

Coop^{The} Scoop

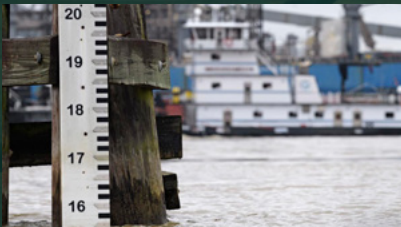
1st Quarter, 2020



Southeastern Propeller employee works on repairing a ship propeller.



02 Limestone Quarrying
Global Economy



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the COOPER GROUP of companies

Shaping the Global Economy: Limestone Quarrying

From underground caverns and the Great Pyramids to Mayan carvings and medieval castles, limestone has served as a foundation for our civilization. Found in art and sculpture, construction and infrastructure, common household and food items, limestone remains a vital part of our daily lives.

With more than 32 million tons moved annually, limestone quarrying is a key industry served by the U.S. tugboat, pushboat, and barge industry. It's another example of how we're Shaping the Global Economy. •



> Crescent Towing

Crescent Crew Prevents Maritime Incident



The crew of Crescent Towing tugboat *Miriam Cooper* took action on January 21 that prevented a dangerous maritime incident. When four loaded barges broke away on the river, the *Miriam Cooper* sped into action, managing to push the tier of barges clear of moored ships and stabilize them until fleet boat assistance arrived. The actions of the crew prevented a collision between the multi-barge breakaway and vessels moored to nearby buoys. We commend the crew for their quick response and professional action, and are proud of the manner in which they represent Crescent Towing. •

Pictured (l-r): Logan Jones, deckhand; Captain J.J. Dugas; Joe Perez, Jr., wheelman; Vincent Centanni, engineer

> Blakeley BoatWorks

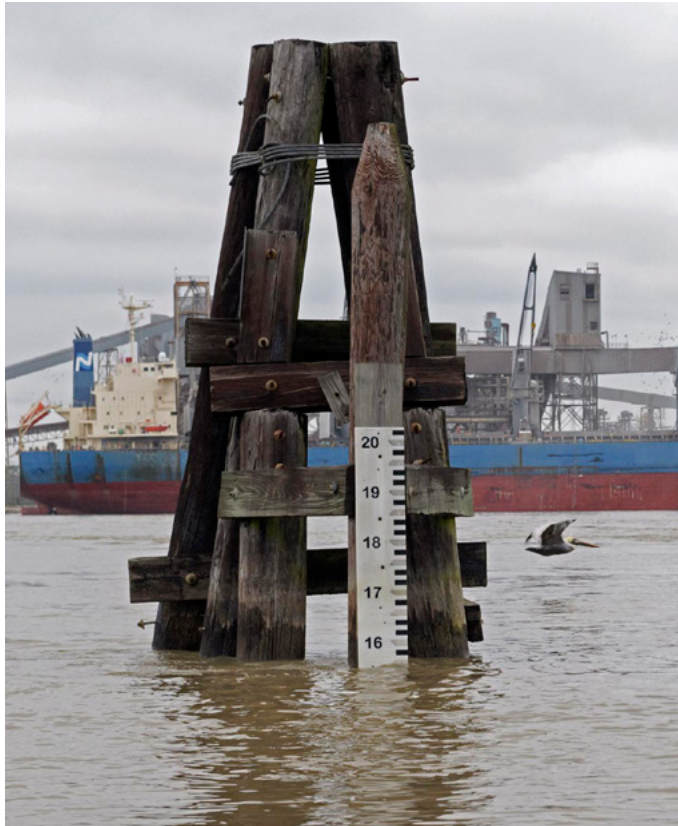
Blakeley BoatWorks Maintenance & Electrical Department

Blakeley BoatWorks has striven to build a robust Maintenance and Electrical Department that exceeds customer expectations. With combined industry experience totaling nearly 40 years, the team is trained to handle all manner of service and repair jobs, from new construction and major overhauls, to crane work and HVAC repair. The Maintenance and Electrical Department faces numerous and varied challenges daily, but nothing they've been unable to handle, which makes Blakeley BoatWorks a one-stop shop for the industry's marine vessel needs. •



Maritime & Ports: High River (as featured in *Biz NOLA*)

by James Sebastien, *Biz NOLA*, February 2020



Members of the maritime industry share the dangers and business challenges of a mightier than usual Mississippi.

