

Great Lakes Division The Company of Master Mariners of Canada

January 2026



Great Lakes and Marine Industry News Update

(available to CMMC members for the purposes of education and information)

January 2026



Work continues on McKeil's new self-unloader Ontario Venture

[The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea]



Tug Wilfred M Cohen downbound out of Algoma Steel with PML barge 2501 and a load of coal tar for Burns Harbor. 12-19-25 [David Kaye]

Polsteam adds Polsteam Wigry to its Laker-class fleet

The Polish Steamship Co. (Polsteam) of Szczecin, Poland, recently added a new vessel, Polsteam Wigry (IMO 1027184), to its growing Laker-class fleet of ships...the ninth new ship added to the Laker class.

Polsteam Wigry is 199.99 meters in length or 656 feet and 23.00 meters in width or about 78 feet wide. She has four deck-mounted cranes for loading and unloading bulk cargoes.

Another new Laker-class ship, Polsteam Weltyń, IMO 9984845, built in 2025, also was added to the fleet recently.

Denny Dushane



POLSTEAM WELTYN (IMO 9984845) is a Dry bulk/Handysize ship built in 2025 and is sailing under the flag of Portugal. She has an overall length (LOA) of 200 meters and a width (beam) of 24 meters. Her summer deadweight capacity is 36,880 tonnes.



ANOTHER NEW BBC SHIP TRANSITING THE SEAWAY (12/19)

On her maiden voyage, BBC FELIX stopped in Montreal for inspection, and then her next planned port of call was Hamilton, where she will unload a cargo of steel. This ensured her timely exit from the Seaway prior to closure

Facebook

Ice jams Seaway traffic

Major delays and ships stopped due to ice and weather resulted in delays to closing the MLO section of the Seaway. Icebreakers worked long hours to clear the ice around Cote Ste. Catherines and St. Lambert where the ice was the thickest.



**At Cote Ste. Catherine, Quebec
CCGS JUDY LAMARSH
(right) and
CCGS VINCENT
MASSEY (above).**

Dec. 21, 2025.





**Lake Superior saltie season closes
ST. MARYS RIVER – The last two salties
left Lake Superior for overseas ports.
Navbulgar’s Murgash, followed by
BigLift’s Happy Ranger, locked
downbound through the Soo Locks after
spending the night at anchor in Waiska
Bay.**

Murgarsh at Mission Point

[Roger Lelievre]

Happy Ranger at Mission Point

[Roger LeLievre]





The launch of the Prairie Harvest at Collingwood Shipbuilding, October 18, 1983. Peter Worden photo/MHSD collection

Now sailing as the Atlantic Huron, it is currently (12-31-2025) off the northern shore of the Gaspé Peninsula, headed to Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia to be dismantled and recycled.



This photo taken by Captain Alain M. Gindroz Wharf 2 at Port Weller from onboard the Polsteam Dabie.

December 25, 2025

Atlantic Huron's Last Run:

The Atlantic Huron, built in Collingwood and launched in October 1983 made her final run down the Seaway with a load of ore to Quebec City—closing the chapter on over four decades of service. Once unloaded, she'll continue on to be recycled by R.J. MacIsaac Construction in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Originally launched as Prairie Harvest, she was the last straight-decker CSL built until the Trillium Class arrived, later converted into a self-unloader in 1989. Through ice, heat, grain, stone, ore and coal—she worked with quiet purpose across the inland seas.



Atlantic Huron final crew [CSL]



Thank You Atlantic Huron [CSL]



At R. J. MacIsaac Construction in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.



