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Maritime Exchange VP Elected to Head MISNA

PHILADELPHIA, PA -- At their fall meeting, members of Maritime Information Service of North America (MISNA), a non-profit association dedicated to promoting safe, secure, efficient and environmentally sound maritime operations, elected Lisa B. Himber, vice president of the Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay, to serve as the organization's president for 2004. Other officers include: Immediate Past President – Liz Wainwright, Merchants Exchange of Portland, OR; Vice President – Ed Page, Marine Exchange of Alaska; Lynn Korwatch, Marine Exchange of San Francisco Bay; and Alastair MacNab, Marine Exchange of the West Gulf

The Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay is a non-profit trade association representing the interest of international trade and transportation businesses in Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, and Delaware. In addition to serving as the “voice of the port” on issues relating to maritime commerce, since 1872 the Exchange has been monitoring the movements of all commercial cargo vessels moving through Delaware River ports and over the last 15 years has developed a regional maritime intelligence database which houses vessel, cargo, and crew information.

“The Exchange has been a member of MISNA since 1995, and the organization has grown dramatically in the last several years,” Himber said, citing the fact that MISNA recently formed partnerships with such federal agencies as the U.S. Coast Guard, the Office of Naval Intelligence, and the U.S. Maritime Administration. “It will certainly be challenging to lead this dynamic organization through the upcoming year as we seek to address a diverse array of maritime information requirements.” Collectively, member associations share information with the international MISNA database, which today captures over 75% of all U.S. port calls. This information is used for purposes of facilitating commerce and improving seaport security.

Organized in 1995, MISNA membership includes 13 maritime exchange organizations from major U.S. and Canadian seaports which have primary responsibility for the collection and dissemination of

vessel movement information and coordination of maritime communications in their respective port communities.

Most recently, MISNA has developed a plan to incorporate long-range vessel tracking capability as an aid to navigation, security and commercial operations. The Automated Secure Vessel Tracking System would complement the Automated Identification System, which provides short-range vessel positioning information to the Coast Guard.

The organization is also working with the Coast Guard to pilot an electronic Advance Notice of Vessel Arrival file transfer program, and MISNA members are largely responsible for the creation and ongoing work of local and regional Maritime Transportation System committees. At Delaware River ports, the Maritime Exchange has also partnered with the Transportation Security Administration to develop the national Transportation Worker Identification Credential.

“MISNA has become involved in a diverse array of projects,” said Elizabeth Wainwright, who served as president of MISNA for the past year. “But there’s still a great void in terms of information exchange between shippers, carriers, local port businesses, and government agencies. Maritime associations are uniquely positioned to fill that void.”

Over the next year, Himber will work to bring closure to some of the projects currently on the group’s agenda as well as work to expand MISNA coverage to areas where there are “blind spots” in terms of federal agency reporting, such as the southern and gulf coasts of Florida.

“There’s no doubt our work will result in significant benefits to both our memberships and the federal agencies charged with improving maritime security and promoting maritime commerce. For our members, the goal is to streamline government reporting procedures...for the federal agencies, we will work to provide greater visibility to maritime activities earlier in the process, thereby enhancing overall Maritime Domain Awareness,” Himber said.

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