

Firm Develops Retrofit For Steering Systems

Engine Monitor Inc., a provider of steering, monitoring and vessel control systems headquartered in St. Rose, La., is reporting good success with a retrofit program that it has developed for towboats.

The program allows companies to upgrade their vessels' steering system from mechanical-over-hydraulic to electric-over-hydraulic.

"We have done this on one Martin Marine towboat, two Kirby towboats, and 10 Ingram towboats so far. We have 12 more scheduled for Kirby and two more for Ingram in 2010, with the expectation of retrofitting Ingram's entire fleet of 40 in the future," said Shane Fauchaux, operations manager.

Depending on a vessel's availability,

EMI is able to complete the retrofit all at once or component by component.

"We use as much of the existing equipment as we can, and design the retrofitted system around that," he added.

Advantages include redundancy, maintenance, ease of use and cost savings. Fauchaux said EMI's system has a backup that protects against loss of steering, and, because there are no mechanical linkages, it does not need continual greasing.

The system requires so little effort to move the rudders that EMI includes an adjustable friction block to give the captain the feel he desires. And, a retrofit costs a fraction of what it takes to replace a complete system, he said, "anywhere from 26 to 54 percent."

Barge Hatches Attract Galveston Thieves

Galveston and Pasadena, Texas, police officers are investigating the theft of dozens of stainless steel barge hatches from Harborside Drive barge companies, including West Gulf Marine in Galveston, Station KIAH reported recently.

The hatches can be sold for quick cash, said police. West Gulf marine worker Lowell Holland said 37 barge hatches were missing out of a consign-

ment of 209, according to KIAH.

"It will delay us 30 to 90 days in production. That means certain me will not be working for 30 to 90 days," Holland told the station.

Investigators are now looking at the possibility of similar thefts.

Galveston police are asking anyone with knowledge of the missing hatches to call them or the local Crime Stoppers number.

BARGE GRAIN MOVEMENTS (1,000 tons)

Week Ending 2-13-10					Week Ending 2-14-09				
Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total	Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	14
190	16	87	0	293	180	2	51	0	233
191	16	134	0	340	184	2	47	0	232
156	16	60	0	232	158	8	53	0	219
172	3	103	0	278	149	4	65	2	219
0	4	46	7	57	0	8	47	5	60

for Miss./27, Ohio/52 and Ark./1:

Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other grains	Total
1,753	171	1,728	71	3,723
1,952	62	1,324	22	3,360

te 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

SOUTHBOUND BARGE FREIGHT RATES

	M/SP	MM	Ill. R	StL	Cinc	L. Ohio	C/M
10	-	-	305	215	267	267	198
0	-	-	358	258	302	302	237
7	-	-	308	230	268	268	207
	343	318	305	240	273	273	210
10	-	-	14.15	8.58	12.52	10.79	6.22
0	-	-	16.61	10.29	14.16	12.20	7.44

percentage change from same week:

year	-	-	-2	-5	17	17	-1
avg.	-	-	-27	-32	-16	-17	-27

Minneapolis/St. Paul MM: Middle Mississippi C/M: Cairo/Memphis percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index.

Source: Transportation and Marketing Programs/AMS/U.S. Department of Agriculture

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