



The Greatest Ships on the Great Lakes

Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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Surging Iron Ore Cargos Boost U.S.-Flag September Total On Lakes

CLEVELAND--Driven by a 30 percent jump in iron ore cargoes, U.S.-flag Great Lakes vessel operators saw their September total surge to nearly 12 million net tons. The September tally represents an increase of more than 16 percent compared to the corresponding period last year; 5.4 percent compared to the month's 5-year average.

Iron ore cargoes for the steel industry totaled 5.2 million net tons. As previously noted, that tonnage represents an increase of 29.7 percent compared to a year ago. Compared to the month's 5-year average, this September's tally is more than 5 percent ahead of the pace.

For the year, iron ore cargoes moved in U.S. bottoms stand at 36.5 million net tons, an increase of nearly 25 percent compared to the same point in 2003. However, on a 5-year basis, the trade is up only 3 percent. Nonetheless, the fleet need only move 6.5 million more net tons of iron ore to equal the amount hauled in 2003, about 5 weeks sailing at the current pace.

The U.S.-flag coal float in September totaled 2.6 million net tons, a decrease of 5.8 percent compared to a year ago, but 3.1 percent better than the month's 5-year average. The decrease is not as significant as it appears; loadings of western coal at Superior, Wisconsin were unusually strong a year ago. The 1.6 million tons carried out of Superior this September are in fact virtually equal to the month's 5-year average.

U.S.-flag limestone cargoes totaled 3.5 million net tons in September, an increase of 17.6 percent compared to a year ago and 7.5 percent better than the month's 5-year average. The increases are even more significant on a year-to-date basis. The 21.6 million net tons of limestone hauled in Jones Act lakers through September represents an increase of 28.5 percent compared to the same point in 2003; 13.2 percent compared to the 5-year average.

Total cargo movement in U.S.-flag lakers stands at 79.2 million net tons as of September 30, an increase of 21.6 percent compared to the end of the third quarter last year and 7.3 percent ahead of the 5-year average.

Lake Carriers' Association represents 15 American corporations that operate 57 U.S.-Flag vessels on the Great Lakes. These vessels carry the raw materials that drive the nation's economy: Iron ore for the steel industry, limestone and cement for the construction industry, coal for power generation.... Collectively, these vessels can transport as much as 125 million tons of cargo a year. For more information visit LCA's Web site - www.lcaships.com - or contact Glen G. Nekvasil, Vice President - Corporate Communications. Tel: (216) 861-0592 / Fax: (216) 241-8262 / E-Mail: ggn@lcaships.com.

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

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