

## The Newsletter of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission

2026 Vol 2 (issue #25)

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



It's an exciting time for all of us who rely on the rivers, and at the Port of Pittsburgh Commission. Warmer temperatures and longer days bring more than just a welcome change of season and a strong start to the busy months ahead on our waterways.

In this issue of NewsFlow, we'll feature stories that reflect both the people and partnerships that make our river system so vital. We begin by taking a closer look at Peter Stephaich's history with the PPC and his lasting impact on the Port and the inland river system. You'll hear from DJ Ryan in our "3 Rivers / 3 Questions" segment, where he shares his perspective as a PPC board member, the SPC, and the connection between the city and its waterways. We also recap our recent PPC Annual Breakfast in conjunction with the Traffic Club of Pittsburgh, which featured Mayor Corey O'Connor, where transportation and infrastructure took center stage. We also have information on the upcoming Port Infrastructure Development Program grant opportunity.

I thank you for your continued interest in and support of our rivers and the work that we do. I hope you enjoy this issue of NewsFlow.

*Mary Ann Bucci* Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission

### **Peter Stephaich Resigns Port of Pittsburgh Commission Leaving Lasting Legacy**

Peter Stephaich's impact on the inland waterways industry, and on the Port of Pittsburgh Commission in particular, spans more than three decades of steady leadership, thoughtful guidance, and deep commitment to the region's river economy.

Since joining the Board of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission in February 2000, Peter has served with distinction in multiple leadership roles, including as Chairperson and Vice-Chair. During his tenure, he helped guide the Commission through periods of both challenge and growth, consistently bringing a strategic perspective shaped by his extensive industry experience. His voice has been instrumental in advancing policies and initiatives that strengthen southwestern Pennsylvania's position as a vital hub in the nation's inland waterways system.

Peter's contributions extend far beyond board meetings. Known for his collaborative approach and willingness to share his expertise, he has long served as a trusted resource to fellow commissioners, industry stakeholders, and policy-

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### **3 RIVERS, 3 QUESTIONS**

with *DJ Ryan*



*DJ Ryan is the Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.*

**1. Hello DJ, it's great to have you in 3 Rivers / 3 Questions! For background, tell our readers a bit about yourself and your role at the Southwestern PA Commission.**

I have spent the last almost 15 years in politics and government in varied positions. I worked for the State House and in various roles in local and national campaigns. I was also an advance associate at the White House and spent five years as District Director for former Congressman and current PPC Chair Conor Lamb. I've been in my current role at SPC for just over three years.

At SPC, I run our communications, outreach, and public engagement programs and direct other strategic initiatives like

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## *Peter Stephaich (continued)*

makers alike. His ability to connect operational experience with long-term planning has left a lasting mark on the Commission's work and direction.

Throughout his career, Peter has been a leading advocate for the inland waterways industry at both the regional and national levels. His leadership roles with organizations such as Waterways Council, Inc., the American Waterways Operators, and the National Waterways Foundation reflect a deep and ongoing commitment to the sustainability and advancement of river transportation. He has also played an important role in educating public officials and the broader community about the value of the waterways system, frequently opening doors—quite literally—for firsthand experiences aboard vessels and along the river.

In addition to his industry leadership, Peter has been dedicated to mentoring the next generation, supporting workforce development, and investing in the people who keep the river system moving. His influence can be seen not only in policy and infrastructure, but in the many individuals he has guided and supported along the way.

As Peter begins the next chapter of his life, this moment also marks a significant change for the company he led for many years, Campbell Transportation Company, which has been acquired by Hines Furlong Line, Inc. While this transition represents a new direction for the business, it also underscores the strength and continuity of the industry Peter has helped shape.

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission extends its sincere gratitude to Peter Stephaich for his more than 25 years of dedicated and conscientious service. His leadership, insight, and generosity have made a lasting difference, and his legacy will continue to be felt across the region's waterways for years to come.



**Sign up for PortPitt's ImPORTant Notices to receive vital alerts regarding river conditions, USACE notices, Coast Guard notices and other information.**

Contact Matt Pavlosky [matt@portpitt.com](mailto:matt@portpitt.com)

## *3 Rivers, 3 Questions with DJ Ryan (continued)*

broadband deployment, emerging technologies like Electric Vehicles, and other important programs like freight and rivers. I love my job because it allows me to do a lot of different kinds of work - there's always something interesting happening in southwestern PA!

