

ANOTHER SHIPPING SEASON BEGINS!

The port of Alpena kicked off its 152nd navigation season last Friday with the arrival of the tug-barge INNOVATION at the LaFarge Quarry dock. The 460-foot barge loaded some 15,000 tons of bulk cement intended for delivery to Milwaukee, South Chicago and Waukegan, Illinois. She is paired with the powerful motor tug SAMUEL de CHAMPLAIN, which boasts 7,200-horsepower diesel engines. The high-efficiency INNOVATION was designed specifically to serve LaFarge's Alpena plant, the largest such cement producer in North America, supplying cement to seventeen different LaFarge docks around the Great Lakes. During the average navigation season she loads at the Alpena docks every three or four days. The integrated tug-barge combination left for Lake Michigan Friday afternoon under the command of Capt. Paul Kimbro.

Second to arrive was the city's flagship, the steamer ALPENA, commanded by Capt. Rob Moore. The ALPENA arrived early on Tuesday morning and loaded 13,900 tons of cement for South Chicago. She was built at River Rouge, Michigan in 1942 as the bulk carrier LEON FRASER, and operated for many years in the United States Steel Corporation's Pittsburgh Steamship Company before being converted to a bulk cement carrier in 1991. The ship was shortened from 622 to 503 feet at that time and given a modern self-unloading system to facilitate the carriage of cement for LaFarge. Like the INNOVATION and her companion tug, she is owned and operated by contract-carrier Inland Lakes Transportation Company, base at Muskegon, Michigan. She is also a regular visitor to Alpena's docks. The ship is driven by a 4,000 horsepower steam turbine engine and carries a crew of twenty-one.

