



NEWS RELEASE

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Last vessel traverses Soo Locks – shipping season over

DETROIT – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District announces the seasonal closing of the world-famous Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. The Corps has operated and maintained the locks as part of its navigation mission since 1881 and will use the downtime to perform critical winter maintenance on the lock structures.

The season's final vessel, the tug Invincible with the integrated barge McKee Sons, a 579-foot vessel, cleared the Poe Lock downbound at 3:42 a.m., Jan. 19. It was loaded with iron ore at Silver Bay, Minn., and bound for Cleveland.

Traffic was up considerably in the 2010 shipping season, with 9,982 passages through the Soo Locks, carrying 74.5 million tons of cargo, compared with 3,098 passages and 53.3 million tons in the 2009 shipping season.

“The Locks are the linchpin of the Great Lakes navigation system, facilitating the transport of important commodities,” said Lt. Col. Michael Derosier, district engineer. “We are proud of our responsibilities to operate and maintain the locks.”

The Poe and MacArthur locks will undergo inspection and routine maintenance of structural, electrical and hydraulic components during the next two months.

The Poe stayed open three days past the traditional closing date of the navigation season, at the request of the shipping industry. The locks are scheduled to re-open March 25.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, maintains a navigation system that includes 95 harbors and the Great Lakes Connecting Channels that join lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie. For more details, contact Lynn Duerod, public affairs officer, 313-226-4680.

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To see the McKee Sons in the Poe Lock, visit our Flickr site:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/detroit_district/5370548214/

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