The height of the Mississippi River in New Orleans is always a concern when it reaches the high-water line of 8 feet, but whenever it nears the flood stage line of 17 feet, that concern rightfully grows into an all-encompassing fear felt throughout the whole city. “This time last year (mid-January), the river was at 13.37 feet; today it’s at 10.37 feet,” said Kristopher Calkins, general manager at New Orleans Terminal. “But on February 28, 2019, it went to 16.78 feet and pretty much stayed there until July 15. So, it’s not that high with all things considered.”

That said, the river is still over two feet above the high-water line, so concern is warranted. Especially when you consider that high water usually comes in the winter or spring and can last through June.

The Cause The short answer is heavy rain. The unusually high, sustained rainfall of 2019 resulted in historic high levels for the mighty Mississippi.

“High river began for us on the Lower Mississippi River in December of 2018 and we didn’t get out of high river conditions until mid-August 2019; this length is unheard of,” said Erik Cooper, executive director at Cooper Consolidated. “This year’s flooding duration exceeded that of the Great Flood of 1927.”

Other factors that contributed included wet soil conditions, elevated levels in rivers and lakes connected to the Mississippi, and snowpack on the upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys.

“This region is vulnerable to flooding into the spring due to rainfall and thunderstorm events,” says Keith Kettenring, executive VP and COO at Crescent Towing. “The magnitude of future flooding will be dependent on how and when the snow water melts along with future rainfall.”

Warning Signs One of the ways to stay aware of river conditions is through The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which provides stakeholders with a 28-day forecast of the river levels at numerous locations along the river.

“This is used to forecast sudden rises and possible duration of the rise,” says Kettenring. “This is a very helpful tool, but all is subject to further rain and snow events (rain has a much greater impact) in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys.”

Following the amount of rain in the heartland is a key indicator of how and when to prepare for high water conditions in the Greater New Orleans area. “In our industry, we are definitely weather watchers,” said Cooper. “We have to be. Whether it’s monitoring hurricanes in the Gulf or heavy rainfall in the Midwest we keep an eye on what may impact us here on the Lower Mississippi River. When we hear about torrential rainfall in Oklahoma, declared states of emergency and March bomb cyclones in the plains and Midwest, we know that the water will eventually make it to us in the coming weeks or months (in the case of snowmelt),” Cooper said, adding, “It can take more than a month for water runoff from heavy rains in the middle of the country to hit the Mississippi River Delta.” *(continued)*

Potential Problems Several issues arise during high water levels in the river, especially for workers who make their living in the inland waterway space.

“First and foremost, a high river stage results in swift currents and reduced visibility of obstacles, which places mariners and equipment at greater risk for incident,” said Ryan Peters, director of Gulf-Inland Crew Management and HR Business Partner at Marquette Transportation Co. Additionally, when river stages increase, the U.S. Coast Guard limits the number of barges a towboat can push. As many towboat organizations operate within an economy of scale, high river stages result in inefficiencies and underutilization.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is charged with the difficult challenge of keeping the channel navigable. To accomplish the task, additional assets are hired to maintain the channel by dredging the silt and sediment.

“Often the Corps and their assets can’t keep up, and the channel draft is lowered which causes problems for ships that have been loaded prior and are now restricted to either sail to their next port or are stranded outside waiting to discharge at one of our terminals along the river,” said Kettenring. “In both instances, ships and their cargoes are held up, waiting on the dredges to catch up and the restriction to be lifted. If the river level rises high enough, the Corps will open one and sometimes two spillways. We have seen even with these extraordinary measures that the river level will overtake some berths and they will have to cease cargo operations until the river falls.”

