

Financial and Operational Condition
of the Barge Industry

by
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The Transportation Center at the University of Tennessee is conducting a survey of barge companies throughout the country to measure the financial and operational condition of the industry. The survey is being sponsored by the Maritime Administration.

Questions in the survey cover such topics as percent of tonnage carried under contract or by common carriage; percent of tonnage carried on the various major river systems; annual revenues; number of employees; book value of capital assets; tons and ton-miles of major commodities; operating expenses by type; overhead expenses by type; number and horsepower of towboats; number and capacity of covered hopper, open hopper and tank barges; and number of days lost for operating towboats and for operating barges due to river conditions, adverse weather and repairs.

Preliminary survey results indicate that the survey covered about 50 percent of inland waterway barge traffic, and showed that the barge industry is comprised of a few large operators and numerous small companies that operate only a few towboats. Final results of the survey will be presented in a paper at the TRB Annual Meeting in January 1987.

Upper Mississippi River
Transportation Economic Study

by
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The Upper Mississippi River Transportation Economic Study represents a state/federal partnership to perform a comprehensive study of river transportation economics and to consider a short-term alternatives to high-cost infrastructure replacement.

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze low-cost, practical, and efficient measures to improve the cost structure of waterway transportation. The study will also identify alternatives to reduce or eliminate barriers to implement such measures. Efficiency measures should be designed to:

- o offset the adverse effects of waterway user taxes, and
- o delay the need for high-cost infrastructure replacement.

Shippers are concerned about the continued development of a viable waterway transportation system and are facing increasing levels of waterway user taxes. A new era is emerging in which users will have to pay an increasing share of waterway system costs. These costs will accrue not only from waterway system maintenance, but from new development costs necessary to handle current and projected levels of traffic.