

January 5, 2007

Dear Portfields Partners,

We hope this letter finds you happy and healthy in the new year. We wanted to provide an update to all the partners who attended the Southern Louisiana Portfields Initiative kickoff meeting in New Orleans in May, as well as new partners who have joined us since, on the progress each port has made in the last six months. In addition, there have been several activities at the national level which are summarized below:

EPA and NOAA Office Directors meet on Portfields: David Lloyd, Director of the EPA Office of Brownfields, met with David Kennedy, Director of NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, on July 11, 2006, to reaffirm the EPA and NOAA commitment to the Southern Louisiana Portfields Initiative. Both Directors continue to be enthusiastic about the opportunity to support port revitalization in the Gulf region, and recognize the value of the contributions of the many local, state and federal agencies in this partnership.

Federal Partners Update: A Portfields update was provided to a broad range of federal agencies at the Federal Interagency Brownfields meeting held at EPA headquarters on November 8, 2006.

Brownfields 2006: The Portfields Initiative was the focus of a well attended Marketplace of Ideas session at Brownfields 2006 in Boston on November 13, 2006. Rebecca Otte of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) facilitated the discussion which included Nathan Champagne of the City of New Orleans, Steve Villavaso of Villavaso and Associates, Karen Peycke of EPA Region 6, and Kenneth Walker of NOAA. The session focused on the role and value of the local liaisons in implementing the Southern Louisiana Portfields Initiative.

NOAA proposes Portfields funding for FY09-FY13: Through the Fiscal Year 2009-2013 budget planning process, NOAA is proposing up to \$300,000 in funding for the Portfields Initiative to support priority project implementation for Southern Louisiana ports. Although this is only the first step in the budget planning process, the Portfields Initiative is seen as a vital component of NOAA's goal of supporting Marine Commerce & Transportation, one of four critical components of NOAA's strategic vision and priorities for the 21st Century.

NOAA says goodbye to Meredith Mendelson: Meredith Mendelson, who has assisted with the Southern Louisiana Portfields Initiative over the last year, will finish her Sea Grant Fellowship in mid-January, 2007. Meredith has accepted a position at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) in Portland, Maine. GMRI is a non-profit organization

that convenes stakeholders for resource conflict resolution and collaborative research. We wish Meredith the best as she starts her new position with GMRI.

DHS Grants: One success story has been the recent award of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants to several Portfields ports. DHS awarded a total of \$399 million, with Louisiana ports receiving a total of \$26 million. A regional port security grant of \$11.4 million was awarded to the five deep-draft lower Mississippi River ports (South Louisiana, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines) through the Port of South Louisiana. Additionally, the Port of New Orleans received \$737,125; and the Port of Greater Baton Rouge received \$11.6 million.

Priority Project Selection: As was outlined at the Kickoff meeting, the next step in the process was to determine which port projects were the most viable. Each port submitted, via their liaison, three priority projects ranging from brownfields redevelopment to dredging to infrastructure expansion. In July, 2006, the Portfields partners convened to discuss the proposals, with an eye towards moving forward with at least one project in each port. Projects were selected based on the opportunity for synergy among partners, as well as the availability of financial and technical assistance opportunities. Further details of their progress are noted below in the updates from each port's liaison. Although these priority projects are the focus of current efforts, the ports are still pursuing additional projects identified through the Portfields Initiative.

Selected Projects:

- Harbor maintenance dredging (Baton Rouge)
- Riverfront property inventory, analysis and acquisition project (New Orleans)
- Airport pump station (Port Fourchon)
- Sewerage Improvement (St. Bernard)
- Expansion of the Maritime Forest Ridge project (Port Fourchon)
- Closure of wastewater ponds (South Louisiana)

Port Updates:

Ports Association of Louisiana (PAL):

The Ports Association of Louisiana (Dr. Scafidel, Joe Accardo, and Dot McConnell), the Port of Iberia's Roy Pontiff, and port liaison Justin Farrell (LA Sea Grant) met with Pamela Davidson of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in late summer to discuss the potential for a regional Strategic Business Plan for the Ports of Louisiana. There have also been discussions with the Louisiana Department of Economic Development about matching funds for the regional plan. PAL is currently developing an application to submit to EDA.

New Orleans:

Karen Peycke (EPA Region 6) and Nathan Champagne (Brownfields Coordinator, City of New Orleans) met with Cathy Dunn and Patrick Gallwey (Port of New Orleans) on September 28, 2006, to discuss grant opportunities. Due to ongoing communications challenges in the city, the Port and liaisons have not held as many meetings as they would have liked. However, grant proposals for a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund and a city-wide assessment grant for hazardous substances were submitted on schedule. Nathan Champagne also met with the New Orleans Director of the Trust for Public Land several months ago. The Mississippi Riverfront Linear Park project will be revisited in the near future.

Baton Rouge:

On September 26, 2006, the Port of Greater Baton Rouge (POGBR) met with EPA Headquarters, EPA Region 6, Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), Baton Rouge City Parish Planning Commission, Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Brownfields and Operations, and NOAA to discuss brownfields grant opportunities, community outreach, and the riverfront inventory project. In addition, the partners discussed the status of the Devil's Swamp Lake NPL site and future maintenance dredging of the Baton Rouge Harbor. The upper section of the channel has not been dredged in recent years due to perceived contamination from the nearby Devil's Lake Swamp site.

As follow up to the September meeting, the Port is drafting a letter to USACE requesting the Baton Rouge Harbor be dredged. The Port is also considering port activities and potential to use clean dredge spoil from the harbor in remediation activities that might take place in the future at Devil's Swamp Lake. In addition, the Port is pursuing brownfields funding for the riverfront property inventory, assessment and acquisition. The Baton Rouge Brownfields Program has hazardous assessment funding available for sites in East Baton Rouge Parish and will provide assistance as necessary to support this project.

The Port also met with Baton Rouge Green in August, 2006, to discuss directional and interpretive signage and landscaping improvements. At this meeting the Port and Baton Rouge Green discussed POGBR's role as continuing sponsor for seven landscaping cells that were constructed at the port's Port Allen property. In addition, participants discussed a plan to transfer maintenance of the landscaped cells to the POGBR and development of maintenance regime by Baton Rouge Green to guide POGBR. The Baton Rouge Green program began conducting assessment of cells throughout Baton Rouge in October, 2006, and POGBR's cells were given priority.

Port Fourchon:

The Port, in conjunction with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, has applied for funding to expand the Maritime Ridge through the NOAA Fisheries Community-based Habitat Restoration Program. Over the last six months, NOAA headquarters staff facilitated several conference calls between Port Fourchon and NOAA National Marine Fisheries staff in Baton Rouge.

Jefferson Parish:

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and the Port determined that the Johns Manville project was not viable at this time, but will continue to revisit it.

St. Bernard Parish:

The RPC staff met with the Economic Development Agency (EDA) and the Port regarding applying for EDA funding to connect the Port industrial park to the Parish sewer system to replace the various package plants and attract new businesses to the area. The Port is working with the Parish for a joint application, in accordance with the recommendation from EDA. The RPC is also working with the Port on their stormwater retention pond dredging project, and generated a draft proposal to LA Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) to apply for the Targeted Brownfields Assessment program to assess the sludge deposited by the storm. The Port recently hired a grant writer who is coming up to speed on these projects. The RPC will be working with the grant writer to assist with these and other funding opportunities for the Port's Portfields projects.

Port of South Louisiana:

At the Port of South Louisiana a brownfields project is underway and the Port is looking at alternatives for the closure of wastewater ponds.