**2. With agencies like the Southwestern PA Commission and the Port of Pittsburgh Commission, it seems either you know us, or you've never heard of us. Tell us about the SPC, and its role in the region?**

You're very right about that! I always tell people that SPC influences so many aspects of their daily lives but they sometimes don't know we exist. It's hard to put it simply, but I'll try. SPC is the DOT's certified Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the ten-county region of Southwestern PA, including the City of Pittsburgh. We also have certifications from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the EDA.

If you want the bottom line: SPC is a regional organization controlled by the counties in SWPA. We run strategic planning around transportation and infrastructure, economic and workforce development, and any other issue that is important to the region as a whole. We're the only organization that brings all the region's leaders together to overcome common challenges and seize upcoming opportunities. We do all this work with the public's guidance and input, which is central to our planning process.

**3. Beyond serving on the Port Commission's board, you've taken an active role in supporting our rivers, such as being a key partner in STAR (Save the Allegheny River). What are your hopes for the region's river system, and its place supporting regional connectivity?**

Our rivers are everything. In addition the recreational benefits our rivers provide, they're also a huge economic opportunity. The average citizen doesn't realize the environmental benefit of moving cargo by river, or the immense system of infrastructure required to keep the system going. STAR's immediate goal is to keep the Allegheny River's lock system operational. We have had great success in that effort over the past few years. But it's so much more than that.

PPC, SPC, STAR, they all share a vision for a fully-utilized inland waterway system. One where companies take advantage of the benefits of the rivers to move cargo and ease the the burden on our roads and rail lines while helping our

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### PortPITT Hosts Breakfast in Conjunction with Traffic Club of Pittsburgh's Annual Dinner

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission hosted its Annual Breakfast Buffet on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at the Duquesne Club, in conjunction with the Traffic Club of Pittsburgh's Dinner. The event brought together more than 50 attendees, offering a valuable opportunity for shippers, service providers, business leaders, and government officials to connect and exchange ideas.

A highlight of the morning was remarks from special guest City of Pittsburgh Mayor Corey O'Connor, who shared insights on the current state of the city and its economic trajectory. He emphasized Pittsburgh's deep historical ties to its river system and underscored the continued importance of waterways in supporting commerce, industry, and regional growth.



Mayor O'Connor also spoke about his vision for the future, focusing on strengthening infrastructure, enhancing riverfront development, and fostering collaboration among public and private stakeholders. His remarks reinforced the PPC's vital role in shaping a connected and resilient regional economy.



The breakfast served not only as a networking opportunity but also as a platform for meaningful dialogue about the future of transportation and commerce in the region. Events like this continue to highlight the importance of partnerships in advancing the Port of Pittsburgh and the broader southwestern Pennsylvania community.



### 3 Rivers, 3 Questions with DJ Ryan (continued)



environment. Ensuring our rivers are better utilized for commercial use also means they'll be kept to a good recreational standard, which does even more to benefit our communities.

Many river towns like those in the Mon Valley (where I grew up) have seen economic decline in the last few decades. Imagine if a new manufacturer set up shop in Duquesne or Glassport and used our rivers to cheaply and safely move their cargo. The impact to those communities would be overwhelming! If any of your readers want to hear more about why the Mon Valley (or any river community) is a great place to set up shop, I hope they'll contact me. I have at least a few hours' worth of arguments I can make.



★ ARDC PRESENTS ★

# ROCKIN' FOR LOCKIN'

**BOATERS BASH 2026**  
Band lineup information to come

**AUGUST 1, 2026**

**THE LIGHTHOUSE MARINA**  
799 Industrial Blvd.,  
New Kensington, PA

**Allegheny River Development Corporation**  
<https://alleghenyriverdevelopment.org>





## Pittsburgh Maritime Association 2026 Scholarship Program Application Criteria

1. OBJECTIVE  
To provide financial assistance to high school seniors whose intention is to pursue a post high school education.
2. ELIGIBILITY  
To be eligible, the applicant **must** be a high school senior (or equivalent) and:
  - Have a Parent or Guardian whose **company** is a member (in good standing) of the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh.
3. TYPE OF SCHOOL  
Any formally recognized public, private, or trade institution.
4. APPLICATION PACKAGE  
Your completed application package must include:
  - a) Application
  - b) Personal essay
  - c) Parent/guardian statement
  - d) Two (2) letters of reference
  - e) A copy of high school transcript (including class ranking)
  - f) A copy of SAT and/or ACT scores (if applicable)
5. APPLICATION DEADLINE  
Applications are to be postmarked or e-mailed no later than **June 4, 2026**.  
  
