



2025 Impact Report

Charting the Course: A Look at Our Impact
on Maritime Workforce Development



Steering Toward a Bold New Future

A Message from our Executive Director

Dear WWW Supporters, Friends and Partners,

Every day, America’s maritime industry fuels our nation’s commerce by moving goods, supporting communities and connecting regions across the globe. And none of this would be possible without a skilled and resilient workforce. However, many are approaching retirement age with far too few young people ready to take their place.

We Work the Waterways was created to tackle these challenges head-on, and build a pipeline of future talent that’s equipped to succeed. Backed by decades of experience in maritime workforce engagement, we are helping close the gap through strategic investments in education, mentorship, and outreach. Together, we are propelling the next generation of maritime professionals who will keep our waterways working for decades to come.

In just 18 months, we’ve connected with over 38,000 students, educators, and supporters in classrooms, at ports, and across social platforms to show the next generation there’s a future for them on our waterways.

This early impact is only possible because of you: our sponsors, partners, advocates and friends. You know that investing in tomorrow’s maritime workforce is an investment in America’s prosperity and security.

The work we do would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our exceptional and growing team. I am excited to share that Pam Maxwell now serves as our Director of Programs and Operations, and Nikki Fondren as our Director of Marketing and Outreach. Their leadership and dedication have allowed us to expand our reach and deepen the impact of every event and initiative.

I’m equally proud of the depth and diversity of our inaugural Board of Directors and Advisory Council. These leaders bring broad expertise, regional reach and a shared commitment to making maritime careers more visible and accessible nationwide.

At We Work the Waterways, we open doors early, building awareness and sparking interest in maritime careers long before traditional recruitment begins. We know our real competition isn’t each other; it’s every other industry telling a stronger story to young people. That’s why we show up early, often, and in ways that connect students to a real opportunity and connect industry to its future workforce.

Thank you for your trust and partnership as we grow this momentum together.



With gratitude,

Errin Howard

Errin Howard
Executive Director
We Work the Waterways

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Reporting Period:

This report covers our first 18 months, from our launch in early 2024 through mid-2025, to capture the full scope of what we’ve accomplished so far and set the stage for what’s next.

01

Mission & Momentum

From day one, We Work the Waterways has been on a mission to expand what's possible for the next generation. In our first 18 months, we've strengthened our purpose and gained national momentum to help more people see a future on the water and take the necessary steps to pursue it.



Who We Are

Our Mission and Purpose



It All Starts with Awareness

At the heart of We Work the Waterways is a simple but urgent belief:

You can't choose a career you've never heard of.

Too many people, whether students just beginning their journey or adults searching for a new direction, miss out on maritime careers simply because they've never seen what's possible. These jobs are vital to our economy and our communities — but they're often hidden from view. We're here to change that.

What We Do

We connect people to the maritime industry through immersive, hands-on experiences that spark curiosity and build confidence. From classrooms to ports, and through digital tools and storytelling, we help individuals explore what's out there and see themselves in it.

While employers and training programs focus on recruitment, our work starts earlier. We build awareness, provide exposure, and foster connection. By doing so, we lay the groundwork for a stronger, more inclusive talent pipeline rooted in understanding and opportunity.



Maritime Education
Learn More on Page 9



Industry Interaction Day Events
Learn More on Page 10



Policy & Advocacy
Learn More on Page 12



Social Media & Storytelling
Learn More on Page 13

Our Mission

To connect the next generation with careers in maritime, shipping, and logistics while fostering lasting appreciation for the industry, its people, and its impact on our environment and economy.

Where We're Headed

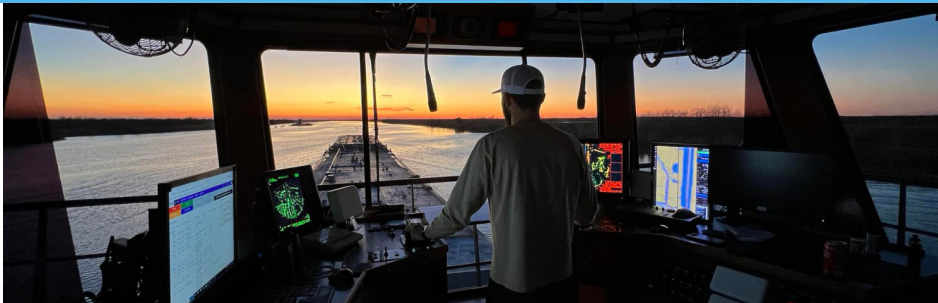
Our Momentum and Vision

The Momentum is Building

In just 18 months, our mission has gained powerful traction. We've reached more than 38,000 students, educators, and supporters across the country, sparking curiosity, building confidence, and creating a new vision for what's possible on the water. Now, as we take the next step in our evolution, we're building on this early momentum to expand our reach and deepen our impact.

