



NORTH STAR PORT

SUMMER 2022



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**Duluth Seaway
Port Authority**

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THE HARBOR LINE

This is the challenge of a single freight transfer: Move a product from its point of origin to its destination in the right amount of time for the right price. From a statewide freight transportation system perspective, the challenge becomes keeping the state's economy moving. Those are two different viewpoints on freight movement, but they're unified in the understanding that supply chains need to operate reliably, meaning all cargoes are moved from their point of extraction/harvest/production to intermediate points of production or storage and ultimately delivered to their final point of sale/consumption/use in a predictable timeframe for a predictable price. Reliable supply chains are critical to effective trade and commerce, but also to community livability, as highlighted by the past two years of supply chain mayhem. Keeping a freight system effectively mobile requires planning, which in turn requires solid data, analysis, and a consideration of technology trends and disrupters.

Adding to that challenge, freight infrastructure is predominantly owned, maintained and operated by the public sector using public funds (think highways, bridges, waterways and airports; most rail and pipelines are exceptions), yet most system users (shippers, carriers, consignees and freight forwarders) are private entities. Effective freight planning, conducted in the public sphere, needs input and data from all of these users, not just those working in freight logistics.

Raising the stakes: This overall freight system must operate within a broader, multimodal transportation system that not only moves and supports our economy, but also provides safe, efficient and effective movement of people within and between the important locations in their lives.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation maintains a family of transportation plans that require regular updating to remain relevant and forward-looking. MnDOT recently published a draft Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP), which looks 20 years into the future and ultimately aims to set a framework for the allocation of public funds for transportation infrastructure,

while building and maintaining a system that provides citizens with mobility, connectivity and livability. This is the highest-level plan, is federally required, and sets the stage for the rest of the plan family. The 2022 draft is structured around six topics: aging infrastructure, climate change, economy and employment, equity, safety and transportation options. The public comment period for this plan is open until Sept. 18, 2022. Minnesotans should take the time to review and comment on the plan. After all, this is the transportation system that supports your way of life. You can find and comment on the draft document at: <https://minnesotago.org/final-plans/smt-draft-plan-2022>.

MnDOT will next tackle the Minnesota State Freight Plan, last updated in 2016. The freight plan must be developed within the context of the SMTP, and will assess all five freight modes: road, rail, ports and waterways, airports and pipelines. This planning process begins in September and will be completed by the beginning of 2024 to meet the federal deadline. Both the SMTP and the State Freight Plan must address the trends of decarbonization, electrification and the development of autonomous vehicles, while supporting healthy, equitable communities. Within that mission, it cannot ignore the fact of growing freight volumes. The Surface Transportation Board predicts that U.S. freight tonnage will grow by 50% between 2020 and 2050, while freight value is predicted to double in that same time period. It's a juxtaposition that will lead to challenging discussions and decisions during the planning process. I feel fortunate to have a front-row seat, serving on the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC), where I am currently chair, and on the Policy Advisory Committee to the family of MnDOT transportation plans.



Deb DeLuca, Port Director

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About North Star Port

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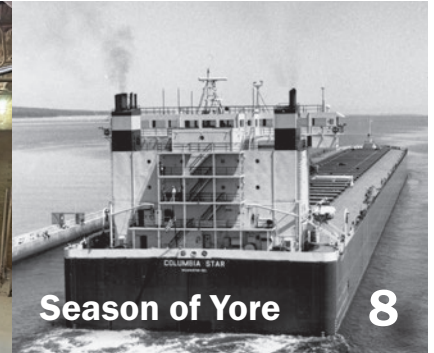
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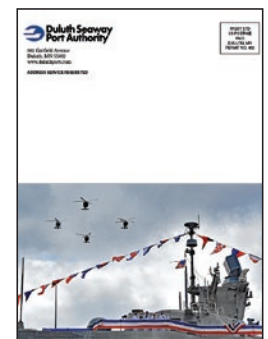
The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest littoral combat ship USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* at the Clure Public Marine Terminal in Duluth on May 21, 2022. Among its armaments, the vessel features a deck-mounted Mk 110 57-mm gun.

On the back:

A quartet of military helicopters fly over the USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* during her commissioning at Duluth's Clure Public Marine Terminal on May 21, 2022.



David Schauer



Gus Schauer



Printed on 10% post-consumer waste paper.



Crew members from the USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* look on during the vessel commissioning ceremony at Duluth's Clure Public Marine Terminal.

SALT IN HIS VEINS

Mark LaLiberte's retirement brings

BY JULIE ZENNER

Mark LaLiberte is not exaggerating when he says, "Salt is in my veins." The recently retired plant manager of Compass Minerals' bulk salt processing facility in Duluth comes from a long line of seasoned entrepreneurs, whose blood, sweat and tears helped put the Twin Ports' salt, lime and cement industries on the map.

Compass Minerals acquired the Duluth salt processing plant in 2009, but the facility's history was shaped by generations of the LaLiberte family, which owned and operated the business as Cutler-Magner Company for several decades. As the last LaLiberte to work at the site,

Mark's departure in May 2022 marked the end of an era—a legacy he unpacked, surrounded by boxes of faded photos, historic news clippings, company promotional materials, packaging prototypes and other memorabilia.

The LaLiberte family's ties to one of the longest-running industrial operations on the Duluth waterfront began in 1913 when Mark's paternal grandfather, Henry LaLiberte, joined D.G. Cutler Company as assistant manager. The business had roots dating back to 1880 and already held a place on Duluth's industrial waterfront as a salt processor, lime producer and exclusive area distributor of Huron Cement. It was a perfect match for Henry, who brought prior experience in the lime industry and an industrious spirit to the job. One year later, owners changed the name to Cutler-Magner Company, a moniker it would hold for nearly a century.

It wasn't long before the LaLiberte name was firmly attached to Cutler-Magner and its operations. Henry rose quickly through the ranks, becoming general manager and acquiring an ownership stake. He took the helm as president in 1931. His son, Paul, joined the company in 1935, and 11 years later, his youngest son, Clarence, came on board.

