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## Maritime Exchange Completes Enhanced Maritime Intelligence System

### *Maritime On-Line Facilitates Compliance with Government Mandates*

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay, a not for profit trade association representing the interests of maritime-related businesses in the tri-state region, recently announced the completion of a major project to convert its community based port information software to a new Internet-based platform. Known as Maritime On-Line (MOL), the system includes a collection of applications to assist maritime and law enforcement personnel with the day-to-day operations of vessel, cargo, and crew processing through U.S. seaports.

The Maritime Exchange has been in the business of tracking vessel movements on the Delaware River since it was formed in 1872. MOL, developed by and for the Delaware River port community, expands upon this role to electronically disseminate advance vessel arrival and movement schedules, provide a detailed hazardous material reporting system, and facilitate electronic reporting by the community to various federal government agencies.

A key component of the system, which has been in the spotlight of the maritime trade industry due to recent port security regulations is the TRACS module. TRACS is used by commercial cargo carriers for reporting import cargo manifest documentation to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Automated Manifest system (AMS). CBP has set deadlines for the submission all import manifest information to be automated electronically later this year, with a March 4 deadline for ocean shipments.

“Given the imminent deadline for electronic manifest submissions, the TRACS integration couldn’t have come at a better time,” said Robert A. Herb, President Terminal Shipping, Inc. “Our principals need a vehicle to

comply with the Customs mandate in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and Maritime On-Line provides them with that tool.”

The new rule follows on the heels of another CBP rule mandating the submission of manifest data 24 hours prior to cargo loading at the foreign port. These rules, coupled with more anticipated automation mandates by CBP and other federal agencies in the near future, are forcing all carriers in the import transportation chain to identify cost effective solutions to meet the regulations. Among those hardest hit will be the smaller carriers and shippers that have limited resources to migrate from a paper environment.

And the deadline for all carriers to comply with the latest regulation is looming. Non-automated carriers and shippers have limited options – develop and implement their own system (often a costly enterprise), contract the services of a for-profit service provider to process its manifest information, or take advantage of port sponsored community systems such as TRACS, only one of a small number in the country.

“We’ve seen a dramatic increase in the demand for service from shippers across the country since the CBP announcement,” said Exchange VP Lisa B. Himber. “The upgrade to Maritime On-Line, work we began over 18 months ago, was undertaken in part to meet the increased promulgation of new security requirements and regulations in a post 9-11 environment. The CBP ruling is certainly not going to be the last federal automation initiative the maritime community will need to meet, but the system we now have in place will help ensure that the Delaware River port community will continue to meet future ones in a cost effective and timely manner.”

Although TRACS and the other modules of Maritime On-Line were first developed to enhance cargo operations for the commercial industry, local federal agencies also benefit from the Maritime Exchange’s system in their port security, safety, and law enforcement missions.

“It is important to me that my staff has access to every available means to support our maritime security, waterways management, environmental and navigational safety, and search and rescue missions,” said U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port Jonathan Sarubbi, head of USCG MSO/Group Philadelphia. “Having the use of this tool [TRACS] enhances overall maritime domain awareness, which in turn helps improve port security in the region; it also aids our ability to effectively assess the risk of hazardous discharge and promotes response preparedness.”

The Exchange has taken the lead in the region on a number of other automation projects to not only enhance port security efforts, but also increase the competitiveness of the Delaware River over other ports.

“We are pursuing several partnerships, locally and through Maritime Information Service of North America (MISNA), to integrate both long and short range vessel tracking capabilities, such as Automatic Identification System (AIS) and Global Marine Distress Signaling System (GMDSS) technologies,” said Himber. “Port security concerns and legislation are not only pushing the transportation sector to be more innovative than ever before in protecting our borders, but they are also providing a unique opportunity to marry security solutions to enhanced cargo operations.”

The Maritime Exchange received financial support from the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority and the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Office of Maritime Resources with matching dollars from the private businesses that use the system, for the development of the vessel and hazardous material reporting portion of MOL. TRACS has been sponsored through the Delaware River Port Authority since its initial development in 1988. DBA, Inc., based in Chalfont, Pennsylvania was contracted to develop the MOL system.

With the longstanding partnerships with the Delaware River Port Authority and the Delaware Department of Transportation, the Maritime Exchange has continued to add functionality and features to its port information system since it created the first regional vessel movement database in 1984. Today, over 450 people representing over 100 companies and local federal agencies are registered with Maritime On-Line to receive and process vessel, cargo, and crew information.

*The Maritime Exchange is a non-profit trade association representing almost 300 port and related businesses throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. Since its establishment in 1872, the Maritime Exchange has served as the primary port advocate on behalf of these businesses, working closely with federal, state and local governmental agencies as well as the tri-state federal congressional delegation to promote commerce along the Delaware River and Bay.*

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