



MISSISSIPPI STATE PORT AUTHORITY AT GULFPORT

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Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS FOR STATE PORT'S RESTORATION

Gulfport, Miss. – July 9, 2009 – Today the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA) at Gulfport officially kicked off construction on the first phase of its restoration plan with a “Ground-Making” ceremony at the Port’s West Pier.

Governor Haley Barbour; Don Allee, executive director and CEO of the MSPA; and the MSPA’s five member Board of Commissioners – John Rester, Frances Turnage, Lenwood “Lenny” S. Sawyer, Jr., Jim Simpson and Frank Wilem – joined a host of other dignitaries and guests to mark the occasion.

“This Port of Gulfport project is a vital component of Mississippi’s comprehensive plan to recover from the worst natural disaster in American history. From the early days after Hurricane Katrina we knew housing restoration, economic recovery, and infrastructure repair would be critical to our goal of coastal renaissance, and the port project touches all three,” Governor Barbour said.

“While 70 percent of funds awarded through the Community Development Block Grant program were dedicated to helping restore the housing stock — including affordable housing for low and moderate income families — the remaining funds are at work rebuilding our economy and repairing our infrastructure. The port project will ensure that the community of Gulfport and the port itself are protected against future storm surges, and provide much-needed jobs that will, in turn, help revive South Mississippi’s economy,” said Governor Barbour.

During the Port’s Ground-Making ceremony, the Governor also announced that a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) has been issued to the Port of Gulfport. Following a thorough technical review, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued the CLOMR, which provides the Port with the authorization to initiate design to raise its base ground elevation to 25 feet above sea level.

“Raising the Port’s elevation will help protect the Port and the Coast from future storms,” said Allee. Our plan is also to maximize the potential of the port to meet the market needs of the future – in a way that will create more jobs and add more revenue to the state’s economy.”

The Port’s construction progress can be tracked online at portofthefuture.com. Viewers can scroll down the home page to view live video from the Port’s construction web camera, which is mounted on the roof of the Hancock Bank Plaza building.

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For more information about the MSPA’s operations and facilities or the Port of Gulfport’s Restoration Program, visit www.shipmspa.com or www.portofthefuture.com, or contact Don Allee at 228-865-4300 or dra@shipmspa.com.