Under Henry's leadership and with the help of his sons and other key personnel, Cutler-Magner established a lime manufacturing plant in Superior. It sold a portion of



The mid-century Cutler-Magner management group included (from left) Lloyd McDougall, Clarence LaLiberte, Henry LaLiberte (seated), Paul LaLiberte and George Cruikshank. Henry LaLiberte, grandfather of Mark LaLiberte, joined the D.G. Cutler Company in 1913.

family's waterfront era to an end

its
Superior
lime dock to
Huron Portland
Cement for construction
of a cement milling operation.

These moves advanced its position in the lime production and cement distribution industries. On the salt side, massive storage facilities for bulk rock salt and granulated salt were built at Cutler-Magner's growing facility on Railroad Street in Duluth. A 750-ton hydraulic rock salt press was installed at the Duluth salt plant, improving its ability to produce salt blocks for agricultural customers.

Paul LaLiberte succeeded his father as president in 1963. He oversaw construction of a large calcium chloride storage building and installation of a high calcium lime hydrator at the Superior plant. When Paul died in 1970, his younger brother Clarence took the helm and spent 37 years in that position. Meanwhile, a third generation of LaLibertes moved into the business. This included Paul's son, David, and Clarence's sons, Stephen (Steve) and Mark, all of whom wore many hats and held multiple management positions through the years.

From its earliest days, Cutler-Magner thrived by maximizing Duluth-Superior's well-developed water, rail and road transportation network. Salt, limestone and other raw materials were transported from Great Lakes-area mines into Duluth using cargo space available on inbound bulk carriers. Finished products left the Twin Ports by truck or rail, often providing return loads for overland haulers that dropped off other commodities for Great Lakes shipping.

Cutler-Magner's role as a major Head of the Lakes vessel cargo receiver and industry leader brought a great honor in 1954 when the Buckeye Steamship Company named one of its Great Lakes steamers the *Henry LaLiberte*. The christening

LaLIBERTE continued on Page 6



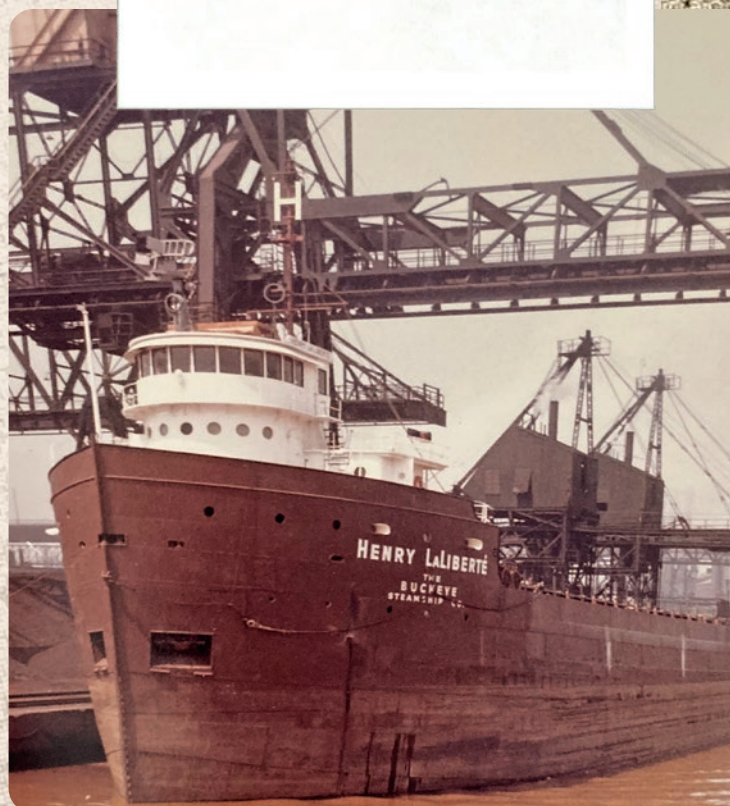
It was once said of our past President, Henry LaLiberte, that he "keeps one eye glued to the balance sheet while the other looks ahead to the growth of the company."

Because his philosophy has guided us through 100 years of growth and change, we dedicate this booklet to Henry LaLiberte, and to you, our customers.

We see growth not only as expansion of our facilities, but also, as the ability to continue our same personalized service while improving our technology and enlarging our operation.

We look forward to 100 more years of growth defined in this spirit.

President,
Clarence LaLiberte
Clarence LaLiberte



The Buckeye Steamship Company named one of its ships in Henry LaLiberte's honor.

recognized the family patriarch as an industry pioneer, innovator and advocate of development of the St. Lawrence Seaway, whose list of accomplishments would fill volumes.

Mark never knew his grandfather, but he grew up knowing the family business inside and out. Some of Mark's fondest childhood memories are of trips to the waterfront with his father, Clarence, to tour Cutler-Magner's salt plant in Duluth and lime operations in Superior.

"I remember going down early Saturday mornings," Mark recalled. "We always stopped downtown at the bakery and picked up donuts and bread on the way. My dad's passion for the business was contagious. He was a great teacher."

Despite the family's ownership stake in the company, a career at Cutler-Magner was never a given for Mark or his siblings. That would have to be earned. Mark attended college at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and spent summers working as a laborer at the salt and lime facilities.

"I learned both plants' operations from the end of a shovel," Mark said. "I worked in packaging, making salt blocks, loading trucks, offloading vessels, that type of thing."

After graduating with a business degree and significant credits in chemistry, he went out in the world to gain experience. Mark worked construction, managed a hardware store in the Twin Cities, sold hardware wholesale and finally returned to Duluth as an office manager for Lakehead Oil Company. One day, the phone rang, and it was Bob Kanuit, former executive vice president of Cutler-Magner. He told Mark there was a rare opening at the company.

"I was in the middle of a big computer software turnover at Lakehead Oil, so I asked if I could have six months to wrap things up," Mark recalled. "Bob said, 'No, the position is open now, and your dad says there's a good chance there won't be another opportunity.' There was very little turnover in administrative positions or management of operations—they only had openings when someone retired."

Mark started as a supervisor at the lime plant and then moved into a supervisory role at the salt plant. After a few years, he was promoted to project management and pegged to develop the company's first safety program. He also worked with his dad, brother Steve, and Dana Stone, vice president of engineering, to improve technology at both the salt and lime plants, including advanced salt purification and innovative packaging.

