

### **Liberia sets all-time ship and tonnage records**

The Liberian Registry celebrated the end of 2007 having achieved a major milestone in its history when its vessel count reached 2,665 and its aggregate gross tonnage peaked at 82,165,902. This comfortably surpasses the previous record of 2,617 ships and 81.5m gt, which was achieved in the period between 1975 and 1979.

Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of LISCR, the register's US-based manager, says, "The Liberian Registry is approaching its sixty-year anniversary larger and stronger than at any point in its history. This major achievement is testament to the faith which owners and operators have in our commitment to safety and commercial excellence, the rapid responsive approach to customer service by our dedicated professional staff, and our use of technology to do the job better, faster and more accurately."

The Liberian Registry is one of the world's largest and most active shipping registers, with a long-established track record of combining the highest standards for vessels and crews with the highest standards of responsive service to owners. Scott Bergeron says "The fact that the registry now has more ships and more tonnage on its books than at any time in its history, under any management, is testimony to the professionalism of the Liberian maritime program.

"The growth we have experienced is across all markets. Liberia, for example, is the fastest-growing fleet in Greece and Germany, and has increased its Japanese-owned fleet by eighteen per cent in the past year.

"Numbers are not everything. But, in today's shipping industry, there is more pressure than ever before on owners and operators to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law. Responsible operators must be seen to be contracting with like-minded, quality service providers. This has been a key factor in the Liberian Registry's growth. An increasing number of shipowners have recognised Liberia's regulatory enforcement proficiency. The resulting operational efficiencies are simply unavailable from bureaucracy-laden flag states.

"The proof is in our world-wide performance. Flag state effectiveness is now closely monitored as part of a much tighter international shipping regulatory regime designed to improve safety, to protect the environment, and to save lives. You do not have to look too deeply into the likes of port state control figures, for example, to identify

under-performing flags, or to realise that, in many instances, quality open registers outperform traditional national flags.

“The days of outdated thinking about open registries are over. Independent analytical reports such as the Round Table of international shipping association’s Guidelines on Flag State Performance accurately judge registers on their performance. The emphasis is now on quality, safety, efficiency, environmental awareness and treatment of seafarers.

“The Liberian Registry is proud to have broken new records, and is confident that it will reach new highs, given the commitment it already has from key markets and in the newbuilding sector. And it is delighted that its continued growth goes alongside its consistent appearance as one of the world’s best-performing flags as judged by recognised industry criteria.”

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