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Responding to the Market

Houston Area Economy

Testing Spill Response Plans

ON THE COVER

Workers lay a base for the concrete backup area at Barbours Cut Berth 6. Plans for new container and cruise ship facilities are on the Port Authority's drawing board. For more information, turn to Page 2.

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The Port of Houston Authority has its eye on major development and expansion of the public docks over the next few years. In recent months, contracts already have been awarded for the design of a seventh dock at Barbours Cut Terminal, and planning is under way for a container terminal and cruise ship facility at Bayport.

The purpose of these ambitious plans is twofold: to ensure Houston can handle increasing container traffic and larger vessels in the next century; and to develop Houston's cruise line business and other opportunities for “nontraditional” revenues.

“We have seven port commissioners who share a common goal — strengthening Houston's competitive position,” says Tom Kornegay, PHA executive director. “Steamship lines are moving toward bigger ships and fewer ports of call, and we want to make sure Houston stays on their itineraries. On the other hand, we've been looking at new ways to generate income, and the cruise business is one of our most promising prospects.”

In recent months, port commissioners named two consultants to provide engineering and design plans for Barbours Cut Berth 7 and to perform planning work for the Bayport cruise terminal and the Bayport container terminal. Each of these projects affects the others, so they will require complex orchestration. Most of the day-to-day coordination will fall on the capable shoulders of Steve DeWolf, PHA chief engineer.

“We expect to finish the planning process for these projects in March of next year,” says DeWolf. “Then we will determine more specifically what we will need to build at first, how large they should be and how much backup area we’ll need.”

While the specifics are yet to be worked out, the Port Authority already knows its first task is to build a wharf at Berth 7 to accommodate cruise ships. At this time, Norwegian Cruise Line offers a weekly Caribbean cruise from Barbours Cut Berth 6. By early 1999, the passenger walkway for the ship will be relocated so that NCL can board passengers at Berth 7 while continuing to use the existing cruise terminal building. At that point, NCL hopes to offer additional cruises, probably of three or four days' duration.

Once NCL switches to Berth 7, Sea-Land Service will relocate its operation from Berth 3 to Berth 6. There is good reason for this juggling act: Sea-Land's offices and facilities at Berth 3 are located in the middle of the docks used by other steamship lines. Relocating Sea-Land will allow for better utilization of the remaining docks. The Port Authority expects to award a contract soon for construction of the paved backup area at Berth 6; consultants already are designing an administration building, gatehouse building and other amenities for Sea-Land's new home.

“Berth 7 has been planned for some time,” says John Scardasis, PHA operations director. “But we're accelerating the construction schedule to accommodate the cruises. Eventually, we expect to further develop Berth 7, possibly for RO/RO ships or auto carriers.”

Another major project under way at Barbours Cut is the expansion of the terminal's railroad ramp area. Plans call for the construction of additional working and storage tracks, which should be completed during the third quarter of 1998. The Port Authority also has approved plans to build additional lead track from the rail ramp to Strang Rail Yard, a $3.7 million project; a second phase of that project will extend lead track from Strang Yard West to Deer Park, near the Shell Oil refinery. The rail improvements will reduce truck traffic and save shippers the cost of having their containers drayed from remote rail yards to Barbours Cut.

Left: At Barbours Cut, workers lay pavement and install utilities in the backup area for Berth 6.
Meanwhile, the Port Authority is considering its options for developing property located on the south side of the Bayport Ship Channel. Though still on the drawing board, plans call for the development of a permanent cruise terminal and a container terminal on a 400-acre site on the south side of the Bayport Channel. (The Port Authority owns an additional 500 acres at Bayport that could be developed for other uses.)

The cruise terminal will be located on the property's northeast corner, overlooking the Bayport Ship Channel and Galveston Bay. This location could accommodate large Fantasy-class ships. Scardasis said the Port Authority has received inquiries from major cruise line operators that would be interested in offering service from Houston if the appropriate facilities were available.

To the west of the proposed cruise terminal site, the Port Authority plans to develop a container terminal that can accommodate post-Panamax vessels.