"We introduced high-speed form, fill and seal packaging in poly bags, which was new to the industry and kind of a door-opener for us," Mark said. "It was actually a concept my brother Steve had seen in the marketplace in other products. It took years of studying efficiencies to make the case that conversion from paper bags to poly bags was a good thing. I've always been very proud of that and of advancements in salt purification at the plant."

In the mid 2000s, company officials began making moves to sell Cutler-Magner and its wholly-owned lime manufacturing affiliate, CLM Corporation, in Superior. Graymont Western U.S. bought the plants. Two years later, it sold the salt side to Compass Minerals. Mark and his brother Steve remained through both transitions. Steve worked in salt sales and eventually moved into specialty minerals for Compass Minerals. When Steve retired in



2018, Mark was the last LaLiberte in the business. He managed the Duluth salt plant for Compass Minerals until his retirement this spring after more than 32 years at the operation.

Compass Minerals' Duluth plant continues to focus primarily on agricultural and water softening salt products along with sidewalk deicing and bulk road salt. Mark feels good about its future as he settles into retirement.

"Most of the major projects at the plant that I was involved in designing or putting forward are in motion," Mark said. "I feel confident that the plant is in good shape."

After more than three decades, Mark looks forward to spending time with family and friends, hiking, biking, playing hockey and honing his tennis skills. He also hopes to share his knowledge and experience in ways that help other business owners succeed, perhaps through consulting or mentoring. He plans to stay active and involved in the community, much like his father and grandfather did.

Sorting and packing items left behind by generations of the LaLiberte family has prompted Mark to ponder the legacy he's leaving behind. His father's death in March 2021 at the age of 103 has made sifting through the old photos and memorabilia even more poignant.

"There is a lot to go through and catalog," Mark said, pulling select items from their boxes. "I came across pictures of the Old Hickory smoked seasoning salt plant that my dad put together, and there's an engineering profile with photos of the process. Here's a photo of my grandparents at the christening of the Henry LaLiberte."

Retirement sounds sweet, but there will always be salt in Mark's veins. It was the lifeblood of his family for three generations, and he is determined to preserve and protect that legacy.

"I think my dad would be proud," he said with a smile and a modest shrug.



Julie Zenner



Courtesy Cutler Magnier/Compass Minerals



Julie Zenner

Seasons of Yore: 1997

Low-sulfur coal reaches its pinnacle

BY JAYSON HRON

Sampling “Every Breath You Take,” a 1983 hit song from the Police, rapper Puff Daddy and singer Faith Evans produced a smash single in 1997 with “I’ll Be Missing You,” their collaborative tribute to the late Notorious B.I.G.

July 5 of that year marked the song’s fourth week at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. Arriving fashionably late in Duluth-Superior, the ditty was still fresh a month into its chart-topping reign, and it serenaded the thousand-foot freighter *Columbia Star* as she sailed into North America’s furthest-inland seaport.

That musical eulogy eventually set a record, since eclipsed, as the longest-running No. 1 hip-hop song in history. Coincidentally and concurrently, the *Columbia Star* also set a record, hers coming not on Evans’ high C’s, but rather, on Lake Superior’s high seas.

Coal Colossus

Built at a cost of \$45 million, the Superior (Wis.) Midwest Energy Terminal opened in 1976 as a coal transshipment mecca for the port. Low-sulfur Montana coal arrived at the facility by train and departed on ships, mostly sailing to the Detroit Edison power plant in Michigan.

In its first season, the facility shipped only 1.9 million tons, or approximately 60 percent of Duluth-Superior’s total coal tonnage, but that total—3.2 million tons—represented a 10-year high. By 1986, the port sailed almost triple that tonnage, with the vast majority of it moving through the Midwest Energy Terminal.

Fred Shusterich joined the company in July of that year as an assistant general manager. He could see the facility’s burgeoning potential, and it would soon reach another milestone, with total tonnage topping 10 million for the first time in 1987. Three years later, in 1990, the facility eclipsed 12 million tons for the first time. On June 25, 1993, Midwest Energy set a Great Lakes vessel-loading record when it poured 71,369 tons of coal into the Indiana Harbor, which made a short sail to the power plant in Silver Bay, Minnesota. By the mid-1990s, Midwest Energy’s total tonnage eclipsed 13 million, and the trend pointed still higher.

Sailing through the Soo

When the *Columbia Star* arrived at Midwest Energy on July 5, 1997, it sailed in comparatively cool, deep Lake Superior waters. Shusterich, then just months from being named president of the facility, remembers a buzz surrounding her arrival



The *Columbia Star*, photographed by Thom Holden in July 1989.



The *Columbia Star*, photographed by Jon LaFontaine on Sept. 27, 1998.



The Midwest Energy terminal in Superior, Wisconsin.



Fred Shusterich
Midwest Energy

and the potential for a record-breaking load.

“It depended on what the acceptable draft was at the Soo Locks and in the St. Marys River, and if it was a good water year,” said Shusterich. “We’d been told what the record was, and we’d been getting some good loads. We looked at some of those previous loads and said, ‘Well, if we don’t cube out, with the draft where it was, we could probably break the record.’”

Loading at a rate of almost 9,000 tons per hour, the Midwest Energy team filled her with 70,903 tons of coal. It was tantalizingly close to the terminal’s ship-loading record set in 1993, but in that case, the vessel needed only to sail northeast across 60 miles of Lake Superior. The *Columbia Star*—now known as the *American Century*—had to navigate the entirety of Lake Superior, plus the Soo Locks and Lake Huron, en route to the power plant in St. Clair, Michigan. Limited somewhat by those factors, Shusterich’s team settled for a Soo Locks coal-transit record, established officially during the ship’s downbound passage slightly more than 24 hours later. And the big loads kept coming. By season’s end, more than 21.4 million tons of coal sailed from Great Lakes ports, and none floated more than the Port of Duluth-Superior: a record-setting 14.7 million tons.

Even at those impressive heights, Midwest Energy had not yet reached its peak. Shusterich, by then serving in his first year as company president, set his sights on more.

