

# Turn Services Christens Mv. American Pharoah



—photos courtesy of Turn Services

The mv. American Pharoah was formerly the John Roberts of the Florida Marine Transporters fleet.

**BY FRANK MCCORMACK**

On a windy February 15 afternoon at New Orleans' Woldenberg Park on the east bank of the Mississippi River, Turn Services, the Crescent City-based independent fleet and shifting company founded in 1990, celebrated the christening of the company's 23rd towboat, the mv. American Pharoah.

The mv. American Pharoah, like other Turn Services vessels, is named after a star thoroughbred racehorse—in this case the 2015 American Horse of the Year. In 2015, American Pharoah won the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes—the American Triple

Crown—along with the Breeders' Cup Classic. In doing so, American Pharoah became the first horse in history to win all four, called the grand slam of American horse racing.

"Naming a boat after a famous racehorse is something we've done since Frank Morton and I talked in 2004," said David Fennelly, chairman of Associated Terminals and Turn Services, recalling a conversation with Morton just after the acquisition of Turn Services. "Frank said, 'Don't you like racehorses as much as I do? What about racehorses?'"

"Never thinking we'd have more than

11 boats, we decided on Triple Crown winners," Fennelly continued. "That sounded like a great idea at the time."

With its fleet growing beyond a dozen, Turn Services expanded its name pool to include historic horses, not just Triple Crown winners. With American Pharoah becoming the 12th Triple Crown winner and the only Grand Slam winner, Turn Services gained not only an additional potential name but also the chance to honor one of the greatest horses of all time.

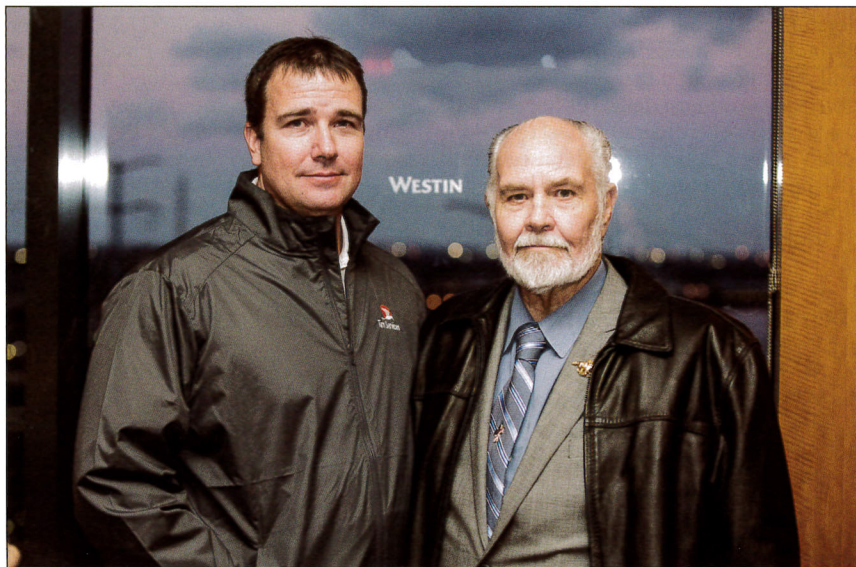
"American Pharoah not only won the Triple Crown," Fennelly said. "Then he goes on and breaks the track record at

Kenneland [site of the 2015 Breeders' Cup] by 5 seconds, running it in just over 2 minutes.

"He's now standing in Lexington, Ky., at Ashford Stud," Fennelly added. "He has 180 mares and foals, and that's for about \$100,000 a pop. You do the math."

Just like its namesake, the mv. American Pharoah stands above its peers in the Turn Services fleet. At 120 feet by 34 feet with an 11-foot draft and rated at 4,000 hp., the mv. American Pharoah is the largest towboat to date in the company's fleet. Previously called the mv. John Roberts, the American Pharoah was built at Hill-

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Chad Leeper, captain aboard the mv. American Pharoah, and his father, Jerry Leeper, former captain aboard the Turn Services mv. Secretariat.



The American Pharoah is powered by twin Cat 3516 diesels.





Wheelhouse.



Galley in the mv. American Pharoah.

## Turn Services

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man Barge & Construction Company in 1977. The American Pharoah is powered by Caterpillar 3516 tier 3 engines mated to Reintjes WWA873 reduction gears with a gear ratio of 7.087:1. Ship's power comes from a pair of John Deere 6081 engines paired with Magna Plus 431PS16202 generators.

On deck and in the engine room, the American Pharoah has the feel of a hefty, classic towboat. But thanks to a refit done at FMT Shipyard & Repair LLC, the marine construction division of Florida Marine Transporters, the

American Pharoah boasts new paint and Turn Services emblems, new electronics and a totally redesigned wheelhouse and galley. It was a familiar project for FMT Shipyard: The American Pharoah (née John Roberts) was previously part of Florida Marine's fleet.

Vendors recognized for playing a role in the refurbishment of the American Pharoah include Bayou Safety & Supplies, Bon Marche, Carboline Company, Commerce Bank, Dale's Welding, Donovan Marine, Eagle Control Systems, Gretna Glass, Hammerhead Construction, Hydra Force, IC Electric, National Aqua Pressure, Schuyler Maritime, Sea-Trac Offshore Services, Simplex Americas and Sur-

face Systems.

The mv. American Pharoah has accommodations for eight and will regularly carry a crew of seven, transporting products between Baton Rouge and Myrtle Grove, La.

Speaking to the large crowd gathered for the American Pharoah's christening, Turn Services President Mario Muñoz honored James Buky, senior vice president-sales and logistics at Turn Services, to whom the mv. American Pharoah was dedicated.

"Ladies and gentlemen, today is a special day for Turn Services," Muñoz said. "Not only are we here to christen our flagship, the mv. American Pharoah, but we are also here to honor an industry legend."

Buky, a native of Jeffersonville, Ind., served in the U.S. Army as a typist in Athens, Greece, and as a member of the U.S. Army bowling team, Muñoz said. Back in the States, Buky got his start in the maritime industry in 1965 with American Commercial Barge Line (ACBL). He quickly moved from logistics to sales, with stops in St. Paul, Minn., in 1972, New Orleans in 1975, and the company's headquarters in Jeffersonville in 1977. He eventually was promoted to senior vice president of sales and marketing for ACBL. He retired in 1995 and moved to Mandeville, La.

"I remember starting out my own career at ACBL long after Jim had retired," Muñoz said. "It was as if his ghost was still walking around that office. His name still came up almost daily. His fingerprints were still on every lucrative deal they ever did. People would always reminisce about the Jim Buky days. If that's not legend, I don't know what is."

Buky started with Turn Services on

March 17, 2008, and in the time since his hiring, Turn Services had added fleeting operations, barge cleaning and repair service locations, eight crew boats and 15 towboats, Muñoz said.

"He will always lend a hand to anyone he can," Muñoz said. "He believes the customer deserves service and understands the company needs to profit. He always finds the middle ground to make both groups happy. The word 'legend' sometimes gets overused in this day and age. But Jim is certainly the epitome of an industry legend."

Muñoz called Buky not just a legend but also an icon and rock star, calling him the "Mick Jagger of our industry."

"Fifty-two years have passed since he was first hired in the industry, and his schedule is still the most daunting of any salesperson I know," Muñoz said. "His energy is boundless."


Buky conceded his career has been quite a ride.

"Needless to say, it was a great adventure going from dispatcher to senior VP at ACBL," Buky said. "Now at Turn, I can't say enough to thank Frank, David, Mario and Gary for allowing me to be part of their team."

"This is 23 boats, but I really believe the best at Turn Services is yet to come," he said. "There better be a lot more Triple Crown horses, because we're going to add a lot more."


After a blessing for the boat and crew, Buky and his wife, Dale, climbed aboard the mv. American Pharoah. Once aboard, Dale Buky smashed a bottle of champagne over the railing, officially christening the vessel into the Turn Services fleet.

*Note: For more pictures from the mv. American Pharoah christening, see the WJ Photo Page on the inside back cover.*



# CONGRATULATIONS, TURN SERVICES

We're proud to have refurbished the mv. American Pharoah.



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## Turn Services Adds Mv. Bold Ruler To Fleet

Turn Services, a New Orleans-based fleeting and shifting firm, recently purchased a towboat, the mv. Elizabeth Ann, and changed the name to Bold Ruler.

The twin-screw vessel was built in 1974 by Bergeron Machine Shop. It measures 70 by 30 feet and is powered by Caterpillar C32 II diesel engines rated 1,500 hp. total. Turn Services bought it

from CHS Inc., Belle Chasse, La.

Bold Ruler was an American Thoroughbred Hall of Fame racehorse that won the 1957 Preakness Stakes and was named the 1957 Horse of the Year.

Turn Services will use the boat in fleet service at the CHS Harvest States grain elevator at Mile 61.5 on the Lower Mississippi River, said Mike Marshall, senior vice president-operations.