"In a few years, 2,500- to 6,500-TEU vessels will be the norm, and Houston will need the facilities to accommodate them," Scardasis said. "These ships also will require a 45-foot water draft, which is why the Houston Ship Channel widening and deepening project is so important."

Development of the Bayport container facility is a top priority because of the steady growth that has taken place at Barbours Cut Terminal. Over the past five years, container volume at Barbours Cut has grown by approximately 120 percent, according to Jimmy Jamison, manager of the terminal.

"It's not just new business we're seeing," says Jamison. "Our existing customers are capturing additional market share."

The Port Authority has not yet decided how many docks initially will be built at Bayport. However, the container terminal — and its neighboring cruise facility — will be designed so they can be expanded as need arises.

"We're very lucky that the Port of Houston Authority has the property to develop additional facilities if needed," Jamison adds. "Many ports just don't have sufficient land to do what we're doing."
One of every three jobs in Houston is tied to international trade, making international business a cornerstone of the local economy, according to research by the Greater Houston Partnership.

Several factors have contributed to Houston’s emergence as a trade center, including its port, airline connections, international banks and a strong consular corps, said Jim Kollaer, president of the Partnership.

Kollaer recently discussed the Houston area’s competitiveness before an audience of approximately 400 people during the Partnership’s quarterly meeting.

The Houston metropolitan region generates a gross area product (GAP) of $156 billion, Kollaer told the audience. Houston’s GAP is growing by an average of 3 percent a year, outpacing the state of Texas and the United States. Key growth sectors in the Houston economy are construction, industrial machinery, business services, health service and engineering/management services.

“Our GAP is exactly the same as Hong Kong,” Kollaer said. “If we were a country, we’d be the twenty-second largest in the world.”

As a rule, Houston competes with five other metropolitan areas in recruiting new businesses: Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, Salt Lake City, Seattle and Los Angeles. To assess Houston’s competitiveness, Partnership staff compared Houston to the competing cities with respect to six key factors: workforce; business costs; transportation and other infrastructure; quality of life; international trade infrastructure; and location, proximity and climate. These six factors play an important role in a business’ decision to relocate or expand into a new city.

When asked to “grade” Houston in the six areas, audience members gave their highest grade — “B+” — for international trade infrastructure and business costs.

Houston’s international infrastructure includes consular offices representing 68 countries, making this the fourth-largest consular corps in the United States. Only one of Houston’s six competitor cities — Los Angeles — has more consular offices, Kollaer said. Houston’s port ranks first in the United States in foreign tonnage and second in overall tonnage. Last year, the Port of Houston handled 150 million tons.
of cargo, more than half of which moved internationally. In addition, the city's well developed international infrastructure includes a host of banks, airlines, steamship lines, freight forwarders and brokers, and other businesses that facilitate trade.

As for business costs, Kollaer said Houston has lower office rental rates than any of the other competing cities. Class-A office space in Houston's central business district leases for an average of $13.91 per square foot per year, while competitor cities' rates ranged from $15.31 to $21.21. Houston ranked in the middle of its competitors with regard to taxes. Houston area employees pay an average of $3,571 in various state and local taxes, and —like all Texas residents — they pay no state income tax.

"One of the things Houston's always been known for is low business costs," Kollaer said.

Kollaer's audience gave Houston a "B" in two areas: location/climate and quality of life. Businesses favor Houston because of its temperate climate, and winters are mild here. They often cite the city's central location on the U.S. Gulf Coast as a factor in relocating; location makes Houston a key gateway to Mexico and Latin America.

As for quality of life, most Houstonians think their city is a good place to live, Kollaer said. A Gallup survey conducted earlier this year in four U.S. cities — Houston, Atlanta, Chicago and Philadelphia — found that Houstonians were the happiest group. Asked to grade Houston as a place to live, 59 percent gave their hometown an "A," "B" or "C." Atlanta ranked second, with 42 percent giving their city a "C" or better.

The luncheon audience gave Houston lower marks for its work force and transportation/other infrastructure. Houston's work force received a "B-" because the city has a less educated work force than some of its competitors. About 75 percent of adult Houstonians finished high school, and 24.2 percent received a college degree.

"We need to focus on developing a regional education strategy to provide a skilled work force," Kollaer said.