Shipping Federation
of Canada

Mariners' Workshop

January 28 & 29, 2026
Montreal, QC

The Shipping Federation of Canada is pleased to announce the 2026 edition of its Mariners' Workshop, taking place at the Marriott Montreal Chateau Champlain, in Montreal on **January 28 & 29**, under the theme of "**Enhancing the Human-Tech Balance in the Age of E-Navigation.**"



Shipping Federation
of Canada

Mariners' Workshop

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Enhancing the Human-Tech Balance in the Age of E-Navigation

SESSION 1 – Seafarer Welfare in the Age of E-Navigation – Challenges and Opportunities

SESSION 2 – Federal Agencies – Updates on E-Navigation

SESSION 3 – PANEL – Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships – An Honest Discussion

SESSION 4 – New Technology vs. Human Needs

SESSION 5 – Port Collaborative Information Systems – Developer and User Updates

SESSION 6 – PANEL – Seafarer Welfare in the Age of E-Navigation – Challenges and Opportunities

SESSION 7 – PANEL – Preparing Tomorrow's Mariners in a Rapidly Evolving Tech Landscape



The production-ready Seaspan-Aker Multi-Purpose Icebreaker (MPI) design will meet all U.S. Coast Guard requirements for the Arctic Security Cutters. Illustration courtesy Seaspan

America Turns to Finland for Icebreakers

On December 27, the U. S. Coast Guard awarded contracts to Finland's Rauma Marine Constructions and Louisiana's Bollinger Shipyards for six new Arctic Security Cutter icebreakers. Finland gets the first two, with delivery in 2028. The U.S. will build four more domestically by 2029, using a Finnish-Canadian design.

The St. Lawrence Seaway ends its longest season on record

The St. Lawrence Seaway closed its network of locks and channels on January 12, its latest closing date since opening in 1959. The latest closing date had been January 11, during the 2017 season.



Ships were waiting in the ice as winter weather conditions held up navigation on the St. Lawrence Seaway on Jan. 4, 2026. Photo of ships anchored in ice off Carleton Island

Photo courtesy Horizon Aerial Media



CCG Vincent Massey at work

CCGS Icebreaker Vincent Massey on her way to Lake Superior

Vincent Massey has four medium-speed diesel engines driving 2 two controllable pitch propellers in nozzles rates at 13,440 kW (18,020 hp), max. speed of 16 knots in open water and break 1-metre (3.3 ft) ice at a continuous speed of 3 knots; two bow thrusters (one fixed, one azimuth retractable) and one transverse stern thruster.





© Earl Minnis 01/04/2026.

CCGS Vincent Massey upbound at the Ambassador bridge 1-4-2026 [Earl Minnis]