“We had been building, putting things in place to reach over 21-22 million tons by the early 2000s,” he said. “It was an exciting time, renegotiating contracts, getting new customers, getting long-term contracts, getting contracts in the Canadian Maritimes and reactivating our tonnage to Spain. They were fun times, with a lot of great people and great teamwork.”

In 2000, total coal tonnage (16.6 million tons) surpassed iron ore tonnage (16.2 million tons) in the Port of Duluth-Superior for the first time since 1932. Coal’s upward climb finally culminated in 2008, when Midwest Energy topped 22 million tons.

“It was a grand plan and exciting to see it come to fruition,” said Shusterich, who retired nine years later, on Jan. 1, 2017.

“I don’t miss it anymore,” he said, perhaps akin to a mid-1990s hit played a bit too often. “But it was the best job I ever had.”





Bob Welton

The Duluth Cargo Connect crew unloads bagged minerals from the *Hudsongracht* in early May 2022. The shipment contributed to a 33% increase in general cargo tonnage compared to the five-season average.



SEASON UPDATE

SUMMER 2022

Lagging iron ore and grain shipments quashed total tonnage in the Port of Duluth-Superior through mid-summer, with only a slight uptick evident in July.

Through June 30, 2022, slightly more than 8.8 million short tons transited the port. This total represented a 20% drop compared to last season's pace and an 18% slide compared to the five-season average. Iron ore took the biggest tumble, falling 25.4% year over year.

Typically, the nation's blast furnace utilization rate—hovering near a relatively healthy 80 percent this summer—correlates closely with Great Lakes iron ore tonnage totals, but that hasn't necessarily been the case so far this season.

"We've seen a variety of contributing factors, beginning with lingering ice and cold that slowed early-

season shipping," said Jayson Hron of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "More recently, some blast furnaces and ships went out of service for maintenance, which resulted in less maritime ore movement through June and July. Additionally, a percentage of Minnesota's iron ore is moving via rail instead of via the Duluth-Superior port, which reduces the overall ore tonnage potential for the Great Lakes.

"Overall, we're hearing talk of strong demand, active blast furnaces rapidly chewing through ore piles, and laid-up ships returning to service soon. Those are all indicators of a potentially strong second half for iron ore movement on the Great Lakes. Time will tell, but we think iron ore tonnage will rally somewhat in the second half, bringing the Port of Duluth-Superior totals closer to



Bob Welton

Clure Terminal gantry crane No. 2 moves a wind turbine component from the *Miena Desgagnes* to a waiting truck in mid-June 2022.



average by season's end."


The grain forecast is even harder to predict. At only 240,231 tons through June 30, grain tonnage was 19.4% behind last year's pace, with 2021 representing an 85-year low in the Port of Duluth-Superior.

Rallying from those depths is still a possibility, especially with good growing conditions and a strong 2022 fall harvest season. The planned reactivation of Duluth's Elevator A after its recent purchase by Hansen-Mueller will be a grain storyline to watch in the season's second half.

While iron ore and grain slumped, other cargo

categories thrived through midsummer, namely limestone and general cargo.

In June, Duluth-Superior welcomed 433,143 tons of the versatile chalky rock from Michigan, which pushed the season-to-date limestone total above 1 million short tons and 14.3% ahead of the five-season average.

Inbound wind energy cargoes and bagged minerals delivered the general cargo boost, with nearly 13,000 tons arriving at the Duluth Cargo Connect facilities in June. That float lifted the season-to-date general cargo tonnage total past 27,280 tons, which exceeded the five-season average pace through June 30 by a robust 33%. 

John G. Munson of the Duluth-based Great Lakes Fleet sailed under the Blatnik Bridge just after sunrise on July 25, 2022, en route to discharge limestone at Hallett Dock 5 in West Duluth. Limestone tonnage finished June more than 14% ahead of the five-season average.

DULUTH DEBUTS

Duluth's Clure Terminal hosts combat ship commissioning



David Schauer

Crew members from the USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* and audience look on during the vessel commissioning ceremony at Duluth's Clure Public Marine Terminal.

The United States Navy commissioned its newest littoral combat ship USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* (LCS 21) at Duluth's Clure Public Marine Terminal on May 21, 2022. It was said to be the first U.S. Navy ship ever commissioned in Minnesota.


Constructed by Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin, the Freedom-class littoral combat ship was launched and christened June 15, 2019. Minnesota iron ore was used in the vessel's construction.

"It's a great example of America's supply chain at its best," said Deb DeLuca, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "Eighty percent of the nation's first-pour steel includes Minnesota iron ore, much of which moves through our port on its way to the steel mills on the lower lakes. Seeing it sail back here in the form of a Wisconsin-built ship that will help protect our nation's interests is a very tangible reminder of the importance of strong and secure supply chains."

The U.S. Navy awarded USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* plank owner status to the Duluth Seaway Port Authority for its role in hosting the vessel visit and commissioning ceremony, which drew hundreds of attendees.

LCS 21 is the second naval ship to honor Minnesota's Twin Cities. The first Navy warship named *Minneapolis-*

Saint Paul was a Los Angeles-class submarine launched in 1983. Having served for more than two decades with distinction, including during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the submarine was decommissioned in 2007.

Duluth has an even longer history with the U.S. Navy, dating back to the establishment of the Minnesota Naval Militia in the early 1900s, and the arrival of the USS *Fern* in 1906. That ship was renamed the USS *Gopher* to reflect its new assignment in Minnesota's largest seaport city. 

The USS *Minneapolis-Saint Paul* awaits commissioning under a spectacular sunrise on May 21, 2022.



David Schauer

Viking Octantis ushers in new era of Great Lakes cruising



David Schauer

The *Viking Octantis* floats in the Duluth harbor basin at sunrise on July 25, 2022. It was the vessel's third visit to the Twin Ports in 2022.

Cruise ships returned to Duluth for the first time since 2013, with the *Viking Octantis* leading that procession on May 30, 2022.

Viking has seven stops at the port scheduled for this year; American Queen Voyages has two.