A New Chapter Begins

In April 2024, We Work the Waterways received its designation as 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and in April 2025, we took a pivotal step forward by becoming an independent nonprofit organization. This milestone reflects our growth, the trust of industry partners, and our momentum to scale nationwide. With a respected Board of Directors and Advisory Council in place, we're positioned to drive greater impact, build stronger partnerships, and strengthen the talent pipeline for America's ports and waterways.



A Look at What's Ahead

Program Expansion

Expanding national programs to reach more students and career seekers earlier

Digital Growth

Building our social media presence to engage a wider audience and amplify awareness of maritime careers

Brand Refresh

Revamping our website and marketing efforts to better tell our story and connect with communities nationwide

Educational Tools

Developing new education materials and resources to support exploration of maritime pathways in classrooms and beyond

Sponsorship Revamp

Redesigning our sponsorship program to offer greater flexibility, recognition, and impact for supporters and partners

Data Insights

Expanding how we track engagement, outcomes, and impact to inform strategy and share results with our stakeholders

2025

Became an independent nonprofit

11

States reached and growing

246

Supporters driving our mission

18K+

Students engaged and counting

15K+

Organic Facebook followers



Our Vision

To build a robust, skilled maritime workforce that powers economic growth, strengthens national security, and supports thriving, sustainable communities along America's waterways.

How We Create Impact

The PROPEL Framework

Impact doesn't happen by accident. It comes from clear priorities, intentional action, and a deep commitment to progress. PROPEL is the framework that keeps us focused and aligned. It shapes how we engage, where we invest, and the outcomes we work to achieve.



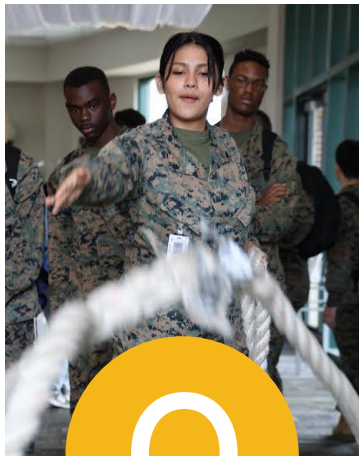
People

Connecting students, career seekers, and communities to the maritime workforce



Resources

Equipping educators, companies, and collaborators with meaningful tools



Opportunities

Creating impact by expanding access, awareness, and connection



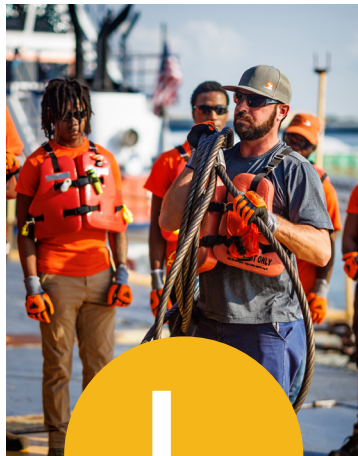
Partnerships

Collaborating with schools, industry, government, and environmental groups



Education

Building awareness of maritime careers and the importance of our waterways



Leadership

Elevating voices from within the industry to inspire the next generation

WE WORK THE WATERWAYS | 18-MONTH IMPACT REPORT

02

Impact in Action

Here you'll find the numbers, student voices and stories that demonstrate how our work is already inspiring the next generation to step aboard.



By the Numbers

18 Months of Impact

Since launching in January 2024, We Work the Waterways has significantly grown our reach — connecting students, schools and communities to some of America's most vital and rewarding careers. The numbers below reflect our commitment to building stronger talent pipelines, more resilient supply chains and a brighter maritime future.



150+

Schools in 11 states engaged across major port hubs and high-need communities



81

Hands-on career experiences since 2024 including site visits, job shadowing and Industry Interaction Days

38K

Students and community members reached through immersive in-person events and engaging content across four online platforms



279

Companies, agencies, organizations, and individuals power the mission — providing funding, training, guest speakers, internships, and job pathways



Maritime Education Programs

Programs for Students and Industry

We Work the Waterways offers a growing range of educational programs that inspire, inform, and activate the next generation of maritime professionals — from early learners to adult job seekers. Our approach is layered, real-world, and focused on long-term impact.