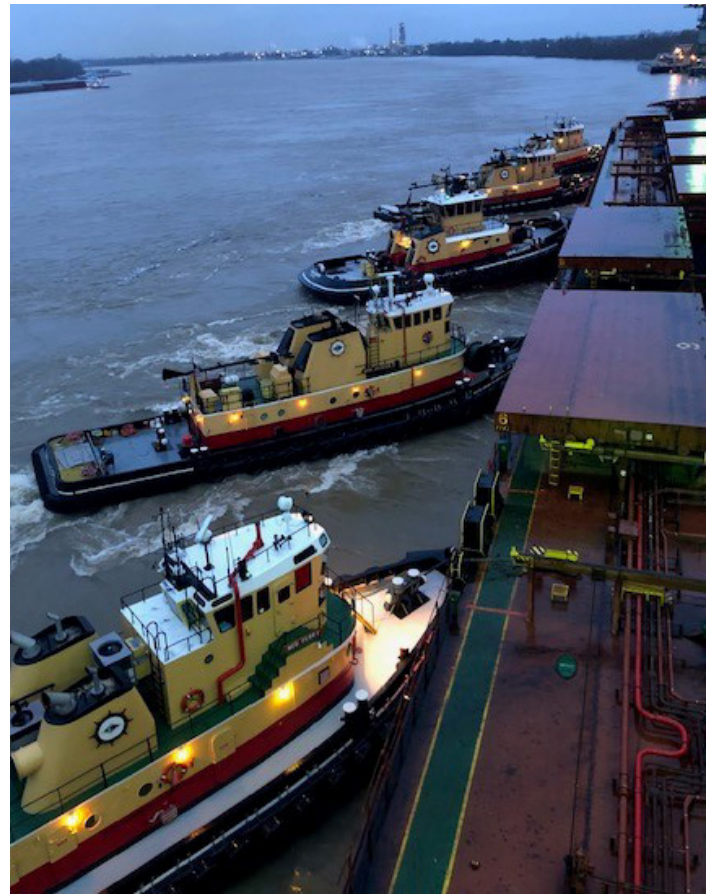
The cost in addition to transportation companies, local businesses are also strained by high water conditions.

“It makes it more difficult for everyone to do their job and puts upward pressure on the price of goods at the end of the day,” said Cooper. “Most affected businesses incur higher operating expenses (usually starting at 35% more) and don’t get ‘made whole’ for these additional expenditures. Most years, a high river period is expected and even built into a company’s operating plan. But when it goes on for nearly a year, that can really hurt, since it’s so unexpected and unprecedented in scope.”

Managing the Issue Periods of high water could be managed more efficiently with additional funds, particularly for Corps operations and maintenance of the river. But, even with more funding the challenge will endure.

“The Mississippi River has more than 250 rivers that feed into it,” said Cooper. “It’s constantly evolving. These changes continue to happen despite the best efforts of many, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ flood control measures. When we see that in the last 10 years the river system has flooded more frequently and violently than in the previous 20-plus years, we may want to reevaluate the way we manage the flood control infrastructure and its processes.”

“There isn’t a silver bullet to completely stop flooding, but we can change alongside the river by potentially injecting newer technologies into old (or new) infrastructures and continuing to heavily invest in maintenance and repair. A great start would be a comprehensive reevaluation of the flood control systems and processes instead of locally or regionally driven plans that only move water problems into someone else’s ‘backyard’ in a game of levee wars.” •





Watch 

Eddie Holland General Supervisor (retired)

A proud part of Cooper-Wilkins Welding and Machine Co. for 32 years, December 2019 marked Eddie's retirement from his role of General Supervisor. Confident that his position has been left in good hands, Eddie is looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren. •



Watch 

Tina Adams Director of Administration

Tina has worn many hats throughout her career at Crescent Towing, including assisting with the development of Vessel Services, a pivotal program used to track vessels and jobs, and becoming the first female dispatcher at Crescent Towing - New Orleans. •



Watch 

Captain Joe Maggioni Docking Pilot

Captain Maggioni has been working the rivers since 1976. He recently became a Docking Pilot, responsible for assisting cargo ship pilots and coordinating with our tugboats to successfully maneuver and dock these large vessels when they come to port. •

Submit Your Recommendations

Do you know an employee who should be featured in a future We Are Cooper/T. Smith profile? Send your recommendations to Thomas Smith, Director, Corporate Communications: thomas.smith@coopertsmith.com. •

> Cooper Marine & Timberlands

CMT Implements New Technology



Watch 

As one of the Gulf Coast's premier cargo handler, Cooper Marine and Timberlands (CMT) has implemented advanced technological innovations to add value for its customers. Using handheld tablets and our exclusive Assignment Manager web application, CMT is enhancing team safety, operating a more efficient system of maintenance, and improving team communications.

For decades, critical operational information was traditionally communicated by paper forms and word-of-mouth. Assignment Manager lets team members easily manage operational information in real-time from a

tablet. As information is submitted from the field, managers now respond in real-time. Assignment Manager also acts as a checklist for the crew's daily maintenance and inspection responsibilities. Crews submit inspection results and equipment readings for machinery and equipment, allowing supervisors to more effectively schedule maintenance and quickly respond to discrepancies. Service requests and accompanying photos can be automatically submitted from inspection forms, and organizing and scheduling personnel shift schedules is simple with Assignment Manager. Managers now easily track the location and condition of equipment and tools.

Assignment Manager is making our operations safer and more efficient, ensuring our team can offer the highest level of service for our clients. •

WIMOs at Crescent



On Wednesday, February 12, Crescent Towing was proud to host the Women in Maritime Operations (WIMO's) lunch and learn. Approximately 42 WIMO's members visited Crescent Towing's Algiers facility to tour tugboat Mardi Gras and gain a deeper understanding of the work the vessels and their crews perform on the Mississippi River. The day began with king cake and coffee, which was followed by a presentation and fleet tour, and wrapped up with a short harbor tour with Captain Roy aboard the Mardi Gras and a delicious lunch cooked in-house. WIMO's members from Crescent Towing include Tina Adams, Dana Asevado, Patricia Davis, Heather Lech, and Ivy Nash.

WIMO's was founded in 2017 as a way of bringing together women working in operations roles within the maritime industry. The organization is dedicated to retaining, advancing, and promoting women in the industry through networking, continuing education, and knowledge sharing. •

> Blakeley BoatWorks

Perdido Queen Undergoes Repairs at Blakeley

In January the Perdido Queen, a dinner cruise vessel operating from the Mobile Convention Center, was transported to Blakeley BoatWorks for its annual U.S. Coast Guard inspection. However, during a visit to our shipyard the vessel's owner further engaged Blakeley BoatWorks to conduct additional refurbishments, including sandblasting and painting the underwater hull, freeboard, and main deck. Our team also removed the roof of the upper deck, performed maintenance on the supporting structure, and then installed a new roof. Further, our carpentry team installed new epoxy flooring to waterproof the onboard restrooms, and outside machinists removed the vessel's bronze propellers for repairs by Southeastern Propeller. Maintenance was completed in a timely manner and the Perdido Queen soon found herself relaunched and returned to regular service. •



Crescent Towing Captain Marks Industry Growth, Constance Over 30-Year Career (as featured in *The Waterways Journal*)

by Frank McCormack, *The Waterways Journal*

Captain Bo Tucker has worked aboard tugs — primarily in Mobile — for the better part of 30 years. Tucker said he actually started out in construction, but he had some uncles and cousins working in the maritime industry who recruited him to come work alongside them.

“I got on in August of ‘91 with my uncle’s boat,” Tucker said, referring to Crescent Towing’s *Ervin S. Cooper*, a twin screw tug that’s still part of Crescent’s fleet. “As soon as I got on with him, immediately he started teaching me how to run the boat.”

Within about a year, Tucker moved from the deck to the engine room. By 1993 or 1994, he had earned his pilot’s license and began working as a relief captain. Then, in 1998 Tucker began running his own boat. He’s now captain aboard the *J.K. McLean*, a 92-foot by 38-foot z-drive tug with 5,225 hp.

When asked what’s changed over his 30 years working in Mobile Harbor, Tucker pointed straight to the size of ships that harbor tugs service.



“When I started in Mobile in ‘91, our biggest ship would be a 600, 680 or 700 feet,” Tucker said. “Now, we have a turning basin 1,500-feet-wide and we’re seeing anywhere from 650 to 900 to 1,200-foot ships in Mobile.”

Of course, in 1991 the tugs at work in Mobile Harbor were smaller, too. Tucker said Crescent’s three vessel fleet in Mobile in the early ‘90s consisted of one twin screw tug and two single screw tugs. Now, Crescent Towing’s Mobile fleet includes the *J.K. McLean* and *Lisa Cooper* (both with z-drives and 5,225 hp.) and the *Noon Wednesday*, a twin screw tug with 4,500 hp.

Crescent Towing also has a fleet of five harbor tugs in Savannah, Georgia, and 18 tugs on the Lower Mississippi River in and around New Orleans.

That presence in three distinct ports affords Crescent Towing’s mariners the opportunity to shift from one port to another in times of need. For instance, Tucker said, it’s not unusual for Mobile crews to shift to New Orleans during periods of high water. Working in each port equips Crescent’s mariners with experience and skills that enhance their safety and operational expertise in any harbor or waterway.

With harbors expanding and ships getting bigger, Tucker said innovation in the industry will only continue.

“The industry is still growing, and you never know what will come out next,” he said. (*continued*)



And that's part of what continues to excite Tucker about his life aboard a harbor tug — and the maritime industry in general.

"It's always an adventure," he said. "Each job is different. You really don't ever go to the same job. You either have a different size ship or a different draft, a different pilot on that ship or different crew on the boat."

One thing, though, that's stayed the same over these 30 years is seamanship among mariners, Tucker said.

"Our seamanship and looking out for each other stays the same," he said. "Even among different types of boats. We are in the industry with push boats, and we look out for them. In New Orleans or Mobile, if barges break loose, we go tow them. If they need any kind of assistance, we head to them. In the same way, they come to us."

"The push boat industry and the tug boat industry work together," Tucker added.

Likewise, if there's a disabled vessel or a fire, harbor tugs are often the first on scene and best-equipped to respond. Tucker said over the years his boats have responded to fires aboard barges, disabled vessels, mariners in medical distress, break-aways and more.

"We've gone and helped anywhere from the smallest fisherman to the biggest tanker," he said. "It's just a brotherhood. We don't leave anybody. We try to assist whenever we can."

And just as his uncles and cousins pulled him into the industry when he was a young man, Tucker said he does everything he can to train and equip young mariners.

"The first two days I was on with my uncle, I was in the wheelhouse," Tucker recalled. "I didn't like sitting in the galley, not seeing what was going on. That's what I tell my younger guys. I say, 'You come up here, and I'll give you a chance to learn.' The main thing is, if you show interest any captain in the industry will help you out. But you have to show interest in it, and you have to want to do it."

Tucker said he's excited to see his 14-year-old grandson expressing that kind of interest in the industry.



"He's seen my type of work, and he's wanting to go into it," the proud grandfather said. "You can really make a career out of it." •

Mississippi River Rescue

During the 38th-annual Mississippi Valley Trade and Transport Conference held in New Orleans in February, Cooper Consolidated's Port Manager Kenny Burnsed assisted with a rescue on the raging Mississippi River.

While touring Coastal Cargo's Louisiana Avenue terminal with Karen Conroy, Regional Sales Manager, Cooper Consolidated; Cy Hill, Vice President, Sales, Coastal Cargo; and Cliff Mosby, Operations Manager, Cooper Consolidated; Hill spotted a man being swept downriver, struggling to stay afloat.

As Hill rushed away to find help and a life ring, Burnsed instructed the man to swim to one of the nearby dock pillars. Fortunately, he managed to grab hold of a pillar. Unfortunately, due to its large diameter and the strong current, the man struggled to keep his grip.

Multiple pillars are tasked with supporting this dock and atop each is a metal support bracket -- brackets that are just small enough to get a hand around. Burnsed directed the man to reach for his pillar's bracket. Luckily, due to high river, the bracket was only about two to three feet above him.



Louisiana Avenue Terminal



Fighting the current, the man climbed just far enough up his pillar to reach the bracket and hold on. This leverage and higher positioning made it possible for Burnsed to reach down from the dock and pull the man up to safety. With water temperatures around 45 degrees, the man was shivering and dazed.

"The first thing he did was take a knee and start praying," Burnsed said. "I'm not much of a praying type, but I gave him an 'Amen' at the end of his prayer. He needed it."

Hill returned to the scene with a life ring and a support team of Coastal Cargo employees. They questioned the man about who he was and how he fell in, but he didn't make much sense. He claimed to have been "walking along a ledge, fell into the river, and had been drifting for a while." Hill and Burnsed posited that a combination of shock and possible hypothermia had made him loopy.

Afterward, the man was escorted to the front office where New Orleans Harbor Police was waiting to assist. According to them, the man was likely a member of the local homeless population. Harbor Police believes they've had previous incidents with the man. When recounting the incident, Burnsed and Conroy referred to him as a "frequent floater."

"I'm glad we were able to help this guy out when we did," Burnsed said. "Had we driven by a minute or two later or gone back through the warehouses, we might have been hearing about him on the news."

Burnsed credits on-the-job training for his swift action. "Throughout my career on the river we were trained on what to do in an emergency," he said. "Sometimes it's by the book, and sometimes it's improvised. But the truth is, the experience gained from the operations side of this business helps keep you prepared for this type of incident. When you're prepared, it helps you stay calm, assess the situation, and make better decisions." •

To Our Team, Thank You



During the past month our teams have shown remarkable resiliency and resolve to stay healthy, stay safe, and keep our country's economy moving.

Each of our teams have thoroughly enhanced their prevention measures and response protocols based on the guidelines established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our team and we thank every Cooper Group employee for recognizing the important role that they play in ensuring we all work in the healthiest and safest environment.

Our company has faced challenging times over the past 100 years and this global pandemic is no exception. Please click the video link above for a special video thank you to our team members for their extraordinary efforts and reassuring message to our customers and global partners that we're with them during these trying times. •

Milestones

5 Years

Johnny Bryant Jr.
Scott Thomas
Roy Thomas Jr.

Amy Slay
Lance Terry
Zack Tierney

15 Years

Brett Key
Elliot Condon
Logan Barnes
Chuck Burford
Larry Griffith
Marshall Dannelley
Wes Redmond
Sean Schouest
Dustin Horn
Greg King
Jamal Dix

Ralph Owens
Bobby Bentley Jr.
Michael Salone
Bob Litton
Jeffrey West
David Henson Jr.
Daniel Hudson
Douglas Fazekas
John Richardson Jr.

20 Years

Aaron Major
Jesse Tricon
Ray Crouch Jr.
Antonio Rideaux
Josh Drouant
Colton Smith

Michelle Nelson
Brooks Pate
Francis Arnona IV

25 Years

10 Years

Earl Boykin
Charles Gray
Matt Hastings
Shawn White
Royal Babin Jr.

Charles Hart
Tina Adams
Keith Kettnering

40 Years
Kurt Gegenheimer

After 18 years of service at the Commerce Building, Officer Steve Reid retired from his guard duties as on March 27. To thank him for his years of service, he was presented with a farewell package of personal notes from Cooper Group employees throughout the company.

Pictured: James Fowler, Officer Reid, Jamie Davidson



Captain Joe Tucker, the first captain hired at Crescent Towing – Mobile, celebrated his 85th birthday in January. Captain Joe was instrumental in building the Mobile tug operation from its origins in 1979. His extensive family has provided Crescent Towing with 12 captains over the past 40 years.

Pictured: Tadd Willcutt, Captain Joe Tucker, Captain Ronnie Walker

After nearly 30 years with the company, Kay Sudduth retired from Cooper Marine & Timberlands on March 27.