**CCG Des Groseilliers assisting vessels around St. Zotique anchorage in Seaway
January 3, 2026**



**Carleton anchorage (Cape Vincent)
with 7 vessels anchored.**

Jan. 5, 2026



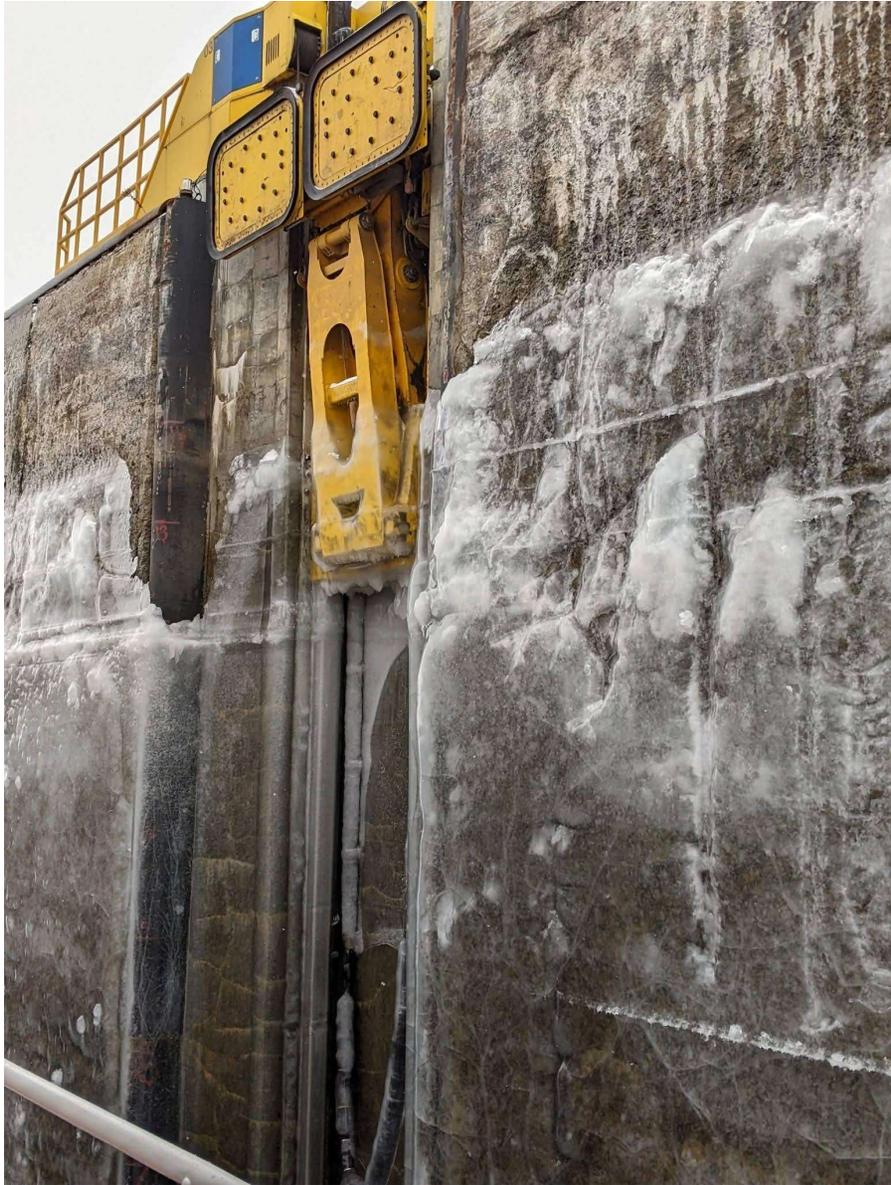


De-icing lock walls

Michael James Folsom St. Lawrence Seaway Ship Watchers Network



De-icing lock walls...HFM non-operational due to conditions with lockages reverting to mooring wires with manned lock operations



HFM are frozen, covered in ice from the water level down as seen from the CCGS JUDY LAMARSH at Côte Saint Catherine Lock. The coast guard vessels float through, but they take lines from the ships.

***Hands-Free Mooring (HFM) typically uses remote-controlled vacuum pads on the lock walls to hold ships, replacing manual lines and speeding up transits.**

Great shots by wheelsman Warren Magnusson onboard CCGS Judy Lamarsh.

Jan.6, 2026



**St. Lawrence
Seaway closure
delayed as
freighters are
slowed by ice.
Gate structures
ice removal
operations!**

Rand Logistics gets a rebrand; now called Mainstay Maritime

The following statement was posted New Years Eve on the internet web site LinkedIn for Mainstay Marine:

“We are excited to announce that Rand Logistics has been rebranded to Mainstay Maritime. Along with a new name, we are introducing a clear mission, vision, and set of values that reflect who we are today and how we operate—grounded in reliability, accountability, and continuous improvement. We’ll be sharing more details in the weeks ahead. The name Mainstay comes from maritime tradition. On a sailing ship, the mainstay provides the critical support that stabilizes the mast and enables propulsion. In the same way, Mainstay Maritime provides the strength, reliability, and forward momentum that support our customers’ supply chains. Our new logo has five sides, representing the five Great Lakes we operate on. Its form also evokes the bow of a ship cutting forward and an upward arrow—symbolizing progress, resilience, and our direction as a company.