Elementary School

Early Exposure & Exploration

Our elementary program introduces young students to the maritime world through storytelling, hands-on activities, and real-world examples. By exploring ports, vessels, and the people behind them, students begin to see maritime careers as relevant and exciting. This early exposure builds pride and curiosity that lasts.



Middle School

Awareness & Exploration

Building on our elementary and high school programs, the middle school experience will introduce tools and activities that help students explore how their interests connect to maritime careers. Through interactive learning and real-world connections, they begin to see where they might fit into the industry.



High School

Experience & Activation

High school students connect with the industry through Industry Interaction Days, site visits, and career exploration tools. These programs help students see real pathways into maritime work — from training and certifications to jobs on the water and beyond.



Career Awareness & Community Engagement

We also work with maritime companies and community partners to deliver presentations and outreach sessions. These efforts help industry leaders tell their stories, connect with students, and strengthen the workforce pipeline.

Industry Interaction Day Events

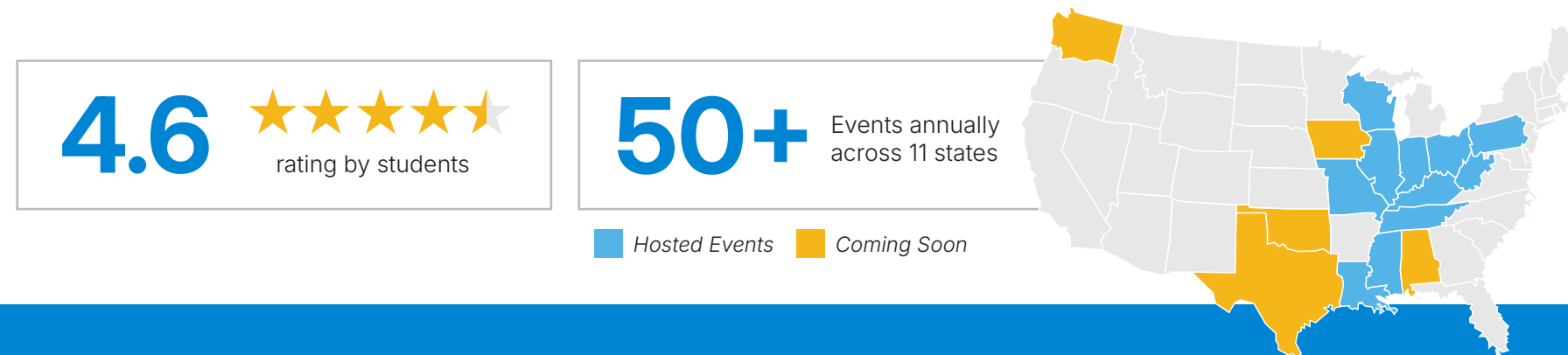
Our Flagship Experience

Where Exploration Meets Industry

Industry Interaction Days are high-energy events that give students an immersive look into the various maritime careers through hands-on learning, face-to-face connections and career exploration tools. Our events are held in communities across the nation, providing students opportunities to engage, to connect, and to be inspired by the people behind America's waterways.

Turning Curiosity Into Career Paths

Our Industry Interaction Days connect students to real career pathways and to the people in maritime. Every demonstration, conversation, and skill tried plants the idea that life on the water is within reach. For sponsors, these moments are a direct investment in a stronger, steady workforce ready to step up when today's workers retire.



What are Students Saying?

94%

Learned something
new about the maritime
industry

98%

Received valuable
advice from an industry
professional

96%

Left with a better understanding of the steps needed to pursue a career

73%

Reported interest in a career path presented at the event



Charting Career Paths

Mapping the Industry for Students and Career Seekers

A Framework for Career Exploration

We Work the Waterways has developed a clear, accessible framework that organizes the maritime industry into nine distinct career pathways. Each pathway represents a wide range of jobs, both on and off the water. This structure helps students, educators, and job seekers understand the possibilities and discover where they might fit within the industry.

Each career page within the nine pathways includes a job description, key skills, salary ranges, and real-world career stories — along with direct links to employers who are actively hiring.

Serving the Full Workforce Pipeline

Our Career Pathways Hub supports everyone involved in building the maritime workforce:

Students

collect keycards at events and return to the hub to explore roles, requirements, and next steps.

Career Seekers

access job details and apply directly to companies currently hiring next steps.