Houston received a grade of "C" for its transportation and other infrastructure. If audience reaction is any clue, traffic probably accounted for the average grade; many road-weary audience members groaned when Kollaer raised the subject of traffic congestion. A study by Texas A&M University's Texas Transportation Institute rated Houston in the middle of the competing cities in regard to traffic congestion. But Houston finished more favorably with regard to infrastructure. Of the competing cities, only Houston and Seattle can claim to have a port, an airport, an adequate water supply and sufficient electrical power to support industry.
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Robert Nobles has been named 1997 Employee of the Year for the Port of Houston Authority's Trade Development Division. He is a market research analyst in the market development department.

Nobles' responsibilities include gathering port-related statistics from a variety of sources and compiling them into organized, usable reports. He helps track cargo tonnage, foreign trade statistics, market share and a variety of other data. Because of his knowledge of computer systems, he often assists other members of the staff with hardware and software problems.

He was honored as Employee of the Year because of his many contributions to the Trade Development team.

"As market research analyst, Robert has brought the department, and therefore the division, into the modern age of technology," said John Horan, director of Trade Development. "Through his extensive work, required reports and documents are now standardized and are produced in a more efficient manner. This has allowed us to expand the range of information we can research and produce into usable reports."

Nobles first joined the PHA staff in 1991 as a summer intern in the accounting department. He returned to accounting, again as an intern, the next summer.

Nobles completed his college studies and accepted a staff accountant position with the Port Authority in June 1994. In November 1995, he was promoted to his current position in market development.

Nobles and employees honored by other PHA divisions are candidates for the overall Employee of the Year Award, which is presented at the Port Authority barbecue each spring.

Robert Nobles, 1997 Trade Development Employee of the Year

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You could call it a dress rehearsal for an oil spill. Not long ago, a dozen Houston area oil companies and government agencies simulated an oil spill to test their emergency response skills.

Nine oil companies and three government agencies participated in the day-long exercise, held at Sylvan Beach in La Porte, Texas, in late summer. The “spill drill” was one of the largest exercises of its kind ever conducted by multiple companies in the United States.

Approximately 200 people participated in the complex event. They included emergency response personnel, drill evaluators and “role-players” posing as media, community leaders and residents.

Local oil companies designed the drill. These companies include the industry’s biggest names: Amoco, Aramco, Conoco, Exxon, Fina, Marathon, Shell, Star Enterprise (a joint venture of Texaco and Saudi Aramco) and Texaco.

Three government entities also played a major role: the Harris County Office of Emergency Management; the Texas General Land Office, which oversees the state’s land and mineral rights; and the U.S. Coast Guard’s Marine Safety Office for Houston-Galveston.

The scenario for the drill was as follows: A few hours before dawn, emergency responders were told, a leak developed in a crude oil pipeline at Panther Creek, releasing about 2,500 barrels of oil. The creek flows into the Houston Ship Channel west of the Washburn Tunnel in Galena Park. Later, a tugboat captain hauling four barges turned in the ship channel to avoid the spill and ran aground near Greens Bayou. One of the barges leaked 1,800 barrels of lube base stock, and another oil-laden barge began taking on water.

Ruben Arredondo, right, marine manager for the Port of Houston Authority, discusses details of the drill with Jim O’Brien, owner of an oil pollution service company.
The fact that the spill was not real didn't deter participants from taking the incident seriously. Spill responders quickly moved forward with their emergency response plan, notifying authorities of the spill, setting up a command post and information center, and going into action.

Participating oil companies sent employees and contractors trained in various aspects of spill response, such as community notification, media relations, environmental assessment, wildlife protection, cleanup and safety. Role-players, acting as news media and community representatives, flooded spill responders with a barrage of questions and concerns. Drill participants learned not only about the nuts and bolts of oil spill response, but also about joint decision-making, coordination and communications.

Port of Houston Authority staff also were on hand to provide support as needed. Ruben Arredondo, PHA marine department manager, helped provide resources for the spill cleanup crew.

"The Port Authority's fireboats played a role, helping maneuver booms to contain the oil," says Arredondo.

