



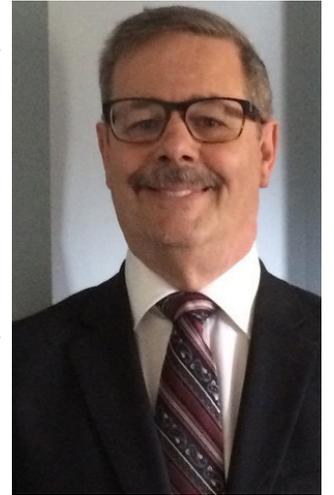
ST. LAWRENCE  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL

## INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

### GERRY CARTER, RETIRED PRESIDENT, CANADA STEAMSHIP LINES

*Mr. Carter has held various executive positions within CSL since joining the company as Director, Information Systems in February 1991. He subsequently held the positions of Director, Labour Relations and Communications (October 1992) and Director, Human Resources and Administration (August 1995) and was promoted to Vice-President, Administration in October 1996.*

*Mr. Carter was appointed Vice-President, Finance and Administration of the CSL Group in August 1997 and took over as Executive Vice-President & Chief Operating Officer of Canada Steamship Lines in January 2001. He was President of CSL from April 2002 until his retirement on March 31, 2012. Mr. Carter also served on the Board of Canada Steamship Lines Inc. and CSL International Inc.*



*During his time with CSL, Mr. Carter also served the industry in the following capacities: Chairman, Canadian Shipowners Association (CSA), Chairman, Standard Compensation Act Liability Association (SCALA), Executive committee, Chamber of Maritime Commerce (CMC), Co-President, Green Marine, Co-Chair, Marine Transportation Advisory Council (MTAC), Member, Transport Quebec Forum de concertation, Board of Directors, Great Ships Initiative (GSI), Board of Directors, Ontario Marine Transportation Forum (OMTF), Board of Directors, Marine Delivers, Advisory Council, Georgian College, Board of Directors, International Chamber of Shipping*

#### *Current Engagements:*

*Chairman Ecycle Solutions (electronic recycling)*

*Chairman Saint Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation*

*Representing Province of Quebec (mandate finishes June 23, 2020)*

**Question 1: You have always had the marine industry's development and recognition at heart. In the current context of the COVID-19 crisis, what are the first comments or impressions that come to your mind when we see all of the work done in recent months?**

**Answer 1:** Let me begin by saying that the COVID-19 pandemic is by far the most serious and destructive event that the world has faced since I started my career in the marine industry in 1979. Over the years, I've experienced recessions, climate change and the aftermath of 9-11. But none of these compare to what we are living through today.



## ST. LAWRENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

My very first impression is the pride that I feel in seeing governments, industry and the public all working together to get through this crisis while minimizing its impact on our lives.

Marine transportation in the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes corridor and Far North regions is an essential service, delivering the various raw materials and products to keep the economy running.

This involves many partnerships between carriers, shippers, ports, the Seaway, shore logistics, pilots and thousands of hardworking employees, both at sea and on shore, who are working selflessly to make the supply chain operate, with the overriding priority of keeping everyone safe and healthy.

**Question 2: When you headed CSL, you had to deal with the 2008 financial crisis. What were the main challenges you faced and how did you overcome them? Do you think that the 2008 financial crisis helped equip today's managers to face the current pandemic and its economic impacts?**

**Answer 2:** During the financial crisis of 2008, I was President of Canada Steamship Lines, the domestic shipping company within the CSL Group. The company's philosophy at the time was to have long-term contracts with contractual minimum volumes thereby protecting us somewhat from the dramatic highs and lows that the shipping industry around the world was facing. Volumes did decline, however, forcing us to temporarily lay up two to three ships.

Our decision, at the time, was to weather the storm and ensure that we kept all of our key shore staff and key

seagoing staff. We estimated that within three to six months we would return to full operation and keeping our people was essential. This strategy served us very well as we had all our ships sailing within five months and lost no key people. Because of the limited effect of the 2008 financial crisis, no substantial changes were made that could have prepared the company for the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Question 3: In your opinion, as soon as the COVID-19 crisis is over, what will be the main issues and opportunities facing the marine industry?**

**Answer 3:** The post-COVID-19 world will most likely be a very different place since the new reality is that a new pandemic can occur again without warning. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is not a once-in-a-lifetime event. During this pandemic, companies have learned that working from remote locations is not only feasible but can be more efficient. I believe that, going forward, companies will be reducing their large offices and can take advantage of a smaller footprint. Employees working from home or a remote location will not have to spend 2-3 hours a day commuting to work and should be able to increase their life balance.

Also more reliance on teleconferencing would reduce business travel, which is very time-consuming and not an effective use of time. Both of these changes also have a positive impact on the environment: having less people commuting and travelling around the world. The rapid spread of COVID-19 around the world was due to people travelling from infected areas to unaffected areas as well as large offices with major risks of exposure and contamination.



**Question 4: Numerous signals indicate that governments will want to become more autonomous and take advantage of local supplies, based on relaunching a greener economic. How do you think the industry should position itself in this context?**

**Answer 4:** As I said previously, COVID-19 is not a once-in-a-lifetime event. It is, therefore, essential that governments, both provincial and federal, ensure that local sources of necessary goods and materials are developed and put into place. As we have seen during COVID-19, relying on foreign nations for essential supplies is not reliable for either quality or supply.

As concerns the movement of essential cargos, the marine industry, which is already recognized as the most economical and environmentally sustainable mode of transportation, must be prepared and in a position to provide uninterrupted marine transportation services in the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes corridor and the Far North regions since it is an essential service, delivering the various raw materials and products to keep the economy running, especially during periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

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I would encourage the Québec government, with its Maritime Vision, to collaborate with shippers, carriers, ports, the Seaway and key associations such as SODES and Green Marine in order to move forward with short-sea shipping and sustainable transportation. ”

The Maritime Vision must then be promoted to both the province of Ontario and the federal government in order that it be effective throughout the St Lawrence/ Great Lakes corridor and the Far North regions.