



AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION NEWS RELEASE
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AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION PRESENTS
FIRST RAPID RESPONSE AWARD TO
MARINE SAFETY OFFICE NEW ORLEANS

Washington, DC – The American Salvage Association (ASA) awarded its first Rapid Response Award on April 29 to the United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Office (MSO) New Orleans for its role in the salvage of the *M/V Lee III*, a supply boat that collided with a container ship and sank near the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River on February 21. Five crewmembers were lost in the incident.

ASA member Bisso Marine commenced operations to remove the vessel. MSO New Orleans immediately established an open dialogue with the salvor, clearly stated all expectations and offered its full support. As the salvage operation progressed, the need to restore commerce was balanced with operational safety, recovery of the vessel's crewmembers and the protection of the environment. The MSO provided invaluable assistance in control of the river traffic and movement to the scene of the fog-bound heavy lift equipment. When diving operations were hampered by dangerously swift currents, the MSO took the initiative to request the Army Corps of Engineers to open a spillway to reduce river flow. During this highly publicized event, the MSO invited the salvor to participate in a press conference, thus providing the public greater insight into this salvage operation.

In a letter to the New Orleans MSO, ASA President Richard Fairbanks wrote, "Through its rapid response, superb management and full support of the *LEE III* salvage operation, Marine Safety Office New Orleans assured the safe and expeditious clearance of the Mississippi River and restoration of commerce vital to the Nation's economy and defense."

The American Salvage Association is a trade association promoting professionalism and improving marine casualty response in American coastal and inland waters.