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News Release

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Army Corps' Largest Diesel Towboat traveling the Illinois River in August



St. Louis – The M/V (Motor Vessel) Mississippi, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' largest diesel towboat and flagship to the Mississippi River Commission, will be traveling 240 miles up, and then down, the Illinois River, August 4-13. The visit is part of the commission's annual Low Water Inspection trip.

Each spring and late summer, the Mississippi River Commission conducts a series of public meetings aboard the vessel, with the late summer trip including the St. Louis area. The public meetings are held at various locations along the Mississippi River. The Commission, established by Congress in 1879, holds the meetings to maintain a dialogue, and to exchange viewpoints and ideas with stakeholders and the public. A public meeting is scheduled at the St. Louis Riverfront, Mo., August 14 at 9 a.m.

General duties of the Mississippi River Commission include making recommendations on policy and work programs, studying and reporting on whether modifications or additions are needed for flood control and navigation projects, providing recommendations on any matters authorized by law, and making semi-annual inspection trips.

Traditionally during the Low Water Inspection trip, the commission travels the length of the Mississippi River stretching from Minnesota to New Orleans. However, in the last five years the commission has incorporated visits to the other major river basins feeding into the Mississippi.

The seven-person, Presidentially-appointed commission, comprised of three Army officers, an Admiral and three civilians, will visit the Illinois River basin to share information and learn from customers, stakeholders and interest groups about the management of the river system. The commission will be doing a systemic inspection and fact gathering trip of the Illinois River basin. The commission will make five stops in Illinois at Ottawa, Peoria, Beardstown, La Grange and Alton.

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Except for two open houses being planned by the Army Corps' Rock Island District in Peoria (Aug. 6) and Ottawa (Aug. 8), the M/V Mississippi will not be open to the public as it travels along the Illinois River. It will however be visible to residents along the river and at several riverfront communities. A tentative schedule of the boat's movements is below but dates and times are subject to change based on river conditions and travel times.

- August 4 Grafton (Heading upstream around noon)
- August 5 Traveling between La Grange Lock and Dam and Peoria
- August 6 Open House from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. downstream of Riverplex in Peoria
- August 7 Traveling between Peoria and Ottawa
- August 8 Open House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Allen Park in Ottawa
- August 9 Standing by at Ottawa
- August 10 Standing by at Ottawa (departing down stream around 8:30 p.m.)
- August 11 Chillicothe Riverfront, Peoria Riverfront (standing by most of the day)
- August 12 Beardstown (morning), La Grange Lock and Dam, Meredosia, Naples
- August 13 Grafton (arrival around 9 a.m.)

The M/V Mississippi, built in 1993 by Halter Marine, is the fifth Army Corps of Engineers towboat to bear the name. It is the biggest diesel towboat in the United States at 241 feet long, 58 feet wide and five stories high. Three 2100-hp diesel engines power the vessel.

The M/V Mississippi spends more than 90 percent of its time as a working towboat, moving barges, equipment and supplies on the lower Mississippi River. The boat will be open to the public Sunday, August 2 at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in Alton, Illinois, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information about the open house, or if special accommodations are required, contact the National Great Rivers Museum at 618-462-6979.

Editor's Note: Photos of the M/V Mississippi are available by contacting the St. Louis District Public Affairs Office at 314-331-8068.