Great Lakes cruises are a different breed of experience, with *Viking Octantis* ticket prices starting at \$6,495 and passengers' average age being approximately 70 years old. Because vessel size is limited by the St. Lawrence Seaway's lock system, the ships themselves are small and provide a more intimate guest experience. The largest cruise vessels in operation on the Great Lakes hold a maximum of 400 passengers, with an average size of fewer than 200. When arriving in Duluth, these expeditions provide opportunities for passengers to visit the city, sample local cuisine and explore cultural sites and museums throughout northeastern Minnesota.

The polar-class *Viking Octantis*, launched in 2022, features an array of expedition equipment including tender boats, a military-grade special operations boat and two seven-person submarines. The ship also includes an onboard lab where National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

CRUISING

continued on Page 14



Gus Schauer

The *Ocean Navigator* departs Duluth under the Aerial Lift Bridge on June 25, 2022. It was the vessel's second visit to the city in 2022.



The *Viking Octantis* and the *Honorable James L. Oberstar* sail alongside each other near the Duluth Lake Port dock on June 27, 2022. Launched in 1959, the *Oberstar* is 806 feet long. The *Viking Octantis* cruise ship is 665 feet long.


CRUISING Continued from Page 11

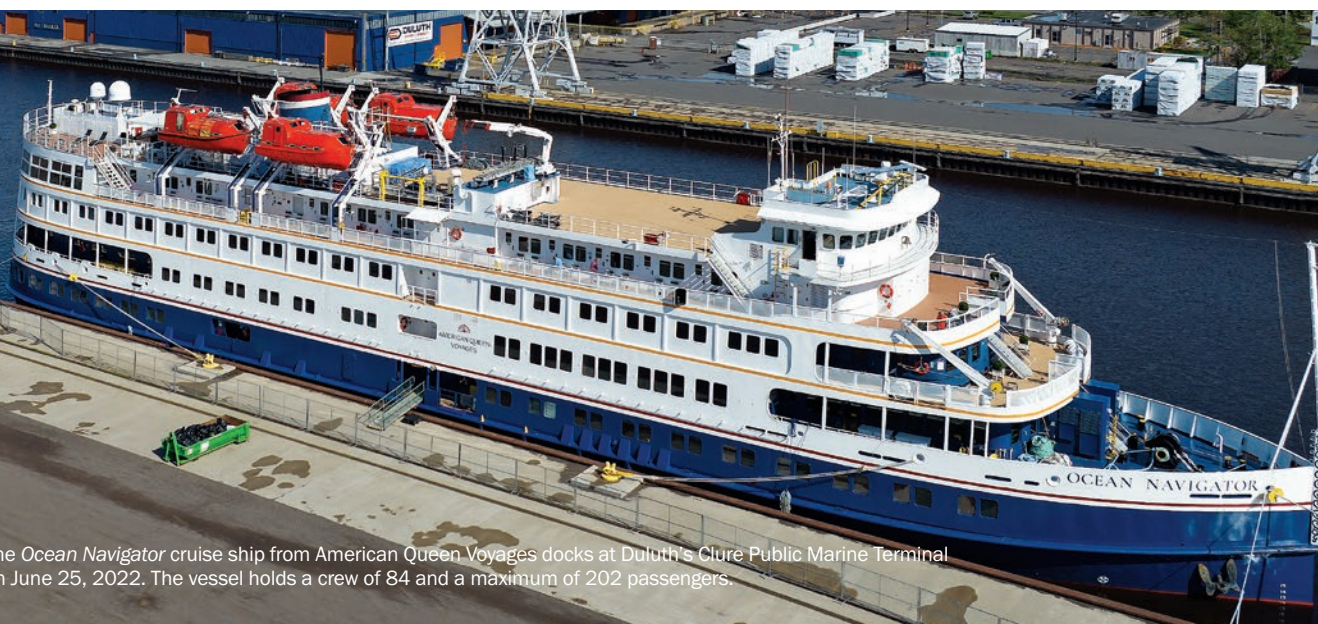
scientists can conduct research and experiments. *Octantis* uses a zero-emissions chemical incinerator to process waste and also works with water treatment and waste treatment facilities at specific ports of call for disposal. The cruise ship operators, in addition to destination ports throughout the Great Lakes, signed a Cruise-the-Great Lakes sustainability pledge committing to environmental stewardship for the 2022 cruising season and beyond.

"It's been really exciting to see these beautiful, modern, efficient cruise ships visiting our port," said Deb DeLuca, executive director, Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "Our Duluth Cruising Coalition partners boarded the *Viking Octantis* in June for a welcoming ceremony, and frankly,

we've never seen anything quite like these awesome ships. They are sleek, luxurious marvels."

In late June, AFAR Media named Duluth and the Great Lakes among the world's trendiest cruise destinations of 2022.

"The initial voyages have been a success, thanks to a tremendous team effort from the ship operators and our Duluth Cruising Coalition partners," said DeLuca. "We're excited to see plans forming for the development of more cruise opportunities for our port. One proposed itinerary has Duluth serving as a hub port for a voyage to Antarctica, which would be a grand journey indeed, and an even bigger economic boost for our region." 



The *Ocean Navigator* cruise ship from American Queen Voyages docks at Duluth's Clure Public Marine Terminal on June 25, 2022. The vessel holds a crew of 84 and a maximum of 202 passengers.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

SHERP ATV

If you're a marine project contractor, your work is literally a sink-or-swim situation. One such contractor, the J.F. Brennan Company (Brennan), bought its way to buoyancy with a fleet of amphibious machines capable of operating in and on the waters of Lake Superior and its St. Louis River tributary. One of them is the SHERP, a truly all-terrain vehicle seen recently in the Spirit Lake cleanup area and also doing donuts in rap videos. We asked Nick Patterson and Les Ormond from Brennan's Duluth office for the inside scoop on this rugged ride.

North Star Port: Supposedly Kanye West owns 10 SHERPs. How many SHERPs are in Brennan's fleet? Have you ever considered using them in your own music video?

Nick Patterson: We currently have one SHERP ATV. It has been very effective in shallow water and wetland terrains. As more and more marshland projects like this come into our portfolio, I imagine we will continue to add to our fleet. We do, in fact, have a trailer for our SHERP to haul materials and supplies with a similar design and large tires.

