



## Duluth-an Inland Seaport

Donald C. Wright

**For more than a century the Port of Duluth, Minnesota,** with its sister harbor in Superior, Wisconsin, has been Mid-America's gateway to the world, first with fir and timber, then with the great bulk cargoes: iron ore, grain, and coal. An international port deep in the continent at the western tip of Lake Superior, Duluth-Superior provides world access to a half-million square miles of unmatched resources and purchasing power through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system. Each year the port moves more than 30 million tons of iron ore, grain, cement, limestone, metal products, machinery, twine, farm products, and coal and coke on some 300 oceangoing ships plus hundreds of "Lakers" which ply

the Great Lakes. Although 2,340 miles from the Atlantic, the port is just 14 days sailing time from Scandinavia, Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, West Africa, and South America. It is the largest port on the Great Lakes and the 11th largest in the nation.

Long before the Welland Canal or the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, fur trade vessels, large and small, rowed or set sail from Duluth bound for Canada, inland U.S. ports and, eventually, to open seas; but the port's major development began in the 1800's with the advent of prairie wheat growing and the building of the railroads. Congress authorized the first inner-harbor improvements in 1871, and the port began to develop rapidly. Today, iron ore and taconite pellets from Minnesota's historic Mesabi Iron Range are the Twin Ports' leading shipments, followed by grains, grain

The author is with the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth, 1200 Port Terminal Dr., Duluth Minn. 55816.

products, and coal. The first iron ore docks, built in 1892, opened modern era developments which have continued to the present. In 1987, the two ore terminals, operated by Burlington Northern (Superior) and Duluth Missabe and Iron Range railroads, loaded about 18,000,000 long tons of taconite pellets—processed iron ore for the nation's steel mills.

Foreign "salties" and U.S.-flag lake carriers enter and leave by the harbor's two entrances: the natural Superior entry and the man-made Duluth ship canal where vessels pass under the unique and world-famed Aerial Lift Bridge. The Duluth-Superior harbor covers 19 square miles of land and water and 17 miles of dredged channels varying from 21 to 27 feet deep. Three miles of upper channel have been designated for deepening and widening. Along the 49 miles of waterfront are 66 public and private berths handling all forms of commerce from bulk to packaged general cargo. The port is served by five major railroads and several interstate highway systems.

Private grain terminals operated by Archer-Daniels-Midland, Cargill, General Mills, Harvest States Cooperatives, International Multifoods and Peavey (ConAgra) are served by 12 loading berths at the elevators and can store more than 70 million bushels. In a year, over 200 million bushels of agricultural products pass through the port bound for overseas, Canada and domestic destinations. Algeria is the largest single destination for bulk grain from the Twin Ports, accounting for about one-third of the total. Barley exports showed a marked increase in 1987 as did soybeans. The Clure Public Marine Terminal, operated by Meehan Seaway Service, is the port's general cargo facility, loading and unloading bagged, boxed, and crated commodities. More than 6,000 lineal feet of dock space with berths dredged to 30

feet are available. Terminal facilities also include 315,000 square feet of warehouse storage, a 1.8 million gallon tank farm for liquid storage and Minnesota's only operating Foreign Trade Zone. The Port Authority's commodities bagging plant—the only one of its kind on the Great Lakes—is located adjacent to the General Mills elevator near the Port Terminal for sacking bulk grains, seeds and beans. Three government Food for Peace shipments to needy nations were allocated to the Port of Duluth last year because of the bagging plant: durum wheat for September shipment to Somalia and Ethiopia and spring wheat for Nepal. The facility also is available for commercial cargoes. In addition, the Port Terminal handles bagged grain products, pinto beans, dry milk, twine, steel plate and coils, machinery, project cargoes, and other imports and exports. The Superior Midwest Energy Terminal is the port's major coal loading facility, transferring Montana low-sulphur coal into 1,000-foot long lake vessels for shipment to domestic users. For the 11th straight year the ultra modern facility set a new record in 1987, loading more than 11,000,000 tons.

A recent analysis shows the Port of Duluth-Superior generated nearly 3,000 jobs and a total economic impact on the region of \$160 million in 1986. A transit port, it imports and exports cargoes produced or consumed at points far removed from the harbor. Most agricultural and mining users are within 250 miles but some, like Montana coal mines, are more than 1,000 miles away. Duluth-Superior, just hours overland from Denver, Fargo, Bismarck, Sioux Falls, Winnipeg, Omaha, and Minneapolis-St. Paul, is a crossroads of traffic to and from major world ports—five days to the Atlantic from the Great Lakes waterways through the St. Lawrence Seaway. A major world port for America's heartland.

## Innovation in Natural Resource Management—the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program

Wayne A. Edgerton

### Background

The Reinvest in Minnesota Resources Act of 1986 has been called by some the most significant agriculture and natural resource legislation ever passed in Minnesota. The concept of "reinvesting" in Minnesota's natural resources was the brain-child of the 1984 Governor's Citizen Commission to Promote Hunting and Fishing in Minnesota. Composed of 20 men and women with varied experience in business, natural resources, and legislation, the Commission's goal was to develop a plan for improving and promoting hunting, fishing, and tourism opportunities in the state.

Outdoor recreation is a one billion dollar industry in Minnesota. However, the Commission reported that a combina-

tion of increasing human population, decreasing wildlife habitat, and inadequate natural resource funding was severely limiting recreation and tourism opportunities and diminishing the overall quality of life. Adding insult to injury, the report also concluded that "Minnesota sportsmen annually export millions of dollars, making them the single most important source of out-of-state license and tourist money to almost every state and Canadian province on our borders." The report concluded that "it is good economics to invest in the outdoor recreation industry, one of the largest industries of our state; and we think it is a legitimate request that the equivalent of the 6% sales tax on an industry that produces a billion dollars of revenue per year be reinvested in that resource." The 6% sales tax is equivalent to \$60 million per year. The Commission recommended that this amount be reinvested annually for 10 years. Thus, Reinvest In Min-



Wayne A. Edgerton is the RIM Reserve Coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 West Plato Boulevard, St. Paul, Minn. 55107.