



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

December 11, 2014

Lakes Ore Trade Finally Shakes off Last Winter, in November!

CLEVELAND — Shipments of iron ore on the Great Lakes totaled 5.9 million tons in November, an increase of 5.8 percent compared to a year ago. That increase finally pushed the year-to-date total ahead of 2013's pace. Through November, shipments stand at 53,249,990 tons, an increase of 86,721 tons.

While the increase is minute, the achievement is huge. The winter of 2013/2014 was the most brutal in decades. The U.S. Coast Guard started breaking ice on December 6, the earliest on record. Iron ore shipments slipped 20 percent in December and then plunged 37 percent in January. A few cargos moved in February, but one voyage that should have taken 50 hours stretched 10 days.

Ice conditions worsened in March, and when the first convoy left Duluth/Superior at the western end of Lake Superior, one vessel had to return to port to repair ice damage. For the other two vessels, what should have been a 62-hour voyage to Gary, Indiana, proved to be an 11-day endurance contest. Although some iron ore was able to move out of Escanaba, Michigan, the trade's March total was 43 percent behind a year ago.

There was little relief in April. The U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards had to convoy vessels across Lake Superior until May 2. It wasn't until April 13 that a vessel was able to enter Marquette Harbor and load ore. As April came to an end, the Lakes iron ore trade totaled just 6.2 million tons, a decrease of 43 percent compared to the same point in 2013. Even at the end of June, iron ore cargos were still down by 17 percent. Between May and September, three U.S.-flag lakers that had not been scheduled to operate this season were activated to help narrow the gap in iron ore and other cargos.

Although ice has formed on Lake Superior and elsewhere two weeks earlier than last year, shipping has yet to be significantly impacted. Once vessels need assistance, the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards will initiate icebreaking. Operation Taconite supports the movement of iron ore to steelmakers and western coal to utilities. Operation Coal Shovel keeps coal moving from Lower Lakes ports.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 17 American companies that operate 56 U.S.-flag vessels on the Great Lakes and carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy: iron ore and fluxstone for the steel industry, aggregate and cement for the construction industry, coal for power generation, as well as salt, sand and grain. Collectively, these vessels can transport more than 115 million tons of cargo per year. More information is available at www.lcaships.com. Contact: Glen G. Nekvasil, Vice President (440-333-9996).

###

Information based on data from knowledgeable sources. However, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Lake Carriers' Association assumes no legal responsibility for the outcome of decisions or commitments made on the basis of this information. This report represents the views of Lake Carriers' Association and may not necessarily represent the views of its individual members.

20325 Center Ridge Rd., Ste. 720 ♦ Rocky River, OH 44116-3572 ♦ www.lcaships.com

The Association Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes
AMERICAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY • ANDRIE INC. • ARMSTRONG STEAMSHIP COMPANY • BELL STEAMSHIP COMPANY • CENTRAL MARINE LOGISTICS, INC.
GRAND RIVER NAVIGATION COMPANY, INC. • GREAT LAKES FLEET/KEY LAKES, INC. • INLAND LAKES MANAGEMENT, INC. • THE INTERLAKE STEAMSHIP COMPANY
LAKE MICHIGAN CARFERRY SERVICE, INC. • LAKES SHIPPING COMPANY, INC. • PERE MARQUETTE SHIPPING COMPANY • PORT CITY MARINE SERVICES
PORT CITY STEAMSHIP SERVICES • SOO MARINE SUPPLY, INC. • UPPER LAKES TOWING COMPANY, INC. • VANENKEVORT TUG & BARGE, INC.