

AWIPS technology gives Weather Service forecasters access to satellite imagery, Doppler radar data, automated weather observations and computer-generated numerical forecasts, all in one computer workstation. On May 3-4, more than 70 tornadoes were pounding the U.S. between Texas and South Dakota, with particularly severe damage in Oklahoma. The AWIPS system in the Weather Service Office in Oklahoma City enabled forecasters to simultaneously track and issue warnings for dozens of tornadoes that were tracking through the area. A highly informed public, and good cooperation with the media and with state and local officials in the area, reduced greatly the numbers of deaths that might have occurred in this still-tragic event.

The AWIPS system will continue to yield new and improved warning and forecast services to enhance safety and improve people's lives. The modern National Weather Service is a good investment of tax dollars and will be an engine of economic gain in many weather-sensitive business sectors. For an investment that costs each American about \$4 per year, today's Weather Service issues more than 734,000 weather forecasts and 850,000 river and flood forecasts, in addition to roughly 45,000 potentially life-saving severe weather warnings annually. Statistics show overall improvements in forecast accuracy and in timeliness of severe weather and flood warnings. Skilled NOAA professionals, working with AWIPS and other technologies such as Doppler radar, surface observation systems and weather satellites, make this possible.

Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the Science Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, which oversees NOAA programs, I am pleased to share with my colleagues the news of this award celebrating one of the many accomplishments of the National Weather Service.

CELEBRATING A CAREER OF
ACCOMPLISHMENT

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, when a fine and outstanding man such as Mr. William R. Wittbrodt of Midland, MI decides to retire after a long and distinguished career, then we must send our congratulations to his family and our commiserations to his employer. So I join with all of his colleagues in saying that "Bill" Wittbrodt's dedication to the work of the United States Steelworkers of America will become that of legend, as has his dedication to his wonderful family. We can only surmise that the value of his efforts will continue to appreciate during his retirement.

Mr. Wittbrodt began his contributions to society with service in our Armed Forces, with his enlistment in the Air Force in 1947, where he served four years, including his service in Korea. Mr. Wittbrodt returned to his native Midland afterwards, and upon joining Dow Chemical, became a member of Local 12075, District 50, United Mine Workers. Thus, his long devotion and service on behalf of Local 12075 was begun.

Without Mr. Wittbrodt's meticulous stewardship and great dedication to Local 12075, the local union would not have been so successful and so committed to the rights of fellow members. Mr. Wittbrodt's leadership was evidenced early; in 1954 he became the Elected Shop Steward, 5 years later he was elected full-time Chief Steward, and in 1965 he was elected to the Local Union 12075 Bargaining Committee. In 1969 he achieved a well-deserved pinnacle of his commitment: the Presidency of Local 12075.

Mr. Wittbrodt's success as President was so evident that he was elected to four consecutive terms, and, while President, shepherded Local 12075's merging with the United Steelworkers of America in August 1972. In unparalleled support, Mr. Wittbrodt became Staff Representative to the United Steelworkers of America, and finally, this caring and devoted man became Sub-District Director, District 29 of the United Steelworkers of America in 1983.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken at length of Mr. Wittbrodt's great contributions to the people of Michigan. But of equal importance is his great devotion to his wife of thirty-five years, Leona, and his grandchildren Merrit, Chad, Denise, Adam, Tyler and Jason, as well as his beloved great-grandchildren Jay Richard, Haley Marie and Lauren. It can be no understatement that Mr. Wittbrodt will be sorely missed by the people of Michigan he served in his distinguished career, and I join with them in expressing my deep and abiding appreciation to Mr. Wittbrodt in this first year of his retirement.

As Bill Wittbrodt enters retirement, I urge you, Mr. Speaker, and all of our colleagues to join me in congratulating him for his distinguished career, and in wishing him and his wonderful family many happy years to come.

WEST COAST LABOR AGREEMENT

HON. NORMAN D. DICKS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a highly significant but largely unnoticed development—the recently agreed-upon labor pact affecting West Coast dock workers and clerks. At 5 p.m. on July 1st, with a news blackout in effect, the West Coast longshore contract expired. From early May until mid-July, officials of the Pacific Maritime Association representing roughly 100 companies on the West Coast, and representatives of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) met to try to hammer out a new agreement. After several days of complex, difficult negotiations—frequently lasting through the night—the two sides reached agreement several days ago. Last week, more than 99 percent of the delegates to the ILWU caucus recommended approval of the new three-year pact. It is expected that before the end of August this agreement will be fully ratified and that West Coast ports will enjoy 3 years of stability.

Besides raising wage and pension benefits the new agreement, among other things, calls for companies and union members to form a committee to discuss the introduction of new

technology on the waterfront, or improve the use of current technology, to enhance productivity. This would seem to be crucial for all concerned. Canadian and Mexican ports and companies are rapidly moving forward trying to outcompete the United States for an increasing share of trade with Asia. It is in the interest of neither management nor labor to let this happen.

