

Gnots Marine Building Its Own Towboats

By Capt. Richard Eberhardt

After years of refurbishing older boats for its fleet, Gnots Marine owner Dan Wise teamed up with Welton Theriot, and the firm has begun building its own boats for its fleet business. Gnots Marine's dispatch office and shipyard is situated in St. Rose, La., on the Mississippi River, just downriver from the Bunge grain elevator.

The name Gnots is an acronym for Greater New Orleans Transportation Service. Already constructed is the Wise One, the company's eighth boat. Coon Wise, boat number nine, is well underway and is named after Wise's deceased son, who was known by friends as "Coon."

The Wise One, with 2,000 hp., missed its christening while taking a load of grain to Bunge's facility in Jonesville on the Ouachita River in Louisiana.

It took almost 15 months to get permits to use the barge space on the river side of the levee at Mile 120 to build three boat ways in a row, Wise said.

Heavily Built

Theriot is designing the boats with a much heavier than normal hull, using 3/4-inch-thick steel for much of the hull bottom while sidewalls and the main deck are 3/8-inch thick. Push knees are built of one-inch-thick steel. Corner knuckles are three-foot radius and built with one-inch steel, as is the head log.

The hard chine is a 1-1/2-inch round bar because it carries the heat of the welds of both the sides and bottom, making the boat much stronger, explained Theriot. The hulls have a pronounced dead rise, giving the boats excellent tracking ability. V-shaped struts are 1-1/2 inches thick and canted aft, giving wheel tips more clearance and reducing vibration.

All deck penetrations and engine exhausts are stainless steel. Grating covers the entire rear deck, protecting the steering rams. Inside, the fidley deck is covered with aluminum grating, providing excellent storage space.

"Everybody who has seen the Wise One commented on how heavy the boat was built," Theriot said. "With steel that heavy, it will keep the boat out of the shipyard."

All shafts for the main rudders and four flanking rudders run through the



Dan Wise and Welton Theriot stand in front of the in-progress mv. Coon Wise at Gnots Marine's shipyard in St. Rose, La.

hull to the main deck for added strength. The rudders feature a "shaft port." When a main engine drive shaft has to be removed, the rudder is turned sideways and the shaft slides through the rudder without removing the rudder, saving time and cost during drydocking.

Pilothouse Visibility

Meanwhile, Theriot is designing the Coon Wise with an elevated house to better see over the barges. Even without the upper deck, the boat will still have berths for four men. The wheelhouse is designed in an octagon shape to give visibility 360 degrees. Standing in the center of the wheelhouse puts the wheelman equal distance from all pilothouse windows.

Gauges will be mounted overhead to keep from blocking visibility to the deck while handling barges in fleets. The

Cummins engines, supplied by Cummins Mid South, will develop 1,200 hp. on the Coon Wise.

Because Bunge is its biggest customer, most of the barges Gnots Marine moves are grain barges. Often those barges need to be pumped out. Theriot designed a three hp. pump with a through-house fitting for a three-inch hose, so barge pumping can be handled by the boat's pumps. No longer will crews have to drag gasoline pumps and fuel onto the barges.

Inside, the boats were designed to be quiet with 1/4-inch plywood behind all the FRP wall board. All interior steel was sandblasted and painted with two coats before installing.

Masts fold over for crews to change light bulbs, eliminating the need to climb a mast. Handrails are 42 inches high, even above the wheelhouse, to keep crewmen onboard.

Much of the after bulkhead of the Coon Wise is a soft patch, allowing easy access should major engine work ever be required.

Bottles for the CO2 fire fighting system are on the upper deck. Patterson winches with 7.5 hp. motors are installed on the bow for making up to barges. Theriot said Patterson winches were selected because they "seem to give the least amount of trouble."

In the engineroom, oversize blowers send cool air directly onto the electrical panel. The blowers move enough air to completely change the air in the engineroom every minute to minute and a half, Theriot said. With that much air moving, the main deck doors to the engineroom can be kept closed while underway, adding to the boat's seaworthiness. Combustion

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Port Captain Bob Steele in the pilothouse of the Wise One.



The mv. Wise One is Gnots Marine's eighth towboat.

ThyssenKrupp
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steel divisions will merge with a materials division. It is eliminating several hundred administrative jobs and about 3,000 production jobs in Germany. The cuts are expected to come mainly in the hard-hit automotive and shipbuilding areas. ThyssenKrupp said it would put up for sale a shipbuilding subsidiary, Hellenic Shipyards, in April with a sale deadline of September 2009.

The company's overseas projects have come under criticism from labor leaders in Germany, who say their costs were not adequately controlled. Under the German system, union representatives have seats on the boards of directors of large companies whose workers they represent by law.

Chief executive officer Ekkehard Schulz had said at the company's annual meeting in Germany that the delays were due to a "massive drop in demand" worldwide. But he expects demand to pick up again in the future, he told the Dow Jones news service. He said the company is not cutting back on its Alabama investment, only stretching out the construction timetable.

Gnots

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tile air for the main engines and generators is ducted from outside the engine room.

The machine work for the main shafts and rudders were fabricated by Bayou Machine.

All doors and windows are aluminum and were fabricated by Dale's Welding in Plaquemine, La. East Park Radiators in Houma, La., supplied the keel coolers.