Through advance planning, drill participants have developed a unified command system to respond to oil spills and other disasters. The system is used by many civilian emergency response groups and consists of a multi-tiered chain of command covering every aspect of spill management, from emergency response to damage claims and compensation.

As official sponsor of the Houston Ship Channel, the Port of Houston Authority is responsible for providing fire and safety protection along the waterway. To help accomplish this, the Port Authority maintains three fireboats: the BRACEWELL, stationed at the Turning Basin Terminal; the FARNSWORTH, which docks at the Bulk Materials Handling Plant; and the TELLEPSEN, which covers Barbour's Cut Terminal and Bayport. In addition, the Port Authority maintains a minipumper and emergency response van for responding to chemical leaks and spills.

Although hazardous spills and fires along the Houston Ship Channel are uncommon, PHA fireboat crews receive extensive training in handling such incidents. Typically, PHA Marine Department personnel and fireboats serve a supporting role, assisting other entities that respond to emergencies. For example, fireboat crews may help responders connect to a shoreside water supply or provide fire fighting foam in the event of a fire; if a fire occurs aboard a vessel, the fireboats assist by fighting the blaze from the water.

The captains and pilot of all three PHA fireboats are trained to act as designated on-scene response coordinators for Port Authority facilities. If an incident occurs at the public docks, fireboat personnel ensure all appropriate agencies are notified and see that cleanup procedures on PHA property are carried out properly.

Harbor fees collected from shippers help pay for the costs of maintaining the fireboats but do not cover all the Port Authority's fireboat expenses.
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Congress Mulls Funding for HSC Project

Federal lawmakers recently agreed to appropriate funds for the widening and deepening of the Houston Ship Channel. The only issue still to be resolved is how much money will be allocated for the project.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted in July to appropriate $23.8 million for the federal government's share of the initial work on the ship channel project. The Senate already had approved $15 million. Now committee members of the two houses are debating the appropriation amount in conference.

"We are thrilled that both houses of Congress gave their support for this project, although there are still details to work out," says Tom Kornegay, PHA executive director. "We're very appreciative of our Texas legislators' efforts to see this project through."

Originally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimated $15 million would be needed to widen and deepen the ship channel over seven to 10 years. However, the Corps and the Port of Houston Authority later agreed the project should be carried out on a faster schedule; the Corps revised its recommendation to a cost of $23.8 million for a four- to five-year project.

The Senate approved an appropriation based on the Corps' original $15 million figure, while the House used the revised figure.

Plans call for the Houston Ship Channel to be deepened to 45 feet and widened to 400 feet to accommodate today's larger vessels and make the waterway easier to navigate. Both local and federal funds will be used to pay for the project.

Houston Cruises Very Successful

Norwegian Cruise Line's "Texaribbean" cruises from Houston are proving to be a huge success.

NCL began offering seven-day cruises from the Port of Houston Authority's Barbours Cut Container Terminal last May. The cruise itinerary of NCL's M/V NORWEGIAN STAR includes stops at Cancun, Cozumel and Roatan.

Ever since NCL launched the service, the NORWEGIAN STAR has averaged 99 percent occupancy on its trips, according to John Scardasis, PHA operations director.

"The cruise service has been an unqualified success since its inception," Scardasis said. "And NCL expects the final quarter of 1997 to be very strong. The holiday cruises have been sold out for months."

Scardasis said NCL is so pleased with the service's success that the line has expressed an interest in offering additional cruises from Houston.

"NCL is very excited about the prospects, and they are committed to this market," he said.

The NORWEGIAN STAR currently sails from an interim cruise facility at Barbours Cut Terminal. The Port Authority has commissioned a contractor to design plans for a permanent cruise facility at Bayport Terminal; that facility could accommodate larger vessels.

ERI Augments Service Roster

Educational Resources International Inc., a Houston area company, has expanded the range of services it offers the shipping community.

Now the three-year-old company offers personnel recruitment services and also performs on-site consulting related to marketing or ISO-9000 preparation.

The company originally was established to provide training classes for businesses involved in international
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But the availability of large scale refrigeration and freezer warehouse capacity on or close by its international airport, Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH), makes Houston a principal distribution center for imports and exports of perishable goods, too.

