



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
St. Louis District

Press Release

Release No. 03-07

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For Release: **IMMEDIATE** – February 7, 2007

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Ice build up further restricts operations at Melvin Price Locks

Saint Louis -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District announced new width limits on barge tows passing through the Melvin Price Locks near Alton, Ill, Wednesday morning, Feb. 7. Limitations were tightened to a maximum of 89 feet after a 12-barge tow became caught in the lock's 1200-foot main chamber last night at about 11:30 p.m. The lock's main chamber was reopened at about 4 a.m. Wednesday.

This decision was made reluctantly due to its impact on the barge industry. It was made after coordination with U.S. Coast Guard, Corps of Engineers and barge industry representatives. Tows currently southbound on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, carrying fully loaded barges of grain commodities for overseas export, will now have to be reconfigured into two-wide tows vice their original three wide arrangements. This will in turn reduce the number of barges that a single tow boat can push, from 15 to 10.

The combination of ice building up at Mississippi and Illinois River locks and decreasing water depths from St. Louis south, are being closely watched by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, National Weather Service and navigation industry experts.

This is the only new restriction being announced at this time. There have been no new limitations announced at Locks 20 through 22 to the north or at Locks 24, 25 and 27 in the St. Louis District.

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Editor's Notes: Media interested in visiting Melvin Price Locks or Dam or in high resolution photos showing the ice condition are asked to contact the Public Affairs Office at 314-331-8002/8068. After hours, contact Alan Dooley at 618-719-9039 or 618-939-5985, or Nicole Dalrymple at 314-575-1521.