



# Lake Carriers' Association

## For Immediate Release

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### 2009 Great Lakes Iron Ore Total Lowest Since 1938

CLEVELAND—Iron ore shipments on the Great Lakes, long the backbone of the navigation system, fell to their lowest level in 71 years in 2009. Iron ore cargos totaled only 31,792,629 net tons, the lowest level recorded since 1938 when the trade finished the year at 21,574,573 tons. The 2009 total also almost perfectly replicates the trade's 1935 performance: 31,765,852 tons.

The lowest total for the Lakes iron ore trade on record is 3,996,441 tons in 1932. (The peak is 107,345,783 tons in 1953.)

The state of the North American steel industry determines the pace of the iron ore trade. It takes between 1.3 and 1.5 tons of iron ore to make a ton of steel. The steel industry began 2009 operating at about 35 percent of capacity. Although a number of blast furnaces were restarted as the year progressed, the industry still ended 2009 with about 30 percent of its capacity idle.

The weak demand for iron ore took its toll on the U.S.-Flag Great Lakes fleet. One 1,000-foot-long vessel dedicated to the iron ore trade, the STEWART J. CORT, has not operated since December 8, 2008. The ROGER BLOUGH, a vessel that delivers iron ore to Gary, Indiana, and Conneaut, Ohio, was idle until October 29. A vessel designed specifically to shuttle iron ore on the twisting Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio, the AMERICAN REPUBLIC, did not set sail until November 25, 2009. Other "ore boats" sailed an abbreviated season.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 18 American companies that operate 55 U.S.-Flag vessels on the Great Lakes and carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy, including iron ore and fluxstone for the steel industry, limestone, and cement for the construction industry, and coal for power generation. Collectively, these vessels can transport more than 115 million tons of cargo a year when high water offsets lack of adequate dredging on America's Fourth Sea Coast. More information is available at [www.lcaships.com](http://www.lcaships.com).

Source: Lake Carriers' Association.

Contact: Glen G. Nekvasil, Vice President - Corporate Communications (440-333-9996).

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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.

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Suite 720 ♦ 20325 Center Ridge Rd. ♦ Rocky River, Ohio 44116-3572 ♦ Fax: 440-333-9993 ♦  
[www.lcaships.com](http://www.lcaships.com)

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***The Association Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes***

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