As Mainstay Maritime, we operate as a meritocracy—where the best ideas, best practices, and best people rise and drive continuous improvement across our fleet. Proud of our legacy. Focused on the future. One Fleet. One Future

Grand River Navigation Company is the U.S. operating subsidiary of Mainstay Maritime, Inc. Together with our Canadian sister company, Lower Lakes Towing Ltd., we are one of the largest marine transportation service providers operating on the Great Lakes today with a combined fleet of 15 bulk freight vessel is service to over 50 customers across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway.”



**The M/V
Kaministiqua
upbound past
Cote Ste.
Catherine lock in
heavy ice
conditions**

[[Travis Oberg-St Lawrence
Ship Watchers Network] 1-
6-2026



SEAWAY MONTHLY TRAFFIC RESULTS

December 2025

Traffic (in thousands of tonnes)	SLSMC - Combined Traffic			
	Year to Date		Change from 2024	
	2024	2025	Tonnes	%
Total Cargo	36 547	36 678	132	.36%
All Grain	11 644	12 617	973	8.36%
Iron Ore	5 001	4 862	-139	-2.79%
Coal	1 872	1 546	-326	-17.43%
Dry Bulk	10 945	11 354	409	3.74%
Liquid Bulk	3 954	4 044	90	2.27%
General Cargo	3 070	2 208	-862	-28.07%
Vessel Transits	2024	2025	Transits	%
Total Transits	3 901	3 888	-13	-.33%

The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation



Capt. Chris Hall (CMMC and President Shipping Federation of Canada) left; Capt. John Greenway, Great Lakes Divisional Master, Master Mariners of Canada with Capt. Satinder Singh, Toronto Port Authority (below) at 87th Marine Club in Toronto



Road salt shortage forces Ontario cities to put different de-icing plans on their plates World's largest salt mine in Goderich says demand due to harsh winter is so high, it can't keep up

Goderich mine crews work round the clock

Demand for road salt is so high that one of the world's largest underground salt mines, in Goderich below Lake Huron, says it can't keep up despite running full crews round the clock, even through the holidays.

Road salt shortages are forcing suppliers in the province to prioritize municipalities first, so anyone working with private contractors have had to source their supplies from out of province, such as from Quebec.



Algoma Intrepid northbound on the St. Clair River, reportedly moving salt from Goderich during the winter - January 8, 2026 [Rod Burdick]



Algoma Mariner above Soo Locks

[Boatnerd File photo]

Algoma Mariner headed to Mexico for refit

Algoma Mariner is heading to a shipyard in Veracruz, Mexico, for a refit. Her fleetmate Radcliffe R. Larimer had a refit in Mexico last winter. Algoma Mariner was built in China in 2011 and is owned by the Algoma Central Corp.



PORT WELLER DRYDOCKS (ONTARIO SHIPYARDS) GETS A NEW SHIP

CSL NIAGARA has arrived at Port Weller for her 5 year dry dock. Pictured here alongside CCGS TERRY FOX who arrived April 2025, for her vessel life inspection. Algoma Mariner awaits at the lay-by berth.

Thanks for the shots Fede Kell 2nd mate.

Jan. 9, 2026

Kathy McKeil ends successful Thunder Bay Season

The Port of Thunder Bay had a strong 2025 season, marked by high grain volumes (especially canola, wheat, soybeans) and a successful cruise season with 15 ship visits bringing thousands of passengers. Key highlights included significant grain shipments, early season activity from vessels like Algoma Guardian, and the arrival of Viking Octantis and Polaris, boosting local tourism and economy despite a slight overall cargo dip from record 2024 levels.



**Kathy McKeil departing Thunder Bay
January 10, 2026**

Photo Michael Hull



The commercial navigation season in the Welland Canal section drew to a close on Tuesday. Here's a photo of the Algoma Buffalo, the last commercial vessel to transit the canal. Thank you to Seaway employees and partners across the system for working together.



