

Tugboating Around the Web

It seems that tugboats rarely get respect, even online. The internet has surprisingly little content about tugboats, despite the critical role they play in the modern maritime environment. Nevertheless, as with any area of interest, some extended looking can yield a variety of websites worth checking out.

For information about current US-registered tugs, check out www.tugboatinformation.com. Content is organized by tugboat company, but if you click on “Search” you can seek out information about each boat in the database. The **Tugboat Enthusiasts Society of the Americas**, at www.tugboatenthusiastsociety.org, is compiled by member Carl Wayne. The site hasn’t been updated in a while, but it does have a section covering more than 7,000 historical tugs. The **Retired Tugboat Association**, at www.retiredtugs.org, is a new group that focuses primarily on retired and semi-retired tugs of the Pacific Northwest. Its members organize gatherings and tugboat races there, but it also has members from across the United States. You can check out its small database of historic tugs under the website’s “Boat Roster” link.

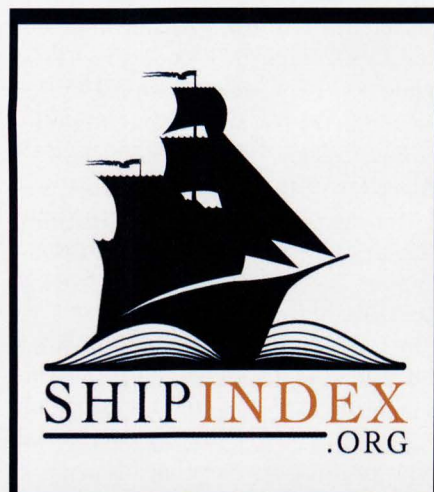
Of course, every modern tug and barge company has a web presence, mainly for providing information and support to clients and to prospective customers, but often these sites will have great images of tugs and barges at work in difficult or interesting situations, shot by professional photographers. **Crowley Maritime**, for instance, a large marine logistics company founded in 1892, has a lot of historical and current information on their website at www.crowley.com, including descriptions of their tugs and technology. **McAllister Towing**, founded in 1864, operates more than 75 tugs up and down the US seaboard. McAllister’s photo gallery at www.mcallistertowing.com highlights their tugs in action.

Private citizens have created lots of tug-related websites as well, where people compile images of tugs and ships they’ve spotted. One nice example is **Towingline.com**, created by Hans van der Ster, who has years of experience at sea in European tugs. He is now at work compiling images, stories, fleet lists, and more on his personal site. **River Ramblings** (www.wvtowboats.com/ramblings/) shares images shot by a tugboat/pushboat operator on American rivers. The number of photos is limited, but those posted on the website are very nice, and show the boats and barges in operation. The photos showing tugs operating in ice are particularly compelling images. **Pelican Passage** (www.pelicanpassage.com), compiled by Pat Folan, has uploaded hundreds of images of tugs and towboats from the 2000s, and the “Tugnet” section of the website has the largest collection of tug-related links anywhere.

TugandOSV.com (OSV refers to “off-shore vessels”), in addition to having a cleverly designed home page on which a tugboat delivers the “.com”, has back issues of its publication, *International Tug and OSV*, available in full text, along with a collection of books they publish and sell. **Lekko International**, at www.lekko.org, publishes two magazines about tugs and towing—one in Dutch, and one in English. Only a handful of back issues are available online, unfortunately. Towingline.com, mentioned above, has a free annual newsletter focusing on European tug work available through its website. The folks behind the TugandOSV.com site also sponsor two biennial conferences: Tugnology, and their international ITS Convention, which will take place in Boston in May 2016.

Another tug-related event is the **Tugboat Roundup**, an annual festival and gathering of tugboats in Waterford, NY, “gateway to the Erie Canal System,” every September (www.tugboatroundup.com).

Suggestions for other sites worth mentioning are welcome at peter@shipindex.org. See www.shipindex.org for a free compilation of over 150,000 ship names from indexes to dozens of books and journals. †



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