



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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The Port of South Louisiana hosted a site visit by U.S. Department of Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Ana Guevara recently at its Guesthouse at the Globalplex Intermodal Terminal. The purpose of the site visit was to discuss the Port and its importance in the U.S. and international trade markets. Issues covered included port infrastructure and facilities, commodities, security, barge and vessel traffic flow, and funding available at the federal level.

Presentations on the Port's infrastructure, facilities, commodities, and security were made by Deputy Director Henry Sullivan, Business Development Director Linda Prudhomme, and Operations Director Mitch Smith. Other presentations included one by Captain Chris Rieder of the New Orleans-Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots Association on the contributions of this Mississippi River corridor to the economy, and Sharon Balfour of the Louisiana Department of Transportation on the remaining Louisiana ports.

DAS Guevara was not only interested to learn about the Port, but its situation in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Deputy Director Sullivan promptly let Guevara know that not only was the Port of South Louisiana back to capacity within days of the hurricane, but that staff at various levels helped out the three New Orleans area ports. "In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we assisted our neighboring ports in numerous ways including security, shipping, temporary operations, communication and more, said Sullivan. Today, we have a much stronger relationship with the other ports because of it."

The news was met with great excitement from Guevara. She offered to assist the Port of South Louisiana to communicate this information to the world, not only now but in the future during emergency situations. "The Department of Commerce can communicate that your port was resilient after the hurricane and is contributing to the world economy, said Guevara. We can help establish confidence in the shippers, manufacturers and purchasers of goods in the maritime industry, she added."

The two entities agreed to work together to establish a process for effectively communicating what is occurring (in real time) in the port's 54-mile district during emergency situations so that the world will have firsthand knowledge. "This communication tool could become a model for other ports around the country," said Guevara.

Operations Director Mitch Smith described one of the ways in which the Port can communicate in real time during an emergency situation. A new state-of-the-art security vessel with video feedback and the ability to link to any kind of communication device in the world will arrive soon at the port's marine operations center. "This boat was designed with the same technology as the Hubble Space Shuttle," said Smith.

The meeting adjourned with DAS Guevara thanking everyone for their presentations, telling them that her eyes had been opened to the Port's economic contributions to the region and the entire country.



Left to right: Linda Prudhomme, Port of South Louisiana; Capt. Chris Rieder, NO-BR Steamship Pilots Association; Ed Peterson, Louisiana River Pilots Association; Henry Sullivan, Port of South Louisiana; DAS Ana Guevara, U.S. Dept. of Commerce; Donald van de Werken, U.S. Department of Commerce; Sharon Balfour, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development; Ardyn Thriffiley, Port of South Louisiana; and Mitch Smith, Port of South Louisiana.