

2008 Harbor Safety Committee of the Year Nominee **Southeast Texas Waterways Advisory Council**

Throughout 2008, SETWAC faced a number of challenges, tackled a variety of safe navigation initiatives, and further transformed its partnership base into a cohesive stakeholder network.

The greatest challenge was the 2008 hurricane season. The trilogy of storms, Edouard, Gustav and Ike, placed enormous demands on SETWAC during the pre-storm preparation-post-storm restoration continuum. While the damage and recovery activities associated with Edouard and Gustav paled in comparison to Ike's 20 foot-storm surge, SETWAC played a critical role in marshalling private sector resources to disseminate time-critical information, relay terminal operational statuses and track recovery assets. SETWAC's just-in-time communications interface with the Port Coordination Team (PCT) was also crucial in the prompt assessment of over 75 miles of waterways' infrastructure and swift restoration of commerce into the nation's largest crude oil destination port. Indeed, SETWAC's participation in over two dozen PCT conferences was unprecedented; particularly in light of the mere five-day time span between the end of Gustav and start of Ike preparations.

SETWAC's Abandoned and Derelict Vessel subcommittee, in conjunction with the local VTS, cross-referenced its hull database of over 80 vessels to assist in post-storm surveys. This initiative was of utmost importance given the 100+ tow backlog between Lake Charles and West Port Arthur. SETWAC also liaised with its stakeholder base to validate all storm-created hazards to navigation from missing fishing vessels to errant containers – a daunting task that quickly mitigated navigational risks.

Beyond the seemingly endless 2008 hurricane season, SETWAC's outreach subcommittee aggressively informed the port community about TWIC enrollment updates and successfully advocated to delay TWIC implementation due to the impact of Ike and Gustav. The subcommittee joined forces with its Navops counterpart to spearhead an exhaustive effort to address barge congestion throughout the heavily-transited Gulf Intercoastal Waterway (GICW) and adjacent channels. This culminated in the development of a barge mooring protocol that reduced breakaways by over 75%; groundings by 20% and collisions by 11% - a noteworthy accomplishment given the 5% increase in vessel tonnage.

SETWAC served as a robust "clearing house" for a number of maritime issues. The most noteworthy included:

- Scoping efforts associated with the Texas Offshore Port System slated to add miles of pipeline;
- Construction and repairs of two major bridge fenderworks systems;

- Coalescing of a variety of port stakeholders to galvanize support for a port security fee regime that provides revenue to operate and maintain equipment purchased through port security grants;
- Development of vessel-facility operating parameters in conjunction with the local Pilot Association;
- Validating LNG transit procedures that are destined to play a role in the inauguration of the Coast Guard's LNG Center of Expertise;
- The management and advisory oversight of over 700 vessel-days of dredging projects.

Finally, SETWAC's holistic approach to navigation safety engendered a close working relationship with its federally-mandated neighbor – HOGANSAC. This permitted SETWAC's constituents to benefit from Brownwater University resulting in the familiarization of dozens of mariners and Coast Guard personnel with the unique operating conditions throughout the GICW.