The Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Working Group (WG) vision is to strengthen, improve and sustain the IMTS in support of the USACE Navigation Mission; “To provide safe, reliable, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation.”

2018 was a very productive year for the IMTS - the WG made significant progress on improving the IMTS and there have been lots of significant activities so far this year. Some highlights since the last WG update follow.

**The IMTS Board of Directors (BoD) meeting - 17 January**: The BoD oversees the WG, prioritizes actions and advocates consistent implementation of recommended IMTS improvements. The purpose of this meeting was to update BoD members and other high level USACE staff of WG activities and accomplishments to date as well as ongoing initiatives. This resulted in increased awareness of ongoing progress and ensured that proper focus is sustained.

**The IMTS WG face to face meeting - 20-21 February**: This type of dedicated meeting effort helps to maintain focus on outcomes; it is critical to identify products and completion dates, or interim products with timelines and metrics indicating continued progress. It does the IMTS little to no good to work without showing progress, outcome and value. There is a lot of good information that has been and continues to be updated, consolidated and shared. With continued improvements along with deliberate and consistent messaging, these efforts should be seen as a priority, as progressing and with value to USACE, to the IMTS users and to the nation.

**USACE Operations and Regulatory Gateway**: We continue to update our IMTS WG Gateway page to help share knowledge to the IMTS workforce. Access to the IMTS WG Gateway site is [https://operations.erdc.dren.mil/imts.cfm?CoP=Nav](https://operations.erdc.dren.mil/imts.cfm?CoP=Nav). We will continue to send periodic updates such as this one to help share progress and lessons learned. In addition, we plan to perform formal outreach to the Nav Industry this summer or fall. The intent is twofold, 1) to provide more discussion so the system users understand USACE focus and 2) to gain better understanding of the Nav Industry’s priorities for improving the IMTS. Any new concerns or priorities identified will be prioritized and incorporated into the WG Action Plan for evaluation and implementation. Topics will include concepts for remote lock operations, currently under consideration at some facilities.

**Standardization**: Standardization remains a USACE priority. The WG continues a national effort to identify a Standardization Framework for USACE that will include the
following implementation categories: 1) funding, 2) policy, 3) engineering and design and 4) operation and maintenance (including human capital). The Framework report that the Inland Navigation Design Center (INDC) initiated at their December 2018 Workshop has been completed and is currently under review; it defines Standardization from a national USACE perspective. The next steps are being developed for implementation.

**Maintenance Synchronization:** The IMTS WG Committee on Lock and Dam Maintenance has been working to standardize engagement efforts and identify scheduled closures in a standard format. They have taken best practices from numerous regions and developed a national standard format that will consistently identify scheduled closures. This will help USACE and the Nav Industry through improved communication and better understanding. This committee is also improving notification efforts of unscheduled closures to ensure that USACE is aware of such impacts to navigation as soon as possible. Regional managers should include David Frantz, HQUSACE Inland Navigation Senior Program Manager in such notifications.

**River Information Services (RIS):** RIS takes navigation data and makes it more accessible and usable in support of navigation operations. The RIS team is working to improve accessibility and usability of navigation data. The team has drafted a Program Management Plan (PMP) for these efforts. The team is focusing on outcomes, using specific tangible and achievable short term products to better describe how RIS can be used. The PMP will include specific timelines for this effort and should be completed in the coming months. An implementation program is underway in the Louisville District (LRL) to test some of the short term products.

**Other Ongoing Activities:** We continue to following up our face to face meeting discussions and prioritizing ongoing activities to keep the IMTS improving and sustained. Some actions are listed below:

1. **Human Resources (HR) SME:** We are working with USACE HR at HQ. The Secretary of the Army (SecArmy) has identified a new initiative to reduce number of PDs. The IMTS WG effort is seen as a Best Practice that the Army could potentially use as a model to achieve their goals. This could be good for USACE and for the IMTS WG; we have been looking for national HR resources to help us accomplish HR-related improvement ideas that were identified in the IMTS Improvement Report (2008). Many items have been implemented but now have to be maintained (such as revisions of standard Position Descriptions (PDs). Other items have been on hold, or partially so because of needed critical HR resources (such as standardizing PDs plus standardizing staffing and grade structure for staff outside of locks and dams).

2. **Lock Staffing and Levels of Service:** We continue to monitor implementation of past improvement efforts and will be updating many as needed. Efforts are underway for periodic evaluation of staffing. This helps to maintain consistent operations and efficiencies previously achieved.

3. **Updating ER 1130-2-500 (Project Operations):** We have begun updating portions of this 1996 Engineering Regulation. Periodic updates help to provide new technologies formally, into the regulation, to better sustain current practices regarding floating plant operations and project maintenance. New technologies and
methodologies include Asset Management, the IMTS Maintenance Standard and other standardization efforts.

4. Lock Operator Training Manual: This training manual is updated every five years. It was last updated in 2016. During the period between updates, questions arise. The WG identifies a Lock and Dam SME as the 'go-to' representative when someone has a question about the manual, usage, best practices or exams. Our current SME is John Mueller, a seasoned Lockmaster at LD 12 on the Upper Mississippi River. He can be reached at john.j.mueller@usace.army.mil.

5. Efforts to improve communication continue. We will provide an update later this summer showing progress, results and outcomes subsequent to this update.

More Information can be found on our IMTS WG Gateway site (link shown in item 1 above) or you may contact the undersigned at michael.d.cox@usace.army.mil, or call 309-945-8669. You may also contact David Frantz at david.a.frantz@usace.army.mil.

Respectfully Submitted,

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PgM, IMTS WG