Educators

connect classroom content to local, high-opportunity maritime careers.

Industry Supporters

showcase in-demand positions and reach future talent through direct engagement.



Real Stories, Real Impact

"I discovered We Work the Waterways through their website where I was able to explore the job opportunities. I ended up applying for six different positions with various companies featured on their site. Wanting to increase my chances I reached out to one of the representatives to see if she had any connections that might help. I was connected with Pam Maxwell, and she went above and beyond. She was able to connect me with two of the companies I had applied to. Thanks to her support and those connections, I was hired by Wood Resources, where I am now proud to be working.

I am incredibly grateful for the guidance and networking support I received from We Work the Waterways. They played a crucial part in my job search."

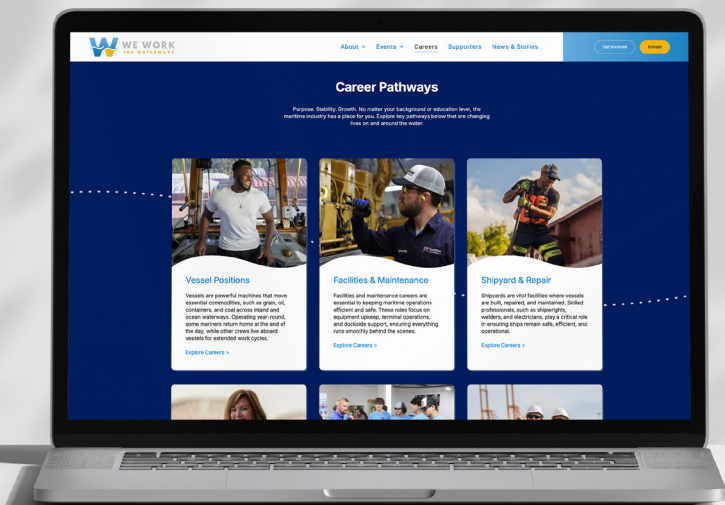
Jamaya Frye
Wood Resources, Deckhand

Tools for Discovery



At our Industry Interaction Day events, students receive printed Career Pathway Keycards, each featuring a QR code that links to our online Career Pathways Hub.

Now in development, Career Pathways Hub 2.0 will launch soon as a fully searchable digital platform featuring job listings, training resources, and personal success stories.



Policy & Advocacy

Making Maritime Voices Heard

Shaping National Conversations

We Work the Waterways ensures the maritime workforce has a seat at the table, from Washington, D.C. to working waterfronts across America. Our leadership is actively shaping national conversations that impact innovation and workforce development.

In 2025, we are helping to advance the bipartisan SHIPS Act, a landmark piece of legislation supporting U.S. shipbuilding innovation, workforce development, and critical infrastructure. Our team met with lawmakers, delivered advocacy letters on Capitol Hill, and mobilized supporters nationwide using accessible tools to amplify our shared voice.

Policy in Action

Our policy work goes beyond the halls of Congress. Throughout the year, we've welcomed local and federal elected officials to events where they see the maritime industry in action. These firsthand experiences allow decision-makers to connect with students, educators, and business leaders, building understanding and momentum that classroom briefings alone cannot provide.

We also collaborate with key agencies including MARAD, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Coast Guard, strengthening alignment between education, workforce development, and federal initiatives.



Help Advance the SHIPS Act

- 1 [Download](#) and personalize our letter template
- 2 Send it to your Senators and Representatives
- 3 Share it with your network to strengthen our collective voice



