



WE WORK THE WATERWAYS

430 Foote Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

We Work the Waterways Marks New Chapter as Standalone Nonprofit Entity

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Contact: Errin Howard 513-403-9312
Aimee Andres 618-980-6523

Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals, Inc. (IRPT) and We Work the Waterways (WWW) are proud to announce a major milestone in their shared mission to grow and support the future maritime workforce. Although We Work the Waterways was officially established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization affiliated with IRPT in April 2024, it will begin operating independently as a standalone 501(c)(3) organization on June 1, 2025.

IRPT has played a pivotal role in helping We Work the Waterways strengthen its foundation. Through staffing support, organizational infrastructure, and a strong network of industry members and partners, IRPT helped elevate WWW from a promising initiative to a thriving, and now, self-sustaining organization.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment," said Aimee Andres, executive director of IRPT and Robert Maxwell, IRPT Board President. "We believed in the mission from Day One – to build awareness of the maritime shipping and logistics industries and to connect young people with real career opportunities. We are incredibly proud of what has been built."

We Work the Waterways focuses on helping the maritime shipping and logistics industries create meaningful connections in their communities – particularly with students. The organization raises awareness among educators, parents, civic leaders, and school administrators, providing real exposure to maritime careers through interactive, age-appropriate programming. Its mission is simple but vital: build awareness early and often, and make the maritime industry accessible to the next generation.

"IRPT gave us a clear path forward," said Errin Howard, executive director of We Work the Waterways. "Their leadership and generosity allowed us to grow faster, reach farther, and build something that is truly sustainable. While we are excited for what lies ahead, we are deeply grateful for how we got here. We especially thank the incredible staff and board of IRPT for their trust, encouragement, and commitment to innovation throughout this process."

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Joining Howard in leading the new standalone nonprofit are Assistant Program Director, Pam Maxwell, and Marketing and Project Coordinator, Nikki Fondren, who will continue driving student outreach and partner engagement across the country.

“Our goal is to become the nation’s leading voice for maritime education and career awareness,” said Howard. “We want educators, schools, communities, and industry leaders to look to We Work the Waterways as the go-to resource for building strong maritime workforce pathways.”

Both IRPT and WWW will continue to collaborate when missions align. IRPT will maintain its focus on policy, advocacy, and infrastructure development, while WWW will focus on inspiring the next generation of maritime leaders through classroom visits, field experiences, and immersive learning opportunities.

We Work the Waterways’ next Industry Interaction Day is scheduled for April 22 in Pittsburgh, PA.

IRPT’s Annual Conference will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from September 30 to October 2 where 400 industry professionals will gather to discuss the state of the inland river system.

We Work the Waterways is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps the maritime shipping and logistics industries engage their communities and promote career pathways. Through hands-on student programming, WWW creates meaningful connections between industry professionals, educators, and the next generation of workers — building a stronger, more informed workforce pipeline.

Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit trade association composed of ports, terminals, users, and suppliers of the U.S. Inland Waterway system. IRPT promotes the use of the nation’s rivers as the most cost effective, and environmentally friendly form of transportation.

Executive Director: Errin Howard
ehoward@weworkthewaterways.com

Asst. Program Director: Pam Maxwell
pmaxwell@weworkthewaterways.com

Marketing & Program Coord.: Nikki Fondren
nfondren@weworkthewaterways.com

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