

For Immediate Release

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Global Events Impact the Mississippi River Valley
Mississippi River has stake in Brexit and Panama Canal Opening

The River and Brexit—The European Union is important to the Mississippi River. U.S. exports of agricultural products to EU countries totaled \$11.9 billion in 2013. The EU countries together would rank 5th as an Ag Export Market for the United States. Top Ag exports include: soybeans (\$1.5 billion), soybean meal (\$860 million), wine and beer (\$649 million).

Half of the top ten soy-producing states in the US are along the Mississippi River with IL and MN being the first and third producers. Two of the top three beer-producing states in the US are along the Mississippi River – Wisconsin and Missouri.

This trade is made possible by the Union's open-market system and the less than 3% tariff the Union sustains. The Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership we have with the Union makes much of this possible.

Britain has the 2nd largest GDP of the EU states behind Germany. A British exit will impact the economy of the Mississippi River and may make doing business with Europe more expensive.

"The volatile nature of global trade today is the exact reason we as mayors are working to increase the number of choices open to the Mississippi River – such as a revitalization of the container economy for the waterway," said Mayor Slay of St. Louis, MO.

The Panama Canal Opening – The Panama expansion project opens for business on June 26 more than doubling the carrying capacity of today.

"The Gulf Region is projected to realize a 12 percent increase in traffic due to the Canal's expansion which will bring more cargo to the Port of New Orleans, gateway port of the Mississippi River," noted Belinda Constant, Mayor of Gretna, LA and incoming Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

"The Mayors of the Mississippi River have been working to restore container movement to the River to take advantage of developments like this. Our project has been officially designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation and there are currently several container-on-barge implementation projects under review for Federal grants from the Port of New Orleans to America's Central Port near St. Louis, added Mayor Hiram Copeland, mayor of Vidalia, LA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

MRCTI is an effort to bring national attention back to the Mississippi River—America's most critical natural asset—and spearhead a new level of regional cooperation to make it more sustainable. As the ecological linchpin to the 31-state Mississippi River Basin, the River is responsible for creating \$400 billion worth of U.S. GDP; providing drinking water for more than 20 million; transporting 40 percent of our nation's agricultural output; and directly supporting 1.3 million jobs and millions more indirectly.

More information is available at www.mrcti.org. Contact: Jim Gwinner
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