In a recent article in the Los Angeles Times, Professor Stephen Cohen, Co-Director of the Berkeley Roundtable on International Economy, and John Wilson, the former Chief Economist at the Bank of America and now a Senior Fellow at the Roundtable, noted that in the past twenty years waterborne trade through West Coast ports has grown from \$61 billion to an estimated \$285 billion for this year. This is double the rate of increase in total US trade growth and this West Coast waterborne trade is clearly critical to America's continuing economic prosperity. Further, that trade, according to Cohen and Wilson, now constitutes more than 60 percent of the gross state product of my state of Washington and more than 35 percent of California's GSP.

If PMA and the ILWU had not reached agreement and there had been a West Coast dock strike or lockout, the dislocations would have been felt even more strongly in Asia than here. As Cohen and Wilson have noted: Asian exports arriving by ship at West Coast ports are expected to exceed \$200 billion this year. This is the principal source of the vital foreign exchange net earnings needed to sustain the currency values, to service large foreign debts and to import the components and machinery required for growth and development of the stricken Asian economies. A significant disruption of West Coast ports would hamper recovery. It might also affect financial markets.

Mr. President, my constituents in Washington State and all Americans have a stake in this pact and in assuring that US-Asian trade continues to grow in coming years. None of us should lose sight of this reality. I am submitting for the RECORD a copy of the Cohen-Wilson article and a related article by Dan Weikel of The Los Angeles Times.

[Los Angeles Times, Wed., July 14, 1999]

METRO—PORT STRIKE WOULD HURT U.S., ASIA

(By Stephen S. Cohen and John O. Wilson)

Despite six weeks of negotiations, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Assoc., which represents almost 100 West Coast shipping lines, have failed to reach an agreement for a new contract for the West Coast. Since the prior contract expired on July 1, many union work actions have affected port operations up and down the coast. A full-fledged strike would put the U.S. and many other economies at great risk.

In the last few weeks, crane drivers walked off the job for two days in Oakland, effectively shutting down one of the nation's busiest ports. Work slowdown also have impacted the flow of goods through the behemoth ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Ports in the Pacific Northwest are experiencing slowdowns as well.

A West Coast port shutdown could trigger a reaction in international financial markets, with the biggest risk being a worsening of the Asian financial and economic crisis. There would also be a major national economic impact, a 20-day strike at ports in

California, Oregon and Washington, for example, could cost this country close to \$40 billion and 200,000 jobs. The impact of such a shutdown would increase daily across the country and even could trigger a sudden spike in American consumer prices.

What makes a West Coast dock shutdown a potential detonator of a national and international financial and economic crisis? The size and magnitude of the trade flowing through the ports, the dependency of this North American gateway on Asian economies and the relative inflexibility to divert cargo to other ports.

Since 1980, waterborne trade through West Coast ports has increased from \$61 billion to an estimated \$285 billion this year. That is double the rate of increase in total U.S. trade growth.

This growth in trade activity is directly related to the increasing import-export activity with Asia. West Coast ports are now dominated by trade with Asia, which accounts for about three-quarters of all port activity (sea and air) in California and about 60% in Washington state. International trade accounts for about 19% of the U.S. gross domestic product and more than one-third of California's gross state product.

But the real dependency is one the other side of the Pacific. Asian exports arriving by ship at West Coast ports are expected to exceed \$200 billion this year. This is the principal source of the vital foreign exchange net earnings needed to sustain the currency values, to service large foreign debts and to import the components and machinery required for growth and development of the stricken Asian economies. A significant disruption of West Coast ports would hamper recovery. It might also affect financial markets.

The ability to shift significant volumes of Asian trade to East Coast or Gulf of Mexico ports in the event of a West Coast shutdown is now extremely limited because container facilities—ships, ports and infrastructure—are too specialized. The West Coast ports have made about 70% of all port investment in the 48 contiguous states for the past five years. As a result, high volume shipping is a powerful, integrated and, alas, inflexible system. Almost all the containers destined for the Central and Mountain states now pass through West Coast ports. So do nearly half of containers destined for the North Atlantic states.

But because of the specialization, the U.S. does not have the luxury of simply diverting Asian cargo to East Coast ports. Shipping is no longer a collection of roving ships docking here and there.

For all these reasons, the risk of a port strike is simply too great for the U.S. and world economies. The current act of management-union negotiations warrants a watchful eye from the White House and Treasury as well as the Department of Labor. If need be, both sides should be locked up at Camp David to finish the talks. But, in no case, should the ports be allowed to shut down.

Beach. "There have been long truck lines, and we've been getting calls from worried manufacturers. We should be able to clear, things up pretty quickly."

