

New WEDA Executive Director



WEDA Appoints
Thomas M. Verna
Executive Director

The Western Dredging Association (WEDA) announced that it has appointed Board Member and Treasurer, Thomas M. Verna, as its Interim Executive Director, effective October 1, 2014. A long time WEDA member, Board Director, Treasurer, and Safety Commission Chairman, Mr. Verna knows WEDA only too well. "Tom brings to us incredible institutional knowledge, the liaison with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - one of WEDA's key partners, and an in-depth knowledge of the dredging, environmental and navigational priorities facing North and South America", said WEDA President, Ram Mohan. Mohan mentioned that WEDA's former appointee to this position, Eileen Maher, had moved on, to focus on her work at the Port of San Diego. "WEDA needed some immediate strategic focusing on its short and long term vision, and that is what I am providing to move the Association forward, and expanding the opportunities for our members across North, Central and South America", said Verna. Verna said that he has already attended the Eastern and Pacific Chapter meetings, and will be attending the Gulf Chapter meeting in November and Midwest Chapter meeting in March. He said that he has been meeting with key leaders in dredging and government relations from Mexico, Brazil, Panama, and Colombia, and hope to have several interesting announcement for members past the New Year. Verna said that he is working closely with Michael Gerhardt of DCA, and WEDA Board Director and Latin American Committee Chair, on these and some other educational outreach initiatives.

Mr. Verna began his professional career with the Memphis District, Corps of Engineers in 1974. From 1978 to 1985, he served as Chief, Dredging-Navigation Section managing dredging and marine construction operations along 355 miles of the lower Mississippi River and tributaries. He joined the staff of the Dredging Division, Water Resources Support Center in 1985 providing staff management and direction for Civil Works dredging activities. Mr. Verna served as a senior policy advisor in USACE-HQ and had staff responsibility for the Corps navigation mission, dredging program, marine construction and floating plant activities providing policy guidance and management within Civil Works. In January 2004, he was also assigned to the Lakes and Rivers Regional Integration Team (RIT) and the Operations and Regulatory Community of Practice (COP). He has written various technical and regulatory publications on topics as dredge instrumentation, hydrographic surveying, dredging program management and operations, cost engineering, AIS data integration, and dredging safety. Since 1985, he has been the dredging course proponent and instructor.

Mr. Verna has been a member of WEDA since 1979, and serves as an officer on the Board of Directors since 1991. He chartered the WEDA Safety Commission and served as its Chairman from its conception in 1996 until 2014. He was also the co-chairman of the Corps/Industry Dredging Safety Management Program Joint Committee. Mr. Verna was also awarded WEDA's "Dredger of the Year" in 2002 and 2013. In November 2006, Mr. Verna retired from federal service, and he is currently working at the USACE Navigation Data Center.