



Maritime Information Service of North America

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Contact: Robert T. Bohlman
206-443-3830

MISNA, Coast Guard Sign Agreement to Work Together

WASHINGTON, DC – Maritime Information Service of North America (MISNA) today announced that it had signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Coast Guard to address the common goals of ensuring that the nation’s Marine Transportation System (MTS), including waterways, vessels, and ports, are safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible through the exchange of information, communication, and data. MISNA is a non-profit maritime organization dedicated to improving the flow of domestic and international commerce by facilitating information exchange. It is comprised of regional maritime associations which represent the full range of businesses, organizations and industries involved in waterborne commerce.

Signing on behalf of MISNA was President Robert T. Bohlman, and on behalf of the Coast Guard was Admiral Paul J. Pluta, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Environmental Protection. “This is a forward-looking move by both MISNA and the Coast Guard,” Bohlman said, citing the fact that MISNA and its individual maritime association members often serve as “the voice of the port” with the federal agencies regulating maritime commerce. “It’s a privilege for our industry to partner with the Coast Guard.”

The MOA formalizes the historical partnership the Coast Guard and MISNA have enjoyed since the organization was formed 10 years ago. It specifically recognizes MISNA’s international network and provides the Coast Guard with increased opportunity to both conduct port stakeholder outreach as well as achieve efficiencies in data collection and distribution. “Given the multi-mission nature of the Coast Guard,” Admiral Pluta said, “it is critical that we engage our private sector partners, particularly commercial maritime industry stakeholders, to help us achieve Maritime Domain Awareness. We are extremely pleased to have this opportunity to work with MISNA and its constituencies to aid in our efforts to improve current and future readiness.”

Over the last 10 years, MISNA has developed standards in automated vessel tracking and reporting. Most recently, it developed a proposal to establish an international Automated Secure Vessel Tracking System, which will provide real-time vessel positioning and other information to Coast Guard, other federal agencies, and the private sector on a need-to-know basis.

Bohlman believes that “The Coast Guard simply does not have the resources it needs to achieve its mission, particularly given its increased port security responsibilities resulting from last year’s terrorist attacks. Through our network, maritime associations are uniquely well positioned to get

the Coast Guard and others out of the information collection business and allow them to focus on what they do best – data analysis and risk assessment.” Last year, MISNA entered into an information-sharing agreement with the Office of Naval Intelligence.

The Coast Guard/MISNA MOA also calls for the Coast Guard to share with MISNA national MTS goals and policies, as permitted by law and policy, so that its members can use their maritime information network to disseminate relevant information related to national MTS and marine safety, security and environmental protection issues. As MISNA represents the private sector, the formal working agreement will help ensure the Coast Guard also considers “best business practices” as it develops emerging rules and policies.

“This is an historic event, and one which will ultimately provide significant benefit to both the federal government and the commercial maritime industry,” Bohlman said. “We look forward to working with the Coast Guard to achieve their critical mission.”

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