



UNVEILING A GREAT LAKES REGIONAL OUTREACH INITIATIVE

During a busy and highly successful 2014 navigation season on the St. Lawrence Seaway, we realized headlines highlighting significant grain exports, increased ocean vessel transits and the launch of a new regular liner service in the Lakes.

The Seaway system registered a 7.6 percent tonnage increase from 2013 to 2014, making it the first time since the 2008 navigation season that we've hit the mark of 40 million tons handled. Each month from May through December showed an increase in tonnage compared to the 2012 to 2014 three-year average. The strong finish to the Seaway's 2014 navigation season contributed to the resurgence in the overall economy and foreshadows a positive outlook for increasing use of maritime transportation to move goods throughout the region and beyond. As maritime stakeholders, our shared commitment to increasing trade on the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway system helps support the growing import and export trends. I am encouraged by these very positive results and aim to further enhance the reach and role of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC) across the Great Lakes region.

An important mission of the SLSDC is to facilitate trade and economic development throughout the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway region. For 30 years, the SLSDC has engaged in trade development activities to promote the waterway and its stakeholders in order to drive economic growth. Frankly, the Seaway exists for economic activity, connecting North America's 'Opportunity Belt' to the world. To that end, I am pleased to announce that, as of February 1, the SLSDC has established a Great Lakes Regional Outreach Initiative which will focus on trade and economic development activities and work 'on-the-ground' with the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway system stakeholder community.

Adam Schlicht, a member of the SLSDC staff, will lead the new initiative, coordinating closely with Seaway governmental, nongovernmental and industry stakeholders across the 'Opportunity Belt.' As the SLSDC's Great Lakes Regional Representative and Economic Development Specialist, he will work with and support Great Lakes/Seaway ports, terminals, shippers, carriers and labor to increase maritime trade; meet with federal, state and local elected officials to offer assistance; coordinate with other regional federal entities,

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Great Lakes state transportation officials and regional economic development agencies to ensure Seaway system maritime transportation is understood and prioritized in regional planning; and provide information about federal maritime transportation and funding assistance programs. In this role, he will also be responsible for leading future SLSDC regional activities and programs that directly assist Great Lakes ports, businesses, the public and other stakeholders. It is important that we have a direct presence in the region.

The SLSDC Regional Outreach Initiative

will greatly complement the SLSDC's existing economic development and policy work in Washington, D.C., as well as our lock operations and marine services in Massena, New York. It will also enhance our joint trade development and marketing efforts with the Canadian Saint Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation through the binational Highway H₂O program, promoting broader participation across all Highway H₂O programs and initiatives. Highway H₂O is the route and the 'Opportunity Belt' is the destination. Our outreach initiative will play a vital role in finding new ways to expand the use of the Great Lakes/Seaway system. You can reach Adam on his professional cell phone at (216) 379-9106 or by email at adam.schlicht@dot.gov.

This is an exciting and dynamic time for the Seaway system and the Great Lakes region and the absolute right time to bring a new focus to our economic development role. Our bi-national waterway provides access to the cities, states and provinces in the region, where trade opportunities abound. SLSDC's new regional outreach initiative will support and encourage greater economic opportunities for the people and businesses throughout the 'Opportunity Belt' that depend on the Great Lakes. I am confident this approach to trade and economic development will advance the SLSDC's efforts to effectively support the Great Lakes region, increase commercial trade through the waterway and provide increased tangible benefits for the economies of both the United States and Canada. ■

Betty Sutton

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Administrator
Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation