

MoDOT receives Marine Highway Designation for Missouri River

JEFFERSON CITY - The Missouri Department of Transportation has received one of six Marine Highway Project designations from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) as part of the America's Marine Highway Program (AMHP). The application to initiate a container-on-barge service was developed in partnership with AGRIServices of Brunswick (ASB), the largest multimodal transportation provider on the Missouri River.

This is MoDOT's first designation and only 52 such designations have been approved since the program's inception in 2010. A Missouri Department of Agriculture grant to ASB was used to develop the application with technical support from MoDOT's Multimodal Division.

The AMHP encourages the use of America's navigable waterways for the movement of freight and people as an alternative to land-based transportation. This Container-on-Barge Project will expand options for the transportation of goods on inland waterways beginning with agricultural products at ASB in Central Missouri to international markets in the Gulf of Mexico as early as 2022. The service could then expand to other products along the Missouri River.

"Container on barge has the potential to be transformational for cost effective and efficient movement of freight, broadening the commodities that can be shipped," said Tom Waters, chairman of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. "We are proud of the collaborative public-private partnership to successfully receive this designation. The more freight we can shift to the uncongested rivers, the more capacity we open on the interstates and rail lines in the state."

"It is very exciting to see an idea, which was seeded by a grant from the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority, bring much needed additional freight capacity to our state," said Missouri Department of Agriculture Director Chris Chinn. "Our farmers and agribusinesses will be more competitive on the global market with this expanded use of the Missouri River."

Dru Buntin, director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources concurred, "Our core mission involves promoting the use of our resources to benefit all Missourians – this project does that. It provides environmentally sound and efficient use of our waterways, and we are excited to see AGRIServices setting the example with this opportunity."

Products being transported in rail containers into the Midwest is growing rapidly.

Services such as container-on-barge can use this supply of available containers to move Missouri produced goods at a low-cost and environmentally friendly method.

“Missouri’s greatest competitive advantage is our location,” said U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. “This designation will allow our state to further capitalize on that advantage by expanding freight capacity on the Missouri River – getting more goods to more markets more efficiently.”

U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo. commented, “By containerizing grain right here in Missouri, we’re opening endless opportunities to ship all sorts of consumer products in and out of our state. Congratulations to all who worked hard to secure this important designation.”

“The MASBDA grant allowed us to pull together a talented team to develop this plan”, said Lucy Fletcher, Business Development Manager at AGRIServices at Brunswick, “The container-on-barge service builds redundancy in the freight supply chain between the Missouri River, Norfolk Southern and highways making sure products get to market in the most cost-effective way. Each mode working together builds capacity needed for the increased freight volume anticipated in the next few years.”

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