



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

News Release

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Points of Contact: Alan Dooley – 314-331-8002
George Stringham – 314-331-8095

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1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833 / www.mvs.usace.army.mil

Lock 24 closed for emergency repairs

Clarksville, Mo., Monday, October 13 – The U.S. Corps of Engineers Lock 24 at Clarksville, Mo., was closed at about 3 a.m. this morning when machinery closing one of the miter gate leafs failed.

[Editors Note: Leafs is the correct term and plural spelling for the large steel “gates” that open and close to permit vessels to enter and be lifted or lowered in the lock chamber to come and go from pools above and below the associated dam. Each gate leaf weighs approximately 115 tons and is about 33 feet high by 61.5 feet wide. Lock 24 has four gate leafs – two on the upstream or north end and two more at the south or downstream end.]

A tow boat, the Alter Barge Line of Bettendorf, Iowa, 7,200 hp Motor Vessel Jeffrey G, was in the lock chamber at the time with six barges, being locked northbound. There were no injuries to personnel or damage to the vessel or its cargo. The vessel was not involved in the incident. The tow boat and six barges are currently still in the chamber. Nine barges that had already been locked through are secured on the lock’s guidewall upstream of the chamber. One barge is loaded and the other 14 are empty.

Lock 24 operation personnel reported that the vessel and its barges were properly secured in the chamber when the mishap occurred. The machinery that moves the number 3 gate, the gate leaf on the Illinois side of the downstream miter gate, failed as it was closing the 115-ton gate leaf.

Lock personnel have tried to close it with a small work boat to enable the current lockage to be finished but have been unsuccessful. That would enable the tow boat and its barge to proceed north.

Operations managers of the Corps St. Louis District indicate that they have spare parts available to the Melvin Price Locks and Dam near Alton, Ill. They are currently mobilizing the Corps of Engineers tow boat Pathfinder to push the District’s floating crane Sewell from the Corps support facility in St. Louis to Clarksville where her lift capability is required to remove and replace damaged machinery.

Early assessment is that the lock will remain out of service until early evening Thursday. Loss of services of the lock chamber effectively halts traffic on the Mississippi River at Clarksville in both directions. As of Tuesday morning one north bound tow was waiting and another was nearing Lock 24.

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The miter gate assemble is so-called because when the steel gates are closed, they do so in a mitered position. From above when closed, they appear to be an arch shape, or three-hinged arch, pointed up stream against the river's flow. The force of the water is transmitted through the gate leafs – or gates – into the concrete wall of the lock.

The gate leafs are opened and closed moved by electric motors and a gear reduction system.

Lock 24 at Clarksville, Mo., locked 30,145,700 tons of vessels and cargo in 4,816 lockages in 2007. It was opened for service on May 12. Industry sources report that traffic has slowed in recent days, but agricultural commodities, which make up a large quantity of goods shipped, are entering the fall market. The Corps of Engineers is keeping commercial towing interests fully informed during the outage.

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Media note: Attached (and below) is an aerial image of Lock 24 taken September 20, 2006. Full resolution version is available upon request. For news helicopters, Lock 24 is located adjacent to Clarksville, Mo. at River Mile 273.4. Media access can be arranged or updated information be obtained by calling the St. Louis District Public Affairs Office at 314-331-8002 or 8095.

