



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps of Engineers in St. Louis responding to Mississippi River Incidents

St. Louis – Wednesday, April 23 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responding to two incidents on the Mississippi River above St. Louis.

In the first incident, a 15 barge tow being pushed by the Marquette Marine Transportation Motor Vessel Theresa L. Wood, bumped the channel side at river mile 221.2, early Thursday morning. Bumping is a term used to indicate the barge tow or vessel made contact with the river bottom or side of the channel, but was able to proceed without assistance. The navigation channel is maintained with a minimum depth of nine feet and width of 300 feet, and is not specifically defined by the river bank.

This occurred just above the confluence with the Illinois River, about three miles upstream from Grafton, Ill. A Marquette Transportation official in Paducah, Ky., indicated that there was no damage either to the tow boat or barges, and the tow was able to proceed on its up bound transit.

Recent river surveys by the U.S. Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers had identified the navigation channel at that location as narrowing due to sand and silt deposits that routinely occur when river flows are slow and depths drop. Both the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers have been watching the location carefully and moving buoys to remark the channel as it narrowed. Cautions for navigation interests have also been issued for this location.

With the bumping, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis has decided to mobilize their dredge, Motor Vessel Potter, to go to the site to restore the required 300-foot channel width. She is currently being recalled and is scheduled to be underway next Monday to dredge the channel as necessary. Dredge Potter had been routinely demobilized following the end of the Dredging season in December 2009 and routinely operates annually during the July-December timeframe.

The other incident occurred Thursday afternoon when damage was sustained to one of three roller gates on Dam 25 near Winfield, Mo. A total of 15 large dam gates control water depth upstream of the dam. One was damaged when an electrical limit switch failed and the large chain that moves the gate was torn from its connection point. The damaged gate is currently wedged between the concrete piers that support it. No other damage to the structure has been identified.

A repair crew from the Corps' Service Base in St. Louis is en route to the scene now and will begin repairs today. The damaged gate will be isolated from the river flow by large bulkheads, called stop logs, which will be put in place to stop the flow through that gate while repairs are carried out.

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There is currently no firm estimate of the time necessary to complete repairs.

The Corps of Engineers intendeds to start lowering the gates back into the river to catch pool this weekend following the high flows from the snow melt to the north. This will be achieved even with the damaged gate once stop logs are in place.

Lock and Dam 25 was first placed in operation in May 1939. It has received major rehabilitation and systematic maintenance since then, and is one of the sites where an additional 1200-foot long lock chamber is planned to be installed in the future.

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