



# MERCHANTS EXCHANGE

MERCHANTS EXCHANGE  
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## Press Release

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*For Immediate Release*

### Merchants Exchange Announces New Executive Director



July 13, 2023 – Portland, Oregon – The Merchants Exchange Board of Directors is pleased to announce the selection of Mr. Curtis Cannizzaro as the new Executive Director of the Merchants Exchange.

“Curtis brings with him a wealth of Exchange and Association Management experience to the role.” Todd Krout, Merchants Exchange Board President says.

Cannizzaro’s maritime background in spill response along the Columbia River, as well as his experience in leadership, business administration, partnership development and strategic planning are valuable assets to the organization. This experience, combined with a deep understanding of the Merchants Exchange’s core values, operations, and strategic goals, will be instrumental in driving the progress, growth, and success of the Merchants Exchange, while fulfilling the needs of its members and stakeholders.

Mr. Cannizzaro’s transition into the role of Executive Director began July 10, 2023. As Executive Director, he will assume a broad range of responsibilities including the day-to-day operations responsibility for the organization, strategic leadership, team management, financial oversight, service development and association management.

“I am truly grateful to support the Merchants Exchange, and the Maritime Industry as a whole, as the Executive Director. With the incredible team of staff at the Merchants Exchange I know that we can continue to deliver that same valued contribution to the Maritime Community. I look forward to developing new ways to improve how we are able to meet those goals and continue to build on the relationships that make this region so unique and special,” says Cannizzaro.

Cannizzaro currently serves as the General Manager of Clean Rivers Cooperative and will continue to assume General Manager responsibilities during this transition until recruitment for a suitable replacement can be finalized.

An integral member of Merchants Exchange staff since 2015, he has previously held the roles of: Assistant Manager, Maritime Fire & Safety Association (MFSA), Business Manager, Clean Rivers Cooperative, Program Manager, Fire Protection Agencies Advisory Council (FPAAC), and Administrative Coordinator, Clean Rivers Cooperative. In each of these roles, he focused on ensuring effective business operations, engaging with members, addressing regulatory issues, and fostering partnerships with regional associations and federal agencies including the United States Coast Guard, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Ecology, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Mr. Cannizzaro holds a B.A. in Business Administration from Bethany College with extensive additional coursework completed in FEMA ICS (Incident Command System), and federal grants management. He is actively engaged in numerous committees, boards, associations, and workgroups focused on the maritime industry. He is currently serving as Board Treasurer, Association of Petroleum Industry Co-op Managers (APICOM), Board Member, Lower Columbia Region Harbor Safety Committee (LCRHSC), Future Environmental Leaders Council Committee, Spill Control Association of America (SCAA).

As only the 6th Executive Director of the Merchants Exchange since 1879, he succeeds Elizabeth “Liz” Wainwright who will retire on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 after 27 years of dedicated service.

“The successful leadership and guidance that Liz Wainwright has provided to the organization cannot be understated and I recognize the high level of service that has been provided by her and the staff to this point,” Cannizzaro says.

The Merchants Exchange Board of Directors expresses gratitude to Liz for her many years of service. Her leadership has set the Exchange on a course for success well into the future.

Please join us in welcoming Curtis Cannizzaro as Executive Director of the Merchants Exchange.

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#### About Merchants Exchange:

From our beginning days of reporting ship movements through watchstanders with telescopes and binoculars in 1879, to our current 24/7/365 Marine Operations Center, Merchants Exchange is proud to be a cornerstone of maritime heritage along the Lower Columbia River. The Exchange serves as a hub of vessel information and knowledge sharing and as a hub for local industry social networking activities. We are proud of our 144-year legacy of service to the maritime industry along the Columbia River.