



September 8, 2003

MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-33-2003

TO : All Steamship Agents, Owners, and Operators

SUBJECT: Monthly Canal Operations Summary – AUGUST 2003

1. Statistical Summary:

- a. Transit Pilot Force 280
- b. Pilots in Training 0
- c. Tugs 24
- d. Locomotives 100
- e. Traffic Statistics (Preliminary):

	<u>Average Daily</u>	<u>High Daily</u>	<u>Low Daily</u>
Arrivals	30.7	43.0	18.0
Oceangoing Transits	30.3	39.0	23.0
Canal Waters Time (Hrs.)	26.87	50.05	13.87
In-Transit Time (Hrs.)	10.35	13.76	7.51
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supers</u>	<u>Regulars</u>
Booked Transits	482	294	188

2. Scheduled Locks Outages

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF LOCKS OUTAGES FOR REMAINDER OF YEAR 2003						
Dates	No. of Days	Miraflores	Pedro Miguel	Gatun	Daily Transit Capacity	Status
Sept 15 - 25, 2003	11	Lane Outage		Lane Outage	26 – 28	Confirmed
Oct 20-30, 2003	11	Lane Outage			30 – 32	Tentative
Nov 25-27, 2003	3			Lane Outage	26 – 28	Tentative

Note: Whenever a set of locks requires a major outage of one of its two lanes for dry chamber inspection, miter gate repairs, tow track work or other major maintenance/improvement projects, advantage may be taken of this requirement to perform simultaneous single lane outages for additional maintenance at other locks.

Transit Capacity: The normal capacity of the Panama Canal is 38 vessel transits per day. This capacity is reduced during locks outages, as indicated in the above table. Consequently, vessels may experience delays in transiting. Normally, during these periods, the Panama Canal Vessel Transit Reservation System slots are fully utilized. Two-day lane outages have no significant impact on Canal vessel backlog.

- 3. See reverse for items of interest to the shipping community.
- 4. This advisory will be canceled for record purposes on September 30, 2003.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Arcelio H. Hartley
Acting Maritime Operations Director



ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR THE SHIPPING COMMUNITY

CANAL PERFORMANCE

In August 2003, oceangoing transits totaled 939, or a daily average of 30.3. Transits by wide-beam vessels (30.48 meters/100 feet in beam and over) totaled 392, or 41.1 percent of all oceangoing transits. The average Canal Waters Time (CWT) was 26.87 hours.

DEEPENING OF PANAMA CANAL GATUN LAKE TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

PROJECT TO REMOVE DRAFT RESTRICTIONS, ADD WATER CAPACITY FOR INCREASED TRANSITS AND ENHANCE RELIABILITY

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) announced that its enormous modernization and improvement project to deepen the navigational channel in Gatun Lake is 38 percent complete - ahead of schedule and within budget. The project's goal is to deepen the channel in the Lake, the largest, man-made body of water that all ships navigate when transiting the Canal. Among the many benefits, when completed, the deepening will provide an additional meter of depth, and provide an increase in the active water storage volume of 45 percent. This will minimize future draft restrictions, enhancing reliability and improving vessel safety, as well as accommodate future demand for drinking water. The project is anticipated to be accomplished by 2009.

Currently, the channel provides an unrestricted draft of 12.04 meters (39.5 feet), plus 1.5 meters (5 feet) of under keel clearance when Gatun Lake's elevation is 25 meters (81.5 feet). The deepening project will permit the same conditions, but at a lower lake elevation of 24 meters (78.5 feet).

"It's hard to truly comprehend the enormity of this project. For the first time, our three major pieces of dredging equipment are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to complete this important project. The channel deepening is really going to ensure unparalleled customer service - safe, reliable and efficient transits," said Canal Administrator Alberto Alemán Zubieta.

The massive \$190-million project involves dredging approximately 7.1 million cubic meters of the 52 kilometer-long navigational channel from the south end of Gatun Locks to the north end of Pedro Miguel Locks. The project will help to accommodate the anticipated increase in Canal demand since active water storage volume will rise by nearly 45 percent (from 770 million cubic meters to 1,420 million cubic meters), providing enough water for an additional six transits per day.

Fully committed to environmental stewardship of the Canal watershed, the ACP has ensured that the project is executed in an environmentally safe and responsible manner. In planning the project, the ACP's Environmental Management Division created an Environmental Management Plan that requires the ACP to implement rigorous water conservation and management measures, as well as precautions to protect plant life in the Canal. In addition, several policies and procedures have been developed regarding the removal and disposal of materials from the Canal to prevent environmental problems. The University of Panama will assist in the analysis of water quality and the development of mitigation measures to help guarantee water quality.

The ACP is using the recently overhauled drill boat *Thor* for drilling operations. In addition, the dipper dredge *Rialto M. Christensen* and suction dredge *Mindi* are currently at work excavating material around-the-clock. There are plans to augment the equipment used in the dredging by adding a new drill boat and a new cutter suction dredge, both of which should be operational within two to three years.