

## **US INLAND BARGE FLEET SMALLEST IN NEARLY QUARTER CENTURY**

The 2009 US inland barge fleet shrank for the first time in four years and now is the smallest since 1988. There were 628 new barges added to the overall fleet as of the end of last year while 1,126 barges were retired, according to a just-released report by Informa Economics, Inc. Among the different barge types, the number of covered barges declined for the eleventh consecutive year, open barges fell for the first time since 2004, while the number of tank barges increased for the third year.

The *Barge Fleet Profile*, now in its 23rd year, is an annual report published by Informa Economics. The report identifies the line haul, commodity carrying fleet of inland barges operating on the Mississippi River system, its connecting waterways and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The report, which is compiled through an annual survey of operators as well as information from the Army Corps of Engineers, also summarizes the size and average age of the fleet by barge operator for each type of barge. Included are covered barges that move grains and oilseeds, fertilizers, steel and other products, as well as open barges that haul coal, sand, gravel and similar product types. Details on tank barges that transport liquid products, such as crude oils and renewable fuels, also are incorporated into the report.

A sister publication, the *Barge Commodity Profile*, is in its sixth year of publication, also was just released by Informa, offering exclusive barge pressure indices. These indices provide a valuable tool in assessing the supply and demand for barges. The report also presents barometers of barge fleet size and movements by commodity type, commodity ton miles and average distance hauled on the Mississippi River system, its connecting waterways and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. According to the most recent Informa pressure indices, the report details that while the barge fleet has shrunk, commodity movements have weakened. The respective barge pressure indices all have relaxed as a result of the smaller fleet and lower volumes moved.

These reports are available from Informa, either through the Internet at [www.bargefleet.com](http://www.bargefleet.com) or by telephoning Pam Daniel at 901-766-4513. The *Barge Fleet Profile* is available for \$100 each while the *Barge Commodity Profile* is available for \$450 each. Both reports can be purchased together for a special price of \$500. For more information about the report, contact Informa Senior Vice President Ken Eriksen at 901-766-4463 or Informa Senior Consultant Alan Barrett at 901-766-4497.

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