IAH's on-site Federal Animal and Plant Inspection Station allows immediate distribution and ensures that fresh flowers, produce, seafood and meat arrive affordably and in perfect condition. What's more, Houston can provide inland transportation to America's heartland more economically than Los Angeles, Philadelphia or Miami. In addition, Houston is connected by air to 113 domestic cities. To serve growing markets all over the world, IAH continues to expand its cargo operations and stands ready to serve customers 24 hours a day.

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transportation. But market demand prompted the company to diversify its offerings.

"We have been pleasantly surprised and gratified at the tremendous support the industry has given our firm, particularly in terms of attendance at our training classes," said Robert Pryor, president and owner of ERI. "Our unique one-day Hazardous Materials Training Seminar has grown over 100 percent since our inception."

ERI also has added courses in supervision and management for international business and project management for freight forwarders.

For more information, contact ERI at (281) 376-4475. E-mail may be sent to Pryor at rmpray@computerx.net.

Courses Offered For Small Firms

The University of Houston Small Business Development Center has announced its October seminars, including several suited for companies interested in international trade.

Exporting for Entrepreneurs will be conducted from 9 a.m. to noon October 29, 1997, at the UH International Trade Center. Topics to be discussed include assessing your company's readiness to export, targeting your top international markets and how to increase your chances of succeeding in these unique markets. Cost is $35.

Several sessions will acquaint participants with different aspects of international communications. These offerings include:

- Tele Talk Surveys the benefits of using different types of telecommunications (9 a.m. to Noon, October 10)
- Internet Basics Familiarizes participants with the Internet and how they can use it in their businesses (9 a.m. to noon, October 14)
- Technology at Your Fingertips Using Internet Discusses research techniques and accessing information sources on the Internet (11 a.m. to 1 p.m., October 14)
- A Significant Marketing Tool: The Internet Topics include providing information, documentation transfers, file sharing and identifying opportunities (6 to 9 p.m., October 30)

Other seminars to be held during the month cover business basics; software training in NxLevel, QuickBooks Pro, Quicken 6.0 and Windows 95. Also scheduled are sessions on effective use of direct mail, credit and collections, managing for growth and how to get a loan.

For a full detailed schedule, please contact UH's Small Business Development Center's training center at (713) 752-8488. The center is located at 1100 Louisiana, Ste. 500, Houston, Texas 77002. The fax number is (713)756-1500.

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Conacex Noreste Officials Tour
Port of Houston Facilities
Aboard M/V SAM HOUSTON

Officials with Conacex Noreste,
A.C., which is the National Foreign
Trade Council, Northeast Region,
of Mexico, recently visited Houston
and toured the city's port facilities
aboard the Port of Houston Author-
ity's tour vessel, the M/V SAM
HOUSTON.

Above: Shown aboard the
boat are, from left, Jesus
Octavio Gonzalez Mtz. of
Conacex; Juan Manuel
Quiroga Lam of Conacex;
Rainer Lilienthal, PHA; and
Julieta Sanchez Trejo of Trans-
portadora Proa, PHA's agency
in Mexico.

Left: The group gathers at the
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TIP and Genstar Form New Group

TIP Intermodal Services and Genstar Container Corp. have merged. The new group operates under the name TIP Intermodal Services and is based in Devon, Penn.

The two consolidated companies were subsidiaries of GE Capital Services, a global financial company that is a subsidiary of General Electric Co. Barry DeSantis, previously chief operating officer of TIP, is now president of the expanded company.

As a result of the consolidation, Genstar’s fleet of 18,000 containers and 10,000 chassis will be combined with TIP’s fleet of 6,000 trailers.

“The merger of Genstar’s domestic intermodal assets with TIP Intermodal Services will allow us to enhance our already world-class service with a greater variety of equipment, creating one-stop shopping for our customers’ intermodal needs,” said Nigel Andrews, executive vice president of GE Capital Services.

“The consolidation of assets creates an opportunity for GE Capital Services to take an expanded role in the intermodal market, which is expected to grow by more than seven percent in 1997.”

Genstar is one of the world’s leading lessors