

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2016

MEDIA CONTACT:

Wayne Stubbs, Executive Director

Port Panama City

Office 850-767-3220

wstubbs@portpanamacityusa.com

Paul Scott Abbott, Media Consultant

Cell 305-469-5276

paulscottabbott@windstream.net

**Port Panama City looks to double capacity with 41-acre acquisition,
development of state-of-industry forest products terminal**

PANAMA CITY, Florida – With development of a modern forest products terminal on a newly acquired 41-acre waterfront tract, Port Panama City is setting a course to double its throughput capability.

The U.S. Gulf Coast port on Florida's Panhandle acquired the 41 acres of mostly vacant land on May 3 from WestRock Co., which plans to continue to operate its corrugated packaging mill on adjoining property.

Port Panama City's plans call for development of a state-of-the-industry forest products terminal, including a 250,000-square-foot warehouse for woodpulp, kraft linerboard and related goods. The terminal also is to feature a 48-car-capacity rail yard, a refurbished 38-foot-draft berthing area with reinforced bulkhead and a 10-acre laydown area, according to Wayne Stubbs, the port's executive director.

"This is a huge step forward in enhancing Port Panama City's already-impressive abilities to handle forest product cargos," Stubbs said. "Exports of paper and wood pellets helped propel Port Panama City to a record year in 2015, with more than 2 million tons of cargo moving across our docks. This acquisition and terminal project position our port to handle sustained growth for many years to come."

Port Panama City acquired the 41 acres for \$13.6 million, financed through the Florida Department of Transportation State Infrastructure Bank, and has secured an option to buy 27 more acres for another \$6 million.

With support of \$4.25 million in FDOT grant funding, the port is proceeding with \$12 million of first-phase forest products terminal projects. An additional \$9 million, half from FDOT, is earmarked for bulkhead work and rail and roadway improvements.

In addition, a \$10 million endeavor, half federally funded, to deepen the channel serving the facility to 38 feet from 32 feet has gained U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval.

Longtime shippers of forest products via Port Panama City are enthusiastic.

"We at Grieg Star are very excited about the port's investment in a breakbulk forest products terminal and the necessary dredging to help fulfill its potential," said Andy Powell, Atlanta-based vice president and general manager of Grieg Star Shipping. "We know that this has been a lot of work for Wayne and his team to bring things to this point and really applaud their efforts."

Donald R. Crisp, chairman of the Panama City Port Authority, noted that the new terminal should facilitate creation of nearly 200 direct and indirect jobs and produce an annual economic benefit of more than \$125 million, commenting, "This is fantastic for the port and its users and for our economy in Bay County."

Port Panama City is a diverse Gulf Coast seaport located on the Florida Panhandle, providing an ideal U.S. Southeast gateway for forest products and other breakbulk, bulk and containerized cargos.

PHOTO CUTLINE for [pancitysite051016.jpg](#):

Just acquired by Port Panama City, a 41-acre tract adjoining the WestRock Co. mill allows the Florida Gulf port to develop a state-of-the-industry forest products terminal, facilitating a doubling of the port's throughput capability.

###