The more SHERPs we have, the better odds we get one in a music video. Let Kanye know.

Port: In all seriousness, one of the SHERP benefits is that it can operate very delicately in sensitive environments, even though it looks rough-and-tumble with those 63-inch tires. What characteristics help it do that?

Patterson: It has a very controlled center of gravity and extremely low ground pressure with the large tires. As they say, "Obstacles do not block the path; they are the path."

Port: What does the SHERP do for your contractor teams that wouldn't otherwise be possible?

Patterson: It allows us to get into areas too shallow for a boat or barge, and too difficult to traverse by foot or with standard rubber tires or tracked machines. It goes from land to water seamlessly, tracks through soft sediments and will even float or paddle across the open water.

This piece of equipment has really expanded our amphibious capabilities and eliminated multiple pieces of equipment needed for similar tasks.

Port: What's under the hood? Could the SHERP win a race?

Patterson: The machine is capable of going up to 25 mph, but only a measly 3.7 mph on the water. It has a Kubota-V1505 diesel engine that produces 44 horsepower. I don't think it will win too many races, but it does go faster than the rental scooters we're seeing around Canal Park these days.



Photos J.F. Brennan Company

A crew from the J.F. Brennan Company uses an all-terrain vehicle called a SHERP in the Spirit Lake cleanup area.

Port: Where and when was this SHERP built?

Patterson: Its manufacturing plant, when we purchased the SHERP in 2019, was in Ukraine.

Port: When was it first used in Duluth-Superior? Which projects have involved the SHERP since then?

Patterson: The first project in Duluth was an ongoing remediation project in the St. Louis River Area of Concern. It has been used on multiple projects in Minnesota and Wisconsin prior to and since then. We've used it during transmission line installations, going through a wetland and marsh area, for traveling down an ice road for site access down a river, for wetland and marsh access to gather survey information for project design and as-builts, and we've also used it for a river cleanup near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The list goes on and on.

Duluth Cargo Connect loads season's first maritime containers for export

In October 2021, the Duluth Seaway Port Authority announced that it had gained approval to begin maritime container-handling operations at the Clure Public Marine Terminal, adding waterborne container shipping capability to its existing land-based intermodal business. Duluth Cargo Connect, a working partnership between the Port Authority and its operating agent, recently initiated that new activity, loading the first containerized cargoes of 2022 for export aboard the Spliethoff-chartered vessel *Nunalik*.

The shipment consisted of approximately 4,500 tons of super-sacked kidney beans bound for Europe from the Chippewa Valley Bean Company in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Duluth Cargo Connect loaded the beans onto the *Nunalik* in 200 20-foot containers, which then sailed from the Port of Duluth-Superior, North America's furthest inland seaport, across the Great Lakes and through the St. Lawrence Seaway to their European destinations.

Coordinating the shipment required collaboration with multiple players, including the Chippewa Valley Bean Company, Jeff Foster Trucking, Nexyst 360 (which assembles sustainable supply chain solutions), and the Spliethoff Group.

"We operate an excellent multimodal transport facility at the Clure Terminal, but to develop this maritime container business, it takes more than that," said Jonathan Lamb, Duluth Cargo Connect president. "It takes the steamship line operators, customers, freight forwarders, truckers and third-party logistics providers. It takes everybody, all of them coming together to make a deal like this work, and we're very appreciative of everyone who helped make it happen."

"It illustrates the kind of efficient, personalized service we can provide here in Duluth, and also how the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System can be a valuable supply chain alternative for importers and exporters."

Cindy Brown, Chippewa Valley Bean Company president, called the innovative shipping arrangement "a saving grace" for her company, which is the nation's leading exporter of kidney beans.

"It opens a new horizon for us to find containers and make an investment in our future by using the Port of Duluth—a port so close to us—with chartered vessels, to deliver product efficiently to our customers worldwide," said Brown. "The sky's the limit. We can find warehousing, we can have storage for our customers and now we can make sure that our product is there on time to meet the needs of retailers in Europe."

Nexyst 360 provided a critical component of the ground-

Duluth Cargo Connect loads the season's first sea cargo container aboard the vessel *Nunalik* on May 27, 2022. The containers were filled with super-sacked kidney beans for export to Europe from Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley Bean Company.



breaking deal, supplying its own specialized NexBox containers to accommodate the shipment. A technology-embedded shipping container, the NexBox is carefully crafted to ensure quality, traceability, sustainability, market access and mobility for specialty grains.

"Containers are in short supply worldwide, so it's a major advantage to have our own private boxes," said Al Dutcher of Nexyst 360. "But what's really notable is the NexBox technology and how it fits into our overall process for linking farmers, buyers and consumers with quality, traceable product that isn't overhandled and moves efficiently."

The Port Authority praised the arrangement as a collaborative effort and also a promising expansion for Head-of-the-Lakes shipping.

"Greater cargo diversity and more multimodal shipping options make our port and our region more vibrant," said Deb DeLuca, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "It's a team effort to create these kinds of solutions for helping regional producers and manufacturers compete in the global marketplace, and we're excited to see those efforts coming to fruition."

Hansen-Mueller Company purchases Duluth's Elevator A

The Hansen-Mueller Company recently finalized acquisition of General Mills Elevator A in Duluth, Minnesota, completing a deal that will bring the grain-handling facility back into active service.

Owned previously by General Mills and inactive since 2015, Elevator A becomes the second Hansen-Mueller-owned grain complex in the Twin Ports, joining the Daisy Elevator and Elevator M complex in Superior, Wisconsin.

Elevator A anchors the northern end of Rice's Point in Duluth. It stands 185 feet above the harbor, with a 3.5 million-bushel storage capacity. Consolidated Elevator Company built the structure with ceramic tile, brick and concrete in 1908, replacing the original wooden elevator constructed on the site in 1894. General Mills purchased the elevator from Consolidated in 1943, modernizing it in the 1970s and operating it until 2015. The site includes a 1,900-foot dock, with a slip depth of 28 feet, and on-dock rail service from BNSF Railway.

Nebraska based Hansen-Mueller plans to bring the facility back into operation in time for the 2022 harvest season. The facility will import and export primarily small grains grown in the United States and Canada to domestic and foreign destinations.

