

Great Lakes Maritime Transportation Teacher Institute

Aired: 7/22/08 and 7/24/08

Run Time: 3:55

Intro: This is Superior Science News. Today's program explores efforts to educate people about the maritime industry on the Great Lakes.

Seagulls Nat Sound: Fade under....

Seagulls and sightseers crowd Canal Park in Duluth, taking in some of the treasures of Duluth's maritime industry. Among them, a group of 15 teachers file into the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center to learn about the importance of shipping on the Great Lakes. It's part of a five-day course put on by Joan Chadde – coordinator of the Great Lakes Maritime Transportation Teacher Institute.

"The program has the goal of enhancing, facilitating, and overcoming challenges to shipping on the Great Lakes. And one of those challenges is the fact that few people really understand what shipping is about. We all use products everyday, but we don't really know where those natural resources come from."

From a tour of the harbor, to the maritime museum, to a scan of the shipyards, Chadde says it gives teachers a closer look at what maritime transportation is really about.

"We're really going to understand how these raw materials are moved on ships, how they're loaded on ships, unloaded, and understanding – taking a raw material from its source and then following through to how it gets loaded onto ships, where does it go, what are the shipping routes, what are the shipping ports, receiving ports . . ."

Joy Pasquariello is a public affairs specialist with the Department of Transportation and the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation. She says people need to realize how the shipping industry affects everyone.

"Especially now in this day and time with the fuel costs and why groceries are expensive and why I go into Wal-Mart and clothes are more expensive. I think it just makes everybody understand how it affects them personally."

Fred Kramer is a schoolteacher in Luxemburg near Green Bay. He plans to share what he's learned with his fourth-grade students.

"It allows me to take something I'm really interested in personally and bring it back to my job - my place of work - and tie it in. I think if the students know that I'm interested in it and passionate about it that is just going to help them learn even more themselves."

For teachers like Josh Sandwisch of Toledo, Ohio, the experience allows him to offer more than a lesson plan to his students.

"The long-term goal is to get these inner city students who attend our school to hopefully choose a career path in the maritime industry. In the Toledo area, the maritime industry in a way is kind of quiet and hidden. You don't hear a lot about it, so by bringing it to these students' attention, we're opening another door for them."

Chadde says they offer a variety of materials from books to movies to maps in order to help teachers bring the shipping industry to life for their kids.

"In general, kids do not like to learn by just being told something, we have to engage them."

Mary George with the Duluth office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers knows firsthand how the shipping industry can excite people of all ages.

"You know you're a boat nerd when you've got a marine radio in your pocket, when you've got your list, and you're checking off all the boats to know which ones you have or haven't got yet. Plus, you've got photographs of every boat except this one, and then you're chasing around the lakes trying to find that boat so you can snap a picture of it. That's when you know you're a real boat nerd."

Kramer:

"It's a classic example of learning for the fun of it."

Sandwisch:

"If I have the opportunity, I'll be back every year they let me."

The teacher institute is funded by a grant from the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute at UWS and UMD.

For Superior Science News, I'm Marie Zhuikov.

Outro: This is a production of the Minnesota Sea Grant program at UMD and KUWS radio.

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