



Lake Carriers' Association

For Immediate Release

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The Greatest Ships on the Great Lakes

Year-End Total Best Since 2000

Major Rebound in U.S.-Flag Shipping on the Great Lakes in 2004

CLEVELAND---Shipments of raw materials in U.S.-Flag vessels on the Great Lakes rebounded significantly in 2004. U.S.-Flag "Lakers" hauled 111 million net tons of dry-bulk cargo, an increase of 17 percent compared to 2003 and more than 6 percent ahead of the fleet's 5-year average.

In terms of tonnage, iron ore cargos for the steel industry registered the largest increase in 2004. U.S.-Flag Lakers loaded 51.2 million net tons of iron ore, an increase of 8.2 million tons or 19 percent compared to 2003. To put that quantity in perspective, 8.2 million tons is enough cargo to keep three 1,000-foot-long supercarriers busy for nearly an entire season. Conversely, the fact the 2004 iron ore float is only 2.5 percent ahead of the commodity's 5-year average illustrates how troubled was America's steel industry for most of 2003 and preceding years

Percentage wise, limestone cargos recorded the largest increase, nearly 22 percent compared to 2003 and some 10 percent ahead of the commodity's 5-year average. The 29.5 million net tons of aggregate and fluxstone moved in U.S. bottoms also represent the highest total for U.S.-Flag Lakers since 1998.

Strong demand for western, low sulfur coal produced at least one, perhaps two records for U.S.-Flag Lakers in 2004. Loadings at Superior Midwest Energy Terminal in Superior, Wisconsin, reached their highest level since the facility began operations in 1976 – 15.5 million net tons. The 3.7 million tons loaded at KCBX Terminals Company in Chicago are certainly the most coal loaded by U.S.-Flag Lakers on Lake Michigan in a number of years.

The other cargos carried by U.S.-Flag Lakers – cement, salt, sand, and grain – more or less corresponded to their 5-year average. Only salt differed noticeably from the 5-year average, but demand for that cargo is largely determined by the severity of winter in the region.

Only two U.S.-Flag Lakers that have operated in recent years were idle in 2004, the small self-unloader MAUMEE, and the mid-sized self-unloader COURTNEY BURTON. Returning to service last year was the mid-sized self-unloader RICHARD REISS. The vessel sailed in late March. The self-unloader BUCKEYE was activated at the end of September to meet a surge in demand for iron ore.

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 on Great Lakes shipping, visit LCA's Web site: www.lcaships.com.

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

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