

June 25, 2004

MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-33-2004

TO : ALL STEAMSHIP AGENTS, OWNERS, AND OPERATORS

SUBJECT: Confirmation of Maintenance Work at Gatun Locks

Beginning Wednesday, July 7, from 0001 hours through Friday, July 16, 2004, at 2359 hours, **(10 days)**, maintenance work will be performed on the **WEST** lane of Gatun Locks.

Maintenance work on the **WEST** lane will include the rehabilitation of 370 feet of tow track at the west side wall, from the base of the incline at the lower level up to the bomb proofing of Miter Gate 16 at the middle level. Other maintenance work such as inspection and cleaning of the conductor slots will be performed as well.

Greatly concerned over the adverse impact that the locks outages have caused to the shipping community, the ACP has been reevaluating the methodology used in performing the track replacement.

Although the original plans called for the west lane to be out of service during the performance of this work, the ACP will be testing a revised method that will permit this (west) lane to remain in service, but with a slightly reduced capacity. The east lane will continue to work at full capacity with 24 hour relay operations. This arrangement will allow for a daily capacity of at least 34 vessels; therefore, Condition 1 for the Transit Reservation system will be maintained throughout this maintenance period.

The results of this change in the methodology will be evaluated to determine if it warrants being applied to future scheduled track replacement outages since this procedure, though less impacting to shipping, will most likely result in an extension of the project originally scheduled for completion in 2006.

We would also like to point out that we have shifted the starting date of the maintenance work originally programmed for June 5, 2004 to June 7, 2004, in order to coincide with a day of typically lower arrivals. We anticipate that if arrivals remain as they have been over the past few days, with the actions being undertaken, we should be able to maintain a manageable backlog during this maintenance period. For now, all other outages published in the previous advisory on the subject, remain as scheduled. Once the June 7th, 2004 maintenance project is concluded, we will reassess the situation for the other locks maintenance lane outages programmed for the rest of the year and will notify you accordingly.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Jorge L. Quijano
Maritime Operations Director



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