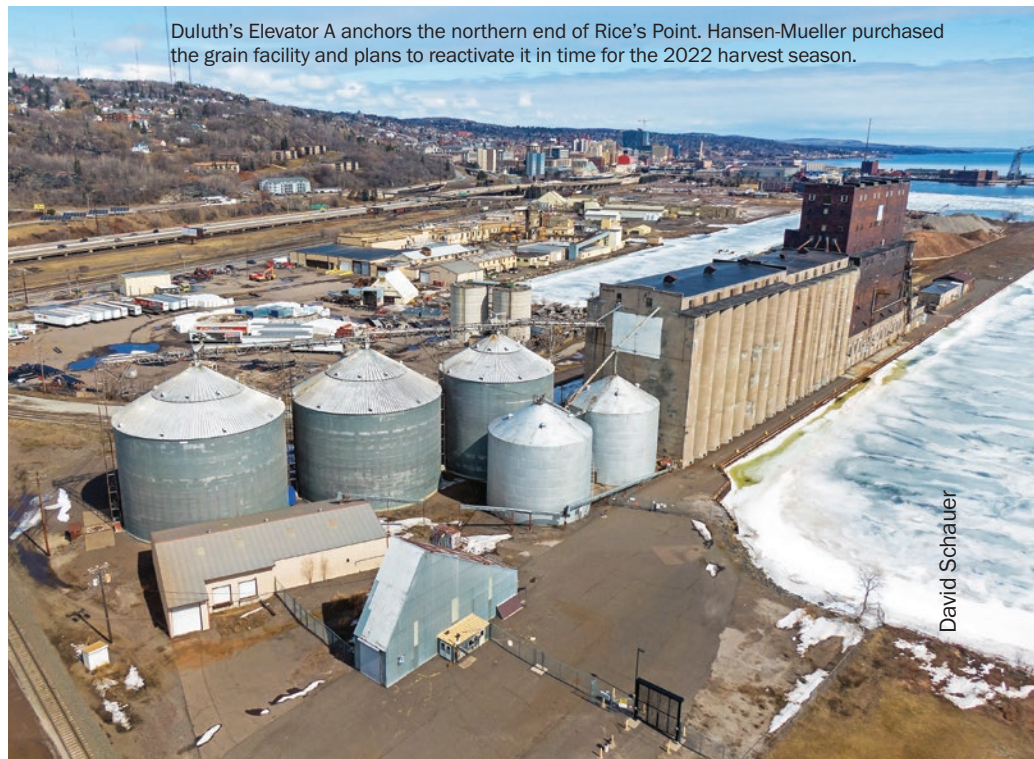
"The facility fits our portfolio very well and will complement our import and export program, as well as our interior grain assets and process-

ing plants," said Paul Johnson, Hansen-Mueller vice president and chief operating officer. "We are excited to grow our business in the Port of Duluth-Superior, and bring new business onto the St. Lawrence Seaway."

The reactivation of Duluth's Elevator A is expected to add at least eight new jobs on the working waterfront, in addition to generating added revenues and increasing grain tonnage through the Port of Duluth-Superior.

"Elevator A is a valuable asset in our port, with its grain-handling capacity, excellent road and rail connections, plus a long, solid, Seaway-depth dock

for ships, and we're excited for its potential," said Kate Ferguson, Duluth Seaway Port Authority director of trade and business development. "We've been looking for the right match to put that asset back into active use, and Hansen-Mueller proved to be that match. It was a process working together with Hansen-Mueller, General Mills and BNSF, which owns the land on which the elevator is built, and we're appreciative of everyone's efforts that brought us to this exciting announcement for Hansen-Mueller, the Port of Duluth-Superior and the Duluth Seaway Port Authority."



Duluth's Elevator A anchors the northern end of Rice's Point. Hansen-Mueller purchased the grain facility and plans to reactivate it in time for the 2022 harvest season.

David Schauer

DeLUCA Continued from Page 2

The MFAC is an important voice in the freight planning process, allowing freight stakeholders to collaborate with MnDOT to identify trends, innovations, challenges, opportunities, and best practices for freight systems. Minnesota had one of the first state freight advisory committees in the nation, and is looked to as a model nationwide. MFAC membership comprises a blend of public and private sector freight industry representatives involved in all five freight modes. I am constantly impressed by the experi-

ence, knowledge and thoughtful input of the MFAC membership; this practical perspective is absolutely critical in the freight transportation planning endeavor. Not everyone realizes it, but freight transportation and the associated planning processes play a critical role in everyday life. Good outcomes aren't accidents; they result from focused planning and thoughtful input from many parties. We're looking forward to participating in that process and helping create outcomes that support our lives, communities and the whole economy.

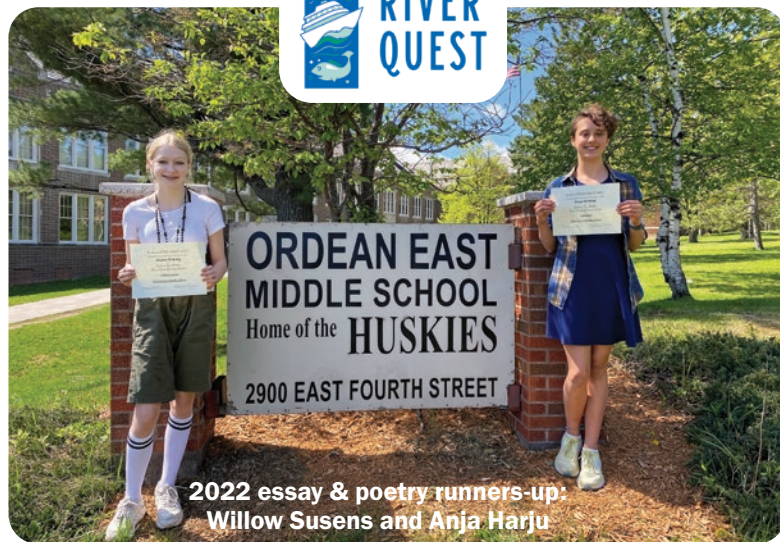
St. Louis River Quest returns to the waterfront

After a two-year, COVID-induced hiatus from in-person presentations, St. Louis River Quest returned to Duluth's waterfront May 16-19, 2022, delivering a memorable hands-on educational experience for approximately 1,000 sixth-graders from northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.

