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MAGAZINE

INFRASTRUCTURE MAXIMIZING IMPACT



Corn Belt Ports Officially Recognized

— by Carol Downey

A long overdue designation of the Corn Belt Ports as Principal U.S. Ports was achieved in September of 2020. The three Corn Belt Ports are:

1. Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports and Terminals [an aggregate of the Havana, Heart of Illinois, Illinois Valley and Ottawa Regional Port Districts] (#42/100) 14.1 million tons moved
2. Mid America Port Commission (#44/100) 12 million tons moved
3. Mississippi River Ports of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois [MRPEIWI] (#81/100) 5 million tons moved

When ranked collectively, these three ports would be 22nd on the list of the top 100 U.S. ports with over 31 million tons moved, which is roughly equivalent to the port of Tampa, Fla., and is expected to grow to over 37 million tons in the next few years.



The federal designation of these port statistical areas will raise the profile of the ports to boost business and investment, which in turn creates jobs and expands the local economies. Port infrastructure development grants are available under federal appropriations acts to improve the safety and reliability of inland river, coastal, and Great Lakes ports. These grants

boost local economies and keep the U.S. competitive in the global marketplace.

The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) has a Marine Highway Program which aims to expand the use of America's navigable waterways including the Corn Belt Ports and to facilitate further integration into land-side transportation systems. Water-based transport of goods is an effective and sustainable option in areas accessible to navigable rivers.

The Corn Belt Ports raise awareness of grain production by Eastern Iowa and Northwest and Central Illinois farmers, and can draw manufacturers to the region. As residents of the region, we know the importance of the river for shipping commodities up and down river. Federal designation draws national attention to this critical waterway. ©

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