



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 6, 2013

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### WTC forms Mississippi River Alliance; 10 World Trade Centers on board

New Orleans, LA- The World Trade Center announced today the formation of the World Trade Center Mississippi Alliance (WTC MSRA), a non-partisan coalition of World Trade Centers along the Mississippi River dedicated to promoting the stakeholder interests of the world's greatest waterway. As the founding organization the World Trade Center of New Orleans (WTCNO) will lead, host and moderate the Alliance, with Dominik Knoll, CEO of the WTCNO, serving as the regional spokesperson.

The Mississippi River Basin connects 31 states and 2 Canadian Provinces through the third largest river basin in the world and the cargo conveyed along the Mississippi River has an approximately \$115 billion annual impact on the nation's economy each year.

Ten states within the Mississippi River Basin are represented in the alliance including Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Kansas, Illinois, Montana, Wisconsin and Colorado. Together the WTC MSRA will represent thousands of U.S. businesses, farmers and stakeholders who rely on the Mississippi River for commodities including petroleum & coal products, agriculture, marine and wood products, chemicals, minerals & ores, paper, plastics & rubber products and textiles & fabric.

"The World Trade Center of New Orleans is excited to have founded and is proud to assume the responsibility of leading the Mississippi River Alliance. I am looking forward to working with our fellow WTCs to promote a healthy and active river. This coalition is essential to ensure the growth of all stakeholders along our nation's most important waterway and it will improve trade and communication for all parties involved," said **Dominik Knoll, CEO, WTC New Orleans**.

The purpose of the Alliance is to unite key stakeholders and decision makers along the river and establish a clear channel of communication in order to share region-specific river-related information which directly or indirectly impacts the collective regions and companies represented by the WTC MSRA. The shared information will include factors which impact the flow of goods through the Mississippi River and its ports as well as issues related to river conditions, depth, funding, access, or other environmental issues. With this, a unified conduit for the distribution of information among involved parties and local and federal government is established.

"St. Louis is proud to be part of this Alliance. The Mississippi River is an important artery of commerce for the U.S., and particularly our region, with many economic interests and industries affected," said **Tim Nowak, Executive Director, WTC St. Louis**.

"World Trade Center Mississippi is delighted to join forces with our sister WTC's in promoting and facilitating business growth along the Mississippi River. This is truly an innovative regional endeavor, and the World Trade Center of New Orleans has demonstrated excellent leadership in coordinating this worthwhile project. We are pleased to be included and look forward to active participation," said **Barbara Travis, Executive Director, WTC Mississippi**.

"This Mississippi River Alliance will play a role in promoting the increased awareness of the logistical impact of the inland water ways. The Panama Canal expansion due to come on line in 2015 will no doubt impact cargo transportation of this entire river system, so it is important and strategic for this Alliance to be at the forefront, in assisting with new developments in the Supply Chain," said **Dan Hendrix, President and CEO, WTC Arkansas**.

"Chicago recognizes the vitality of the Mississippi River in expanding trade throughout the Mid-West region. We are encouraged by the leadership of the World Trade Center New Orleans in bringing this alliance together," said **Bill Lada, President, WTC Illinois**.

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“The inland river system is responsible for the founding of Kansas City, and is becoming increasingly important to trade for our region today with the recent re-opening of our Port on the Missouri River. World Trade Center Kansas City is thankful to Mr. Knoll for his leadership on this important initiative,” said **Mehgan Flynn, Director, WTC Kansas City**.

**Ted Kiel, Director of Operations, WTC Wisconsin** said “Much has changed since the fur trade days, but even with considerable advancement in transportation technology on land and in air, the Mississippi River remains as a primary channel for foreign trade, with an estimated \$85 Billion in exports leaving Mississippi river ports every year. While a significant portion of Wisconsin goods leave the state throughout the Great Lakes, an estimated one million tons of commodities flow across Wisconsin rivers annually. While rivers have been a primary source of trade throughout history, they have also provided water for irrigation, drinking, and power; fish for sustenance; and been a source of recreation and rejuvenation for all who have the privilege to live along their banks.”

Kiel continued, “However, with the increase in utility of rivers such as the Mississippi, the sustainability of freshwater resources has become a growing global concern. The World Trade Center Wisconsin, along with partner organizations bring a wealth of companies and research to the Mississippi River Alliance, and through collaborative efforts such as the Mississippi River Alliance, the necessary groundwork for river preservation, and sustainable utilization will help maintain the river as primary route for US trade, food, energy, and enjoyment for years to come.”

For more information on the World Trade Center Mississippi Alliance please visit [www.wtcmsra.org](http://www.wtcmsra.org).

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The World Trade Center of New Orleans (WTCNO) is one of the strongest international business organizations in the Gulf Coast region, consisting of 1,000+ companies as well as high profile individual members. This membership base represents a diverse group of industry leaders, companies, professional organizations, and government institutions that include manufacturers, energy, agriculture, maritime, digital media, foreign consulates, and other interests. In 2012, member organizations were able to significantly contribute to the state’s record-breaking exports, the total value of which exceeded \$63 billion. This strong international organization creates a variety of opportunities for its shareholders with the objective to add wealth to its community as well as create jobs through international trade and related services while fostering business and economic development by engaging in allied activities.