



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

# News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 12, 1999

CG 06-99

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## **Secretary Slater Officially Switches On Satellite Navigational and Positioning Systems**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater and South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson will join with Admiral James M. Loy, Commandant of the U. S. Coast Guard, to officially switch on the latest satellite-based positioning technology, a federally required system that will benefit all 50 states as well as private industry.

"President Clinton and Vice President Gore have provided visionary leadership, working vigilantly to assure that this nation will meet the needs of the 21st century," Secretary Slater said. "The implementation of these systems shows that government can and does utilize available collective participation and available talent effectively to identify, develop and apply cost-effective technology to improve the safety and the standard of living for the public, both nationally and worldwide."

The ceremony marks the official availability of the Maritime Differential Global Positioning System (MDGPS) and announces its expansion into the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System (NDGPS), which will extend the technology's benefits to all modes of the nation's transportation systems.

The Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) provides a significant advance in the application of satellite technology. By providing more precise positioning information, DGPS will enable faster emergency response and more efficient movement of people and goods, thereby promoting safety and fostering economic growth throughout all modes of the nation's transportation systems.

"NDGPS technology applied to precision farming will help farmers save money through more efficient planting and fertilizing and help them treat their land in a manner that will help preserve it for future generations," Senator Johnson said in a statement. "I am enthusiastic about the ability of our farmers to benefit from this technology and will continue to work with precision agriculture experts in South Dakota to ensure our farmers know that NDGPS is available to them."

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The Secretary noted that the Coast Guard took a theory out of the laboratory and brought it to reality through team efforts. The Coast Guard worked closely with other modes from the Department of Transportation, as well as with other government agencies and private industry, to develop and implement MDGPS and NDGPS.

Both of the systems function as enabling technologies to navigation, safety and transportation management. Since they provide more precise position identification, they reduce emergency response times on both sea and land. In addition:

- Being uniformly constructed and conforming to international standards, they can be economically applied across many components of America's commercial and essential-service sectors.
- The Coast Guard can more accurately and economically place and maintain its 50,000 navigational aids.
- The Army Corps of Engineers can increase its surveying and dredging productivity -- it already is reporting a 500 percent increase in both categories.
- Rail and land transportation industries can plan, schedule and transport people and goods more safely, effectively and economically in such a manner as to increase the overall economic productivity and growth, thereby increasing sales, employment and wages.
- Farmers can more accurately plan and plant thereby generating greater yields.

Yet, with all these advantages, the list is still not complete. Frequent discoveries surface where DGPS may enhance both safety and the quality of life.

Also attending the ceremony will be Mr. Morley Winograd, chief of Vice President Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) program. He will present to the multi-agency DGPS development teams the NPR's prestigious Hammer Award.

The ceremony is scheduled for March 15 at the U.S. Coast Guard's Telecommunications and Information Systems Command located at 7323 Telegraph Road in Alexandria, Va. The event will be hosted by the commanding officer of the Coast Guard's Navigation Center. The program begins at 10:00 a.m. with the exhibits opening at 9:30 am. For more information, please contact Lt. Lee Putnam at (703) 313-5861 or Jack O'Dell at (202) 267-6491.

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## **Coast Guard Releases Fishing Vessel Casualty Task Force Report**

The U.S. Coast Guard will hold a press conference on the release of the final report of the Fishing Vessel Casualty Task Force on Tuesday, April 6. The Task Force was assembled in January as a result of a number of fishing vessel accidents since the beginning of 1999, and to examine the effectiveness of existing Coast Guard safety programs aimed at reducing the high death rate in the commercial fishing industry.

Rear Admiral Robert C. North, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection, directed the formation of the task force. Members included representatives from the Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and representatives from the industry. Its charter included an evaluation of the recent casualties, a review the current fishing vessel safety program and past safety initiatives, and the development of a direction for government and industry.

The task force recommended both immediate and long-term solutions, including:

- coordination of fishery management with safety,
- ensuring that vessels comply with standards,
- establishment of safety of stability standards,
- establishment of operator and crew standards,
- better information for fishermen,
- improved program management, and
- research and development.

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This Task Force report will give the Coast Guard a starting point from which to seek views of the members of the Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Advisory Committee (CFIVAC), the fishing industry at large, safety professionals, interested government agencies and other stakeholders to develop an approach for improving fishing vessel safety.

The report will be officially released at a press conference at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 6 at Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City, N.J. For further information on this event, please contact Lt. Cmdr. John Fitzgerald or Allison Von Hagn at (757) 398-6272. The report will also be available on the Coast Guard web site at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/docs/fishing.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/docs/fishing.htm). effective April 5. Questions regarding the report should be directed to Cathy McDermott at (202) 267-2304.

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