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Cleveland Port Wins Robert J. Lewis Seaway Pacesetter Award

Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook today presented the Robert J. Lewis Pacesetter Award to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority. The Cleveland port was among only a handful of U.S. ports and one terminal in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway (GLSLS) system that met requirements for the award.

During a port committee meeting, Deputy Administrator Middlebrook congratulated port officials on their accomplishment. "Earning a Pacesetter is never easy, but doing so last year during a downturn in tonnage shipped through the Seaway proves how well Cleveland port management and labor are working together effectively to attract and grow business," he said.

"This Pacesetter Award, our fifth, is especially memorable not just because it is for an 18 percent improvement over 2001 traffic, but because it reflects a turnaround in the economy of Cleveland," said Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Maritime Director Stephen Pfeiffer. "Steel is the gauge by which we have traditionally measured the strength of the local economy because it is the raw material for manufacturing."

Cleveland is a magnet for import of steel of every kind—hot and cold rolled, wire rod, coil and plates. Iron and steel products generate the greatest job impact on a per ton basis because of its high value when compared to dry bulk and liquid bulk cargoes common throughout the system.

Last year Cleveland handled 444,100 tons of steel in addition to over nine million tons of interlake cargo. Long recognized as a hub Seaway System port, Cleveland exported steel for the first time in nine years earlier this spring.

Pacesetter recipients must register increases in international overseas cargo tonnage shipped through the Seaway over the previous navigation season. Just three other ports, Milwaukee, WI.; Burns Harbor/Portage, ID; and Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority, NY managed that feat in 2002, while only one terminal, Lake Superior Warehousing Company in Duluth, MN achieved the honor.

The Pacesetter award has been a fixture in the System's maritime community since its inception in 1992. Once restricted to ports, competition was opened to U.S. Great Lakes terminals in 1999.

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