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Norwegian Group Awards Heidenreich's Innovation

Greenwich resident Per Heidenreich will soon have another honor to hang on his office wall. The Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce will bestow the NACC Achievement Award to Heidenreich next month for his accomplishments as founder of Darien-based Heidenreich Marine Inc., an international company controlling a fleet of 40 oil tankers.

Heidenreich, a highly regarded member of the Norwegian-American business community and a leader in the international maritime industry, founded his company in 1984.

The company is the general agent for Star Tankers Inc., a revenue sharing pool established in 1998 with 10 participants from Greece, the United States, Singapore and Finland, specializing in transport of crude and fuel oil.

In January, Heidenreich Marine started Dorado Tankers Inc., a global tanker pool controlling 11 tankers, serving principally the Far East with vessels carrying 250,000 to 300,000 barrels of clean or refined petroleum products.

"The very existence of these successful pools recognizes the dynamic maritime industry career, the reputation for business acumen and personal integrity for which Per Heidenreich is known and the enormous regard in which he is held by the international maritime community," said Inger M. Tallaksen, general manager of the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce. "We consider him to be a pillar of the Norwegian-American community."

Heidenreich, who will receive the award June 6 during the chamber's spring ball at the Tavern on the Green in New York City, is a trustee of the Norwegian Seamen's Church and a director of the chamber.

The honor came as a surprise to Heidenreich, who said he knew nothing about his selection. "I was frankly as surprised as anyone. They told me after I got off an airplane from Europe," said Heidenreich, who finds time to volunteer for Kids in Crisis and the United Way.

"We who are fortunate should help. It's a growing organization. Unfortunately, there's a need. I think it's an incredible, worthwhile cause," Heidenreich, 57, said.

Heidenreich's credentials were hard to ignore, said chamber President Oivind Lorentzen, also president of Northern Navigation in Greenwich.

"He's a great example of a Norwegian who has built a business in the United States. He brought to the country the quality standards Norwegians pride themselves in," Lorentzen said. "He's the kind of guy you'd like to see do well."

Heidenreich oversees a staff of 43 in offices in the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore. Last year, his vessels lifted nearly 700 cargoes and generated more than \$300 million in freight revenues.

Heidenreich has had great success in convincing companies to pool their fleets, said Donald Frost, president of the Connecticut Maritime Association. "Pooling is a super idea. It was a timing situation. He was one of the top people to put it together," said Frost, attributing Heidenreich's success to his use of technology to provide high-speed reports to pool members.

The success of Heidenreich's efforts also has caught the attention of shipping publications, including Marine Money in Stamford. "We've been watching the company closely. Per has broken new ground. He's done something people haven't been able to do in the past. He's captured the benefits of consolidation while still allowing ship owners to be ship owners," said Matthew McCleery, president of Marine Money.

Also honored on June 6 will be Norwegian Liv Arnesen and American Ann Bancroft who spent 94 days skiing 1,717 miles across Antarctica earlier this year.

Based in New York City, the 86-year-old chamber has 10 regional offices throughout the United States. It originated the award to recognize accomplishments exemplifying the Norwegian-American relationship sustained through business, social and cultural ties.