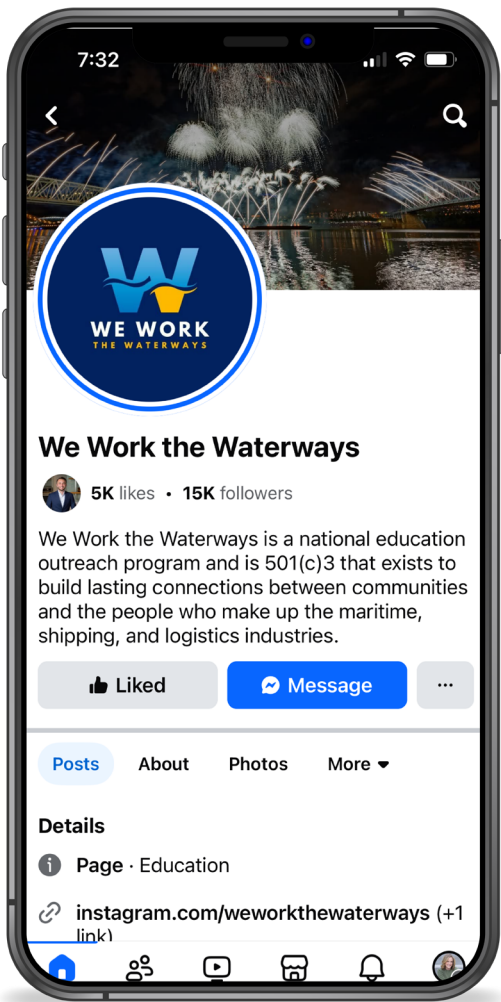
People Make It Possible

Policy alone does not build our workforce. People do. That is why our community shows up, speaks up, and turns awareness into action. Together, we are shaping a stronger future for maritime careers and the national economy they support.

Social Reach & Impact

Connecting Audiences to the Industry

In today's digital world, students, parents, and employers turn to social platforms to learn, connect, and decide what matters. As Captain Aaron Williams puts it, *"We Work the Waterways isn't a place people visit, it's a presence they experience."* Social media is one of our most powerful tools. It's where we meet people, and where they meet the maritime industry.



 **15,000+**
organic Facebook followers:
Our fastest-growing platform.

Millions  
of views and shares. Driven by real
stories and behind-the-scenes content.

 **50**
Reaching all
states and multiple countries,
with impact that extends well
beyond U.S. port communities.

Student Success Stories

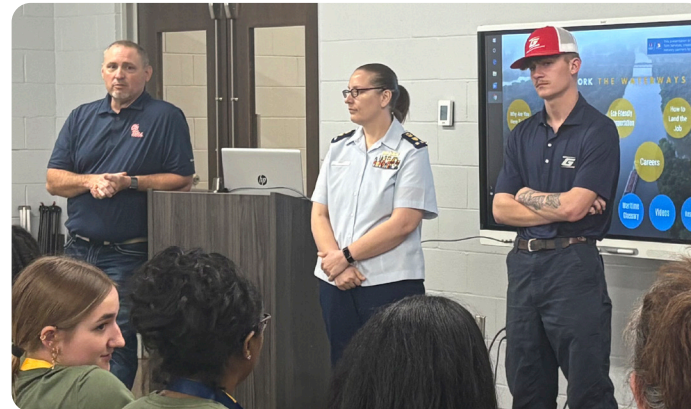
New Paths and Possibilities

Because we engage students early, often before they've given much thought to their future careers, traditional tracking can be challenging. But every so often, a student circles back, a teacher reaches out, or a company connects the dots. These moments remind us that the work matters and that it changes lives.



Colby Brammer

At an Industry Interaction Day in South Louisiana, Colby connected with Turn Services and was referred to our team by Board Member Dawn Lopez. We connected him with ACBL, who arranged a hands-on shadowing experience guided by Advisory Council Member, Captain Kenny Brown. **Colby has since graduated, applied for his TWIC card, and is preparing to apply for his first maritime job.**



Gavin Pugh & Gavin White

After attending an earlier Industry Interaction Day, Gavin Pugh and Gavin White were both hired by Golding Barge Line, one of our valued industry partners. Their school later shared that the event directly inspired their career paths. One of the Gavins even returned as a panel speaker, sharing how the experience helped launch his journey in the maritime industry.



Donte Curtis

Donte Curtis, a 2017 graduate and former student of Dr. Terence James, now works for Marquette Transportation. At our Vicksburg Industry Interaction Day, he joined the student panel to share how a brief conversation at his former job at Circle K led him into the maritime world. During the session, a Magnolia Marine team member recognized the story — he was the customer who sparked Donte's interest years earlier.

Educator Perspectives

Guiding the Next Generation

Teachers and program leaders share how early industry exposure helps students connect classroom learning to real-world opportunities. These moments often spark curiosity and shift mindsets. They remind us why early outreach matters.



"Participating in the We Work the Waterways field trip gave our students a firsthand look at the Mississippi River's role in global trade. They were amazed by the scale of port operations and the career possibilities within the maritime industry. **Many left with a new sense of curiosity and excitement about their future.**"

Liz Fick

Arabi Elementary
5th Grade Teacher



"Each part of the day was well planned, and the We Work the Waterways team did a fantastic job. Walking through the Cargill facility, seeing machine parts in action, and the activity stations were some of the students' favorite moments. Listening to the CEO speak was also a great touch!"

