mariners and their employers largely because of the respect they have for the Coast Guard's charge – to be "captains of the maritime".

There would be a huge void in the maritime community if Coast Guard weren't there to provide the same order, discipline, and compassion to fellow mariners that the Coast Guard provides its own crews. The Coast Guard's Academy, Officer Candidate School, and recruit training and leadership role models maintain the culture to carry out and constantly improve this relationship.

The Navy projects sea power overseas. The FBI conducts criminal investigations. The Customs Service, also founded by Hamilton, collects the importation duties and does law enforcement ashore. However, the Coast Guard's unique maritime leadership - derived by the founding fathers to tame and embrace America's citizen sailors in 1790 – is in a league of its own.

Beyond history, maritime law and order is different than law and order ashore. Offshore, no government can put stoplights up, or yellow stripes down, or expect any kind of normal police system to work. The sea is a vast anarchy except for the natural law of the sea. The normal rule of law ends offshore.

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Captains of the Maritime (Continued)

Order for any ship at sea depends on the captain who is properly charged and equipped with standards and tradition. The high seas constantly give notice that honor, respect, and devotion to duty is critical to a sailor's survival.

Using every opportunity, the Coast Guard has bolstered its maritime leadership. From integrating the Lighthouse, Lifesaving, and Steamboat Inspection Services to accepting ice patrol, drug interdiction, and port state control authorities, the Coast Guard leverages every mariner's natural respect for the sea and devotion to the freedom it provides. Even when the Coast Guard went to war with the Navy in WWII, Vietnam, and the Gulf wars, its peacetime efforts paid dividends. The maritime industry mobilized merchant ships and ports for each of those war efforts providing 80 to 90 percent of the transportation and supplies to the front. The extraordinary waterborne mass evacuation of lower Manhattan following the World Trade Center attack was another dividend of the Coast Guard's maritime community relationship.

As a component of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard must continue to leverage Hamilton's charge. It offers so much more than the border protection services prescribed in many homeland security initiatives. The Coast Guard's marine safety, environmental protection, and maritime mobility missions are vital to homeland security.

The Coast Guard's model for homeland security includes border protection, but with a Hamiltonian philosophy. The Coast Guard must remain "captains of the maritime" first, border police and first responders second, and must be continually equipped, trained and ready to do all three roles at any time.