

Remarks of Gary Nelson

AAPA Annual Convention

Galveston, Texas

October 27, 2009

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, Madam Chair, distinguished elected leaders, board members and Port Colleagues from throughout the AMERICAS. It is with great humility and honor that I have the distinct pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the United States Delegation to the 98th AAPA Annual Meeting here in this beautiful Port city of Galveston, Texas.

I have to admit to my initial hesitancy about coming to Galveston after the Host Port handed out copies of Erik Larson's book "Isaac's Storm" as promotional material in Anchorage last year. I mean who hands out a spellbinding story of one of the worst natural disaster of the last century as an inducement to come visit!

Fortunately my curiosity got the best of me and I read the book cover to cover. What I found was a tale of survival by a courageous community that displayed resiliency, persistence and perseverance during and after the storm of 1900. Community leaders forced to make decisions and recommendations to their constituents based on imperfect and often conflicting information.

I did find a lot of common themes between "Isaac's Storm" and the challenges facing today's Port industry. In particular theme's you will see throughout this conference, Navigating Uncharted Waters, Communicating with our constituents, Recovering from Disasters and Innovative Approaches to Port Challenges.

My thanks to the City and Port of Galveston for providing the perfect back drop for a convention that promises to educate, enlighten and empower each of us to carry on our mission of good stewardship of our ports, our environment and our communities.

Again, on the behalf of the United States Delegation, WELCOME TO GALVESTON!