Bess N. Melancon

St. Amant High School



"We think very strategically about pulling students out of class, and if we do that, we want it to be worth their while. **This program hits the sweet spot for keeping students engaged, with the right amount of time and the right group size to explore different career opportunities.**"

Ronny Seal

St. Charles Parish Public Schools
Curriculum Specialist, School-to-Careers

Supporter Insights

The Voices Behind the Mission

Our supporters see the results firsthand. From students just beginning to explore career options to adults actively seeking new pathways, people are discovering that maritime careers are not only possible — they're within reach.

We asked our partners what impact they've seen — and why they continue to invest in We Work the Waterways. Here's what they had to say:



Opening Doors for Students

"We have had 3 people start employment with us through We Work the Waterways events."

"We've had several young people reach out for more information about jobs at our company."

"More kids are looking at the waterways as a viable option right out of high school, which is critical."



Smart Investment in the Industry

"We believe that We Work the Waterways is a smart investment in the future of our industry."

"It's mutually beneficial for us to stand together to promote ourselves and We Work the Waterways."

"Educating young people about our industry helps ensure the future of our infrastructure and waterways."



Supporters Behind the Mission

"An excellent program we're happy to support. Students are being introduced to both on-water and shoreside careers."

"You are doing a great job bringing together companies, communities, and students to further the industry."

"WWW is a very dedicated, knowledgeable team working toward a common goal."

91%

of supporters say the program is effectively reaching students who wouldn't otherwise hear about maritime careers.

98%

of supporters say We Work the Waterways is helping build the long-term maritime talent pipeline — with over half rating our impact as *extremely well*.

*Based on 2025 Supporter Survey results (50% response rate)

03

Partners in Progress

Our mission is driven by people: visionary leaders, dedicated educators, and committed partners working together to shape the future of the maritime workforce. From the team leading the charge to the organizations standing beside us, these are the people behind the progress.



The People Behind the Mission

Driven by Passion. United by Purpose.

We Work the Waterways Team



Errin Howard
Executive Director



Pamela Maxwell
Director of Programs &
Operations



Nikki Fondren
Director of Marketing &
Outreach

Executive Board of Directors



Seth Lawson
WWW President
Lawson Rigging,
President



Kelly DiMarco
WWW Vice President
Plaquemines Parish
Government, Director of
Economic Development
& Tourism



**Capt. Jeanne E.
Ferrer**
WWW Secretary
Crescent River Pilots,
Pilot



Sydney DeFillips
WWW Treasurer
Mississippi Power
Company Property
Accounting



Dawn Lopez
WWW Director of Board-
Staff Engagement
Associated Terminals/Turn
Services, Vice President of
Marketing & Public Relations

General Board Members

Our Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, governance, and oversight — helping to guide our mission, shape our vision, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Aaron Williams Bollard Consulting
Arthur Yves Associated Terminals/Turn Services
Brandon Phillips Riverview Boat & Tug Service
Christa White Ingram Barge Company
David Murray Waterways Journal
Heather Ervin Marine Log
Katie Dunn ADM/ARTCo
Merritt Parsons Vesich Louisiana CAT
Richard Lockwood Consultant
Tony Dow QSL

Advisory Council

Our Advisory Council provides program guidance, industry insights, and regional perspectives that inform both outreach and advocacy.

Alexandra Hernández Port of South Louisiana
Ashley Pitts Salacia Logistics
Capt. Kenny Brown Maritime Throwdown
Casey Stubbs Golding Barge Line
Frank McCormack Waterways Journal
Holly Normand Celtic Marine
Jenna Gaudet Eckstein Trade & Transport LLC
Marty Vizier Sennebogen
Paul Rohde Waterways Council, Inc.
Stephen LeBouef ADM/ARTCo
Terence James, Ph.D. Vicksburg Warren School District
Thomas Cagle T&T Marine

Our Partners in Action

Working Together for Greater Impact

We proudly collaborate with diverse partner organizations who help bring our mission to life. Whether hosting events, leading activities, or speaking on panels, their support strengthens our reach and impact. We never charge partners to participate — because mutual support benefits everyone. By working together, we build a stronger, more unified maritime community.





Thank You for Your Support

Together, we're building the maritime workforce of the future.

Visit Our Website

[WeWorktheWaterways.org](https://www.weworkthewaterways.org)

Stay Connected



Contact Us

Call: Errin Howard / 513.403.9312

Email: contact@weworkthewaterways.com