The event featured 10 learning stations spread between the DECC and the *Vista Star*, which sailed the harbor to give students a new perspective on our working waterfront.

During their 2.5-hour excursions, students sought answers to questions about the Duluth-Superior Harbor and learned about the St. Louis River Estuary, documenting their adventures in River Quest passports. Students were introduced to topics ranging from pollution prevention to industrial water use, wastewater treatment, beach nourishment, oil spill response, hydroelectric power, commercial shipping, and land and water conservation. Sessions on hypothermia, rip currents and life-jackets/boating safety conclude each session.

River Quest is a community-based, volunteer organization founded in 1993 to provide regional middle school students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance awareness and understanding of the St. Louis River ecosystem and the interrelated commercial, industrial and recreational activities in the Duluth-Superior Harbor, part of the St. Louis River Estuary. Station sponsors work directly with educators to align resource materials with Wisconsin and Minnesota science and social studies standards to make the experience an even more effective teaching tool. More than 26,000 students have participated in River Quest since its inception. Afterward, many submit essays or poems about their experiences for the program's annual Captain Ray Skelton writing contest (read 2022 winning entries at stlouisriverquest.org).



River Quest relies on the support of hundreds of local businesses, nonprofits and individuals who donate their time, talents and financial resources each year to engage and educate area youth.

Duluth Seaway Port Authority ranks favorably in Green Marine environmental rating

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority and its terminal operations on Rice's Point ranked among the nation's top performers in the recently released Green Marine 2021 environmental performance report, posting a 3.8 score on Green Marine's five-point scale. The overall average for port authority participants was 2.97.

The annual report rates port authority participants in seven categories: air emissions, community impacts, dry bulk handling and storage, environmental leadership, underwater noise, waste management, and a revised performance indicator for spill prevention and stormwater management. A record 50 North American port authorities

participated in the 2021 evaluation process, with the Duluth Seaway Port Authority ranking No. 6 in the United States and No. 1 among U.S. Great Lakes ports.

"Green Marine provides a tangible annual scoreboard for environmental stewardship, with performance criteria that become increasingly robust each year," said Jeff Stollenwerk, Duluth Seaway Port Authority director of government and environmental affairs. "The process raises awareness of our work to minimize environmental impacts and it inspires us to continually improve our environmental stewardship."



IN FOCUS: Andrea Guerriero

Our In Focus series profiles the photographers whose images bring the port's working waterfront to life.

How did you get hooked on the Great Lakes shipping?

I started shooting ships because of a trip I took to Duluth in August 2015. While on one of the harbor cruises, we pulled up next to the *Paul R. Tregurtha* as she was heading out to Lake Superior. I was in awe. I grew up on the St. Marys River here in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and knew all about the ships, but seeing her go under the Aerial Lift Bridge and being in such close proximity blew my mind. We saw her again three days later at the Soo, and I was hooked.

Are many of the vessels you shoot on their way to or from the Port of Duluth-Superior?

I am fortunate to live where the Soo Locks are located, so shipping traffic is high here. Many of the ships I shoot are heading to Minnesota locations—Silver Bay, Two Harbors, Duluth—or to Superior, Wis. I try to include information about their journeys and cargoes. My followers enjoy learning everything they can about this industry.

What are your favorite types of shipping shots?

I enjoy setting up shots that frame the ships in some way by including their surroundings. It makes the photos more interesting and draws attention to the vessels. As for videos, I look for unique locations. Living on the St. Marys River, I can shoot right from home, where it looks like the ships are coming out of the forest, or I can shoot in the harbor where many ships meet. Johnson's Point is a 45-minute drive, but worth it. Ships make a big turn after coming out from behind the trees, which is very impressive to record, especially if it's a thousand-footer.

Do you travel the Lakes for work?

I love to visit locations on the lakes. I've also had the opportunity to travel aboard a ship, which gave me a completely different perspective. The Duluth area is always at the top of my list of places to shoot. Since my first visit in 2015, I have been back three more times. I'm hoping to head your way again in the near future.

What inspires you to keep documenting and celebrating Great Lakes shipping?

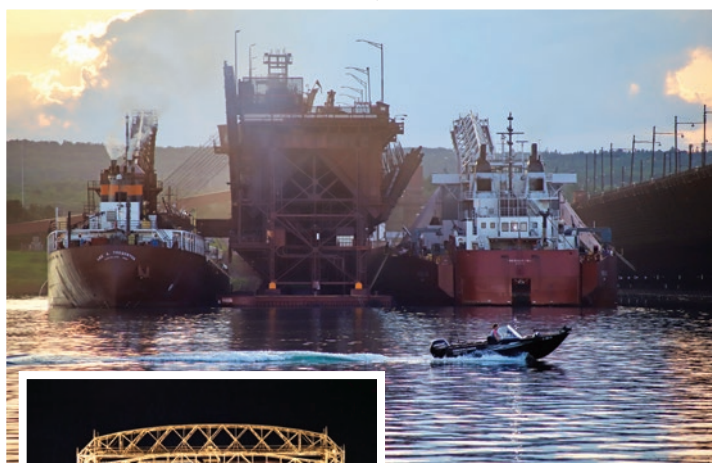
Many things—the beauty of all of the ships that sail, the stories of their captains and crews (many I have gotten to know), the beauty of the Great Lakes and the backdrops they provide, the wonderful people I've met, the education and experience the industry provides, and that I get to share everything with people who love it all as I do.

Is there camaraderie between Lakes photographers?

With most of us, yes. We are all here for the same reason. We love the ships and their crews and appreciate all they do, so we do our best to capture it and tell their stories with our photos, videos, and, in my case, with interviews and mariner profiles. There are amazing photographers across the Great Lakes who inspire and motivate me. It is a joy to share a love of this industry with so many talented people. It has become part of me.



Andrea Guerriero



Photos by Andrea Guerriero, www.facebook.com/DreDesignsGLMP



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