

**ZEUS MODU Project Summary**  
**Port Freeport**  
**Lisa McMichael, Environmental Coordinator**  
**Email: [mcmichael@portfreeport.com](mailto:mcmichael@portfreeport.com)**  
**Phone: (979) 233-2667 (Ext. 4322)**

Port Freeport, through a collaborative effort with several governmental and non-governmental organizations, successfully organized the decontamination and removal of the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) Zeus, an abandoned “jack up barge”. The rig posed an imminent threat of pollution to the Freeport Harbor Channel and surrounding areas.

The unit was used extensively as a drilling unit in the 1980s then converted to salvage/construction service. The unit has been cold-stacked for more than 16 years at the former Quintana Marine Yard on Quintana Island. The unit extends into the Freeport Harbor Channel. Petroleum products on the unit included diesel, and lube oil. The unit was abandoned by the owner in 1991 and was leaking hydraulic fluid and other petroleum products as well as being in poor structural condition. The rig was an imminent threat to the environment, economy, and security in the Freeport Harbor Channel and surrounding areas.

The project fulfills the following six AAPA awards criteria as summarized below:

**Benefits:** The project has benefited the environment, economy, and security of the region, and the community. First, due to an increased risk of additional contamination, both water and property, the rig went through a thorough decontamination which was overseen by Port Freeport, Brazoria County, and the Texas General Land Office (TGLO), along with other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Second, the demolition and disposal of the rig removed the risk of the rig falling and blocking the channel thus preventing ships from passing into Port Freeport and the surrounding chemical and petroleum complexes. Third, the project was located within a quarter mile of the Brazoria County Park at Quintana and various recreational areas. Additionally, the collaboration benefited local junior high school students as they tracked and participated in the project from the onset.

**Independent Involvement:** The Port’s Executive Management, Engineering and Construction Department, including the Environmental Coordinator worked in unison with multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the community to assist in this project. Also, the Port provided and participated in training sessions and community education efforts regarding this project. Additionally, the Port contracted professional consulting services to conduct an Environmental Assessment of the adjacent upland property.

**Creativity:** The team effort fostered by the Port enabled the project to proceed in an organized and safe fashion. Due to the multiple aspects of the project, expertise was brought in from numerous sources through successful communication efforts.

**Results:** the overall results of the project went beyond removal of hazard but also included the collaboration of the Port, local, state and federal government agencies and further opened communication channels within the community.

**Cost Effectiveness:** in the long run the benefits from the decontamination and removal of the Zeus will far exceed the \$2 million cost to remove the rig. The economic impact of just one day of harbor channel inaccessibility could amount to \$19 million.

**Transfer of Technology:** While this type of project is not uncommon, the methodologies, including planning, public communication/collaboration and use as an educational tool can be passed on to other ports with similar complex issues.