Mail to: Pittsburgh Maritime Association  
4621 Easy Street  
West Mifflin, PA. 15122  
  
Email: Robert McCallister at [Rmccallister@wapgh.org](mailto:Rmccallister@wapgh.org) (email as a single .pdf document)
6. SELECTION PROCESS  
Applications will be reviewed by a minimum of three (3) members of the Pittsburgh Maritime Association.
7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
Applicants will be judged without regard to race, sex, ethnic background, religion or age.
8. SCHOLARSHIP TIME LIMIT  
The \$2,000 Scholarship will be paid directly to the student upon successful completion of the first semester/grading term. A copy of the first semester transcript must be mailed to: Pittsburgh Maritime Association, 4621 Easy, West Mifflin, PA. 15122 before a scholarship check will be mailed. The Scholarship Award must be activated within twelve (12) months following the date of the award.
9. AWARDS CEREMONY  
The Pittsburgh Maritime Association will present Scholarships to the winners at the Waterways Association "Annual Summer Picnic" Membership Meeting, Wednesday, July 8 2026, aboard at the Gateway Clipper Fleet.



## Federal Funding Opportunity Opens: FY 2026 PIDP Grants Announced

The U.S. Maritime Administration has officially opened the FY 2026 round of the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP), presenting a significant opportunity for ports and regional partners—including those across the Port of Pittsburgh system—to secure federal funding for critical infrastructure improvements.

The PIDP is a competitive discretionary grant program designed to enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of goods movement through the nation’s ports. By investing in both planning and capital projects, the program supports efforts to modernize port infrastructure, strengthen supply chains, and prepare for continued growth in freight volumes.

For FY 2026, a total of \$488.6 million in discretionary grant funding is available. This includes \$450 million allocated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), along with an additional \$38.6 million made available through annual appropriations. These funds are part of a broader \$2.25 billion commitment to the PIDP program over five years (2022–2026), underscoring the federal government’s continued focus on freight mobility and maritime infrastructure.

PIDP grants are available to a wide range of eligible applicants, including state and local governments, public agencies, port authorities, tribal entities, and multi-jurisdictional partnerships. Public-private partnerships are also encouraged, allowing collaboration with facility owners and operators to advance impactful projects.

Please note, that under the PIDP guidelines, the Port of

Pittsburgh Commission is considered a large port (more than 8 million tons of freight per year), therefore, the PPC is required to submit a Benefits Cost Analysis (BCA), AND the PPC can ONLY submit one (1) application in this funding cycle. Applicants are recommended to submit under small port status, (see below), and use a local government or municipality, economic development agency, or similar agency to submit the small port application.

Eligible projects include those that:

- Improve the loading and unloading of cargo;
- Enhance the movement of goods within and around ports;
- Support operational efficiencies; (including dredging)
- Strengthen infrastructure resiliency to environmental challenges

Importantly, the program maintains a statutory set-aside for smaller ports, ensuring that rural and emerging port communities have access to funding needed to expand capacity and support local and regional economies.

Applications for the FY 2026 PIDP grants are due by June 1, 2026, at 11:59:59 p.m. EDT. Interested applicants are encouraged to review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and begin preparations early to develop competitive proposals. The NOFO can be found here: <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/ports/port-infrastructure-development-program/pidp-fy-2026-nofo>

For additional information or questions, applicants may contact Matt Pavlosky [matt@portpitt.com](mailto:matt@portpitt.com) or Scott Harshman, [scott@portpitt.com](mailto:scott@portpitt.com) for application advice, or the Maritime Administration at [PIDPgrants@dot.gov](mailto:PIDPgrants@dot.gov).



## OUR PORTPITT TEAM

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**SCOTT HARSHMAN**  
Marketing and  
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**MIKE BRINZA**  
Operations Manager



GOOD THINGS FLOW FROM HERE

