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Soo Locks opens; commercial shipping season underway

DETROIT — At midnight the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin operating the Soo Locks around the clock again for the 2005 Great Lakes shipping season.

The Great Lakes Fleet freighter, INDIANA HARBOR, is expected to be the first vessel of the season to pass through the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. at 12:01 a.m. tomorrow. One of 13 “thousand-footers” sailing the Great Lakes, the Indiana Harbor is running empty upbound to two different harbors in Minnesota.

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter KATMAI BAY will be in the upper river to assist any vessels that need help through the ice. The USCG Ice Breaker MACKINAC is also in the area.

This season marks the 150th year that vessels have been able to lock through at the Soo.

More than 11,000 vessels carrying up to 90 million tons of cargo pass through the Soo Locks every year.