PortsToronto returns to its roots as the Toronto Port Authority

By Maritime Magazine 2025 January 15

After operating as PortsToronto for a decade, the organization that owns and operates Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and is responsible for stewardship of Toronto's harbour is returning to its roots and will once again be known as the Toronto Port Authority.



Transport
Canada

Transports
Canada



**Regulations Amending and Repealing Certain Regulations Made Under the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (Environmental Response): SOR/2025-233
Canada Gazette, Part II, Volume 159, Number 25**

Registration

SOR/2025-233 November 21, 2025

CANADA SHIPPING ACT, 2001

P.C. 2025-813 November 21, 2025

Environmental Response Regulations – primarily for oil handling facilities and Environmental Response Organizations



Transport
Canada

Transports
Canada



NEW TC POLICY The objective of this Policy is to set acceptable standards for the recognition and acceptance of electronic record-keeping/logbooks in lieu of traditional paper logbooks and recording. The logbook and records listed under these regulations below could be kept, as an alternative to paper hard copy, using electronic means in accordance with this policy.

Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020 (NSR, 2020)

Record of navigational activities

Maintenance record

Radio record

Cargo, Fumigation and Tackle Regulations

Cargo gear register

Marine Personal Regulations (MPR)

Official logbook

Record of crew member's daily hours of work and rest

Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations (VPDCR)



Transport
Canada

Transports
Canada



Ballast Water Regulations (BWR)

Ballast Water Record Book

2.2 Electronic record books system installed on any Canadian vessels must be certified (e.g., type approval, statement, or declaration) by one of the Canadian Recognized Organizations (RO), to comply with the following applicable requirements as amended from time to time:

**For the Record of navigational activities under the Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020
IMO resolution A.916(22) Guidelines for the Recording of Events Related to Navigation.**

**For the Cargo gear register under the Cargo, Fumigation and Tackle Regulations
MSC.1/Circ.1663 Guidelines for lifting appliances.**

**For the Records under the Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations (VPDCR)
IMO resolution MEPC.312(74) Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Record Books under MARPOL.**

For the Record under the Ballast Water Regulations (BWR)

MEPC.369(80) – Amendments to Appendix II of the BWM Convention, introducing a revised format for the Ballast Water Record Book (BWRB). (Entry into force: 1 February 2025).

Great Lakes History

January 2026



Before Buoys 11 and 12 of the Lake Huron Cut into the St. Clair River, there was LIGHTSHIP 103 commissioned December 22, 1920.

Lightship 103 HURON [Larry Geiger Collection]

1941: At the close of the shipping season, the Great Lakes fleet consisted of 513 boats of U.S. Registry and 279 boats of Canadian Registry.



Seamanship and rope splicing...Look at the size of the fids which had to be hammered in to open the rope for the splice!!!



Aquarama in Sarnia.

**1945: Built as a troop transport ship, the Marine Star was converted to a passenger ferry in 1955 trading Detroit to Cleveland
Laid up 1966 and sold in 1987 for a hotel in Port Stanley...towed to Sarnia for hotel conversion...never happened...sold in 2007 to Indian shipbreakers**



Photograph courtesy of George Czerny-Holownia Image: **The red-and-white coast guard ship, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, is docked at the Collingwood harbour. The Collship crane is visible behind the ship.**

In the history of Collingwood shipbuilding, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier holds numerous records. First and foremost, the Laurier was the last ship to be launched, marking the end of a century-long tradition. Though no one knew at the time, the day of the launch, December 6, would mark the unofficial end of shipbuilding in Collingwood. The formal date of closure came nine months later on September 12, 1986.

Salute and Thank You to our Corporate Members Support



CHAMBER OF
MARINE COMMERCE



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TOWING LTD.**



Thank you for viewing our Monthly 2025 monthly Industry Update.

**Hope you enjoy and find the news information useful as part of our
mandate of marine education!**

Master Mariners of Canada – Great Lakes Division