BARGE GRAIN MOVEMENTS (1,000 tons)

River/Lock	Week Ending 3-21-09					Week Ending 3-22-08				
	Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total	Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total
Miss/15	49	0	23	0	73	21	0	3	0	25
Miss/25	182	0	86	0	269	73	0	38	0	111
Miss/MP	338	2	101	0	441	257	13	50	0	319
Miss/27	333	3	101	0	438	244	9	54	13	320
Ill/8	70	0	9	0	79	220	11	33	0	263
Ohio/52	69	21	23	0	113	108	2	20	0	130
Ark/1	0	24	10	3	35	0	6	15	7	28

Cumulative to date for Miss/27, Ohio/52 and Ark/1:

Year	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other grains	Total
2009	4,377	216	2,182	98	6,873
2008	4,056	316	1,730	164	6,266

*Other grains include barley, sorghum and oats. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation & Marketing Division/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

SSAB Expands Mobile Heat-Treating Plant

By DAVID A. MURRAY

While ThyssenKrupp announced a slowing of construction of its Mobile plant, another foreign company announced an expansion near Mobile.

Swedish steel company SSAB announced in February that it was expanding its heat-treating unit at its mill at Axis, Ala. in northern Mobile County. The investment of \$460 million is the county's second-largest, after the ThyssenKrupp plant, and is larger than the original cost of the plant, which was built in 2001. The expansion work on the Axis mill will run through 2011,

according to *The Alabama Press-Register*.

The plant was opened in 2001 by IPSCO, which was bought by SSAB in 2008. The facility added a heat-treatment unit in 2004 to produce high-strength steel.

The new improvements will also include a vacuum degasser, which removes impurities from steel. Together, the improvements will allow the plant to quench and temper about 400,000 metric tons of steel a year.

To support the improvements, the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA) is adding a second barge dock on the Mobile River, upriver from SSAB's existing barge facility.

Deanna Ann Opens Upper Mississippi Season

The mv. Deanna Ann, operated by Marquette Transportation Company Inc., opened the 2009 navigation season on the Upper Mississippi River by arriving at St. Paul, Minn. at 5 p.m. on March 23. It pushed 15 barges though 10 inches of ice on Lake Pepin that morning at about 2:50 a.m., transiting Lake Pepin by 5:30 a.m.

The average opening date of the navigation season for the last 30 years has been March 20. But last year, it wasn't until April 10 that the mv. David L. Criggs, another towboat operated by Marquette Transportation Company Inc., locked through Lock and Dam 4 pushing 15 barges.

Forthcoming Events

The Waterways Journal will be glad to list the city, date and place of your meeting in this column, provided it is interest to the barge and towing industry or allied businesses, is national or regional in scope, and is received at least three weeks prior to the meeting date. Address your announcement to Forthcoming Events Editor.

April 22-24, 2009. Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association 2009 River and Marine Industry Seminar Hotel Inter-Continental, New Orleans. Contact: Alan Savoie, 985, 783-6605; Fred Renoudet, 985, 479-7218; Internet www.gnobla.com.

April 23-24, 2009. Infor Economics, sixth annual Grain & Oilseed Transportation Conference, West Memphis Beale Street, Memphis, Tenn. Contact: Pam Daniel, Informa Economics e-mail pam.daniel@informacon.com.

April 28-30, 2009. American Institute for International Steel and Port of New Orleans, Critical Commodities Conference Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel Contact: AIIIS, President David Phelps, 7245-8075; Internet www.aais.org.

April 29-May 1, 2009. Inland River Ports & Terminals, 2009 Conference, Dr. Hotel, Chicago, Ill. Contact: IRPT, 504, 50715; Internet www.irpt.net.

May 7, 2009. Muddy Waters Golf Outi Annbriar Golf Club, Waterloo, Ill. Contact: Sharon Dudley, sdudley@alliedna.com.

May 7-9, 2009. Warrior-Tombig Waterway Association Annual Meeting Tuscaloosa, Ala. Contact: WTWA, 2431-9055; e-mail warriorcom@aol.com.

June 16-21, 2009. Christian Marin Ministry, gospel tent meeting, Hickman, Contact: Capt. Warren Daniels, 662, 27009 or John Morgan, 314, 409-1952.

June 20, 2009. Ohio River Va Water Sanitation Commission, 15th annual Ohio River Sweep. Contact: Jeanne IS ORSANCO, 800, 359-3977.

June 27-28, 2009. Great River Towboat Festival, Grafton, Ill. Contact: 6786-7000; Internet http://www.greatriverro.com/Cities/Grafton/towfest.htm.

August 20-23, 2009. AEP River Operations, 11th Annual Industry Cha Golf & Softball Tournament, St. Louis, I Contact: AEP River Operations, 636, 52100; www.memcobarge.com; e-mail info@epriverops.com.

Obituary Notices

Mary Greene Stewart, 76, daughter of Capt. Tom Greene and Martha C. Greene, died at her riverfront farm in California, Ky., March 30. She lived the first two years of her life on the legendary family's steamboat Tom Greene and later traveled with the family on Chris Greene, Gordon C. Greene and Delta Queen. After she graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1951, worked on the Delta Queen, serving social director, assistant purser, tour organizer and gift shop manager, as well as singing for the evening entertainers aboard the steamer. In 1965, she married fellow crew member Richard Stewart who survives her.

Capt. Wesley C. McDougal, 97, formerly of Clarrington, Ohio, died April the Monroe County Health Care Center in Woodsfield, Ohio. He worked on the Ohio River, and was in the U.S. Navy Seabees during World War II.



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and Best Wishes
to Gnots Marine!

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