



## NEWS UPDATE

# PORT MANATEE SIGNS STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH THE PANAMA CANAL

On May 18, 2009, Port Manatee fulfilled its pledge to maximize the advantage of its proximity as the closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the Panama Canal by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Panama Canal Authority (ACP).

Port Manatee Executive Director David L. McDonald PPM® and ACP Administrator and CEO Alberto Alemán Zubieta agreed to a two-year strategic alliance to achieve increased trade by soliciting shippers worldwide through collaborative marketing efforts and information sharing.

Port Manatee is the 10<sup>th</sup> member of an exclusive fraternity of U.S. ports with Panama Canal MOUs including: the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Georgia Ports Authority, the South Carolina State Ports Authority, the Virginia Port Authority, Massport and the ports of Miami, Tampa, Houston and New Orleans. Port Manatee is the only emerging container port in the group.

The accord provides the framework for the ACP and Port Manatee to work together in a series of activities promoting both the canal and the port. It demonstrates each organization's commitment to encourage increased trade and meet the unique needs of today's maritime and shipping industries.

Port Manatee intends to utilize the MOU as a platform to launch a targeted marketing initiative aimed at attracting container lines, third-party logistics providers and distribution center and warehouse developers to and around the port.



*Port Manatee Executive Director David L. McDonald PPM® (right) and ACP Administrator and CEO Alberto Alemán Zubieta commemorate the signing of an accord between the two organizations to increase trade through joint marketing and information sharing.*

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Essential groundwork has already been made to jumpstart this effort by the Manatee County Port Authority and Manatee County government, which cooperated to create the Port Manatee Encouragement Zone (EZ). The EZ features 3,700 acres of privately held land at Port Manatee's front gate, creating a unique intermodal distribution development opportunity. Local impact fees have been reduced or eliminated in the EZ, based on the type of development and quality and number of jobs created.

Plans to preserve the port's unrivaled interstate highway connectivity for the EZ are well underway with a proposed east-west connector road to Interstate 75. The Florida Department of Transportation is midway through a Project Design and Environment study to determine the preferred alignment for the new road, which will connect with U.S. 41 at the port's entrance.

Supporting these efforts, the Florida Legislature passed a bill earlier this year to extend Port Manatee's exemption from rules governing Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). Developments within the EZ that might otherwise be subject to restrictive DRI rules are spared the years-long process of permitting, speeding new projects forward.

"In anticipation of this opportunity with the ACP, Port Manatee has approached its master planning process in an accretive way, one step at a time," McDonald said. "In the last decade, we've increased the port's capacity by 50 percent at a cost of \$150 million."

Next on the port's agenda is a \$750 million project, which will dramatically increase its container capacity to levels approaching one million annually.



*Port Manatee is the closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the Panama Canal.*



*As the \$5.25 billion expansion of the Panama Canal speeds to its 2014 completion deadline, the existing canal remains open to uninterrupted vessel traffic.*