Both sides declined to discuss what agreements, if any, were reached on several important contract issues; increasing the productivity of longshore workers, the number and type of jobs under union control, and the use of new labor-saving technology on the docks.

Negotiators said the terms of the contract will not be released until after the agreement is ratified in the weeks ahead by union

members and the executive board of the maritime association.

"We are pleased to have reached an agreement that provides ILWU members with a package that rewards them for the hard work they put forward every day," said James Spinosa, the union's vice president and chief negotiator.

West Coast longshore workers now earn about \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year, depending on their skills and rank. Wages can go higher for heavy equipment operators, dock bosses and marine clerks who truck cargo.

Association officials headed into the negotiations saying the talks were critical for improving the reliability and productivity of the waterfront labor force.

They also said they hoped to engage in substantive discussions about the use of technology on the docks and ways to avoid repeating the score of costly work stoppages that followed the 1998 labor contract.

Among the issues critical to the union were increases in pension and medical benefits as well as the union's jurisdiction—the number of port-related jobs that fall under its control.

Labor officials said that if modernization continues, steps must be taken to preserve union positions and expand the organization's jurisdiction beyond port boundaries.

Both sides came to the bargaining table in May after several years of court fights and political rancor.

Within the union itself long-shore locals in Southern California had repeatedly tried to remove President Brian McWilliams and neutralize his power.

The locals issued a vote of no confidence in the president and demanded that he take a leave of absence for the remainder of his term. Williams, however, has remained in office.

The union's internal conflicts coincided with series of sharp attacks by the Pacific Maritime Assn., which targeted the productivity and reliability of longshore workers.

Miniace a labor relations specialist who worked for Ford Motor Co. and Ryder, led the assault in public and in court, repeatedly suing the union over work stoppages and slowdown to no avail.

Miniace contends that productivity, measured by tons of cargo handled per hour paid has either stagnated or declined in each of the last four years. His greatest fear, he said, was that customers would send their goods through other ports in the United States or Mexico if things didn't improve on the West Coast.

Union officials criticized Miniace's aggressive approach, saying he was a newcomer who did not understand the shipping industry.

[Los Angeles Times, Fri. July 16, 1999]

LONGSHORE WORKERS, SHIPPERS REACH PACT (By Dan Weikel)

Longshore workers and shipping companies agreed to a new labor contract late Thursday, clearing the way for the resumption of normal cargo operations at West Coast ports that have been plagued by work stoppages and slowdowns for the last 10 days.

After almost two months of bargaining in San Francisco, the powerful International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Assn. concluded a new three-year contract that will affect more than 10,000 dock workers in California, Oregon and Washington.

With tensions running high, there had been considerable fear that the West Coast was headed toward its first dock strike since 1971. West Coast ports, which handle cargo

worth an estimated \$280 billion every year, are critical to the nation's economy.

Details of the agreement were unavailable Thursday, but negotiators said it offered increases in pay, health insurance and pension benefits for future as well as current longshore retirees, some of whom now have pensions as low as \$240 a month.

"I think this is a very good agreement for the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Assn.," said Joseph N. Miniace, president of the West Coast's largest shipping association. "We had almost two weeks of work slowdowns, and we've been working until 3 a.m. the last few nights to get a contract. I am relieved; our team is relieved, and their team is relieved."

The Pacific Maritime Assn., which is the union's counterpart, negotiates and administers labor contracts for about 100 shipping lines, stevedore companies and terminal operators.

Association officials said Thursday evening that normal cargo operations will resume at all West Coast harbors, which have been hampered by work slowdowns since early July.

During their peak, longshore workers shut the Port of Oakland for two days and reduced the flow of cargo by at least half at many terminals along the coast.

The pace of work raised fears that the delays eventually would cost business and industry millions of dollars in lost revenue, not to mention losses in fees to port authorities.

Harbor officials in Long Beach and Los Angeles, the nation's largest combined port, said Thursday that any backlog of cargo should be cleared from the docks in the days ahead.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AIDS MARSHALL PLAN FUND FOR AFRICA

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce legislation designed to focus both attention and resources on the global emergency of HIV/AIDS, which is wreaking havoc in developing countries, most tragically in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Throughout much of the First Session of the 106th Congress, much information has been disseminated and discussed about the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa. While AIDS has afflicted Africa since the late 1980's, the latest increases in the HIV/AIDS infected population are staggering. The disease is quite literally obliterating entire communities and devastating the continent.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 1999 Annual Report notes that of the 14 million people world wide who have died from AIDS, 11 million are from the nations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

UNAIDS, the United Nations coordinating entity which tracks and combats HIV/AIDS, estimates that 22.5 million Sub-Saharan African adults and children are currently living with AIDS.

Additionally, the HIV/AIDS virus is devastating southern Africa. In Zimbabwe, 1 out of every 5 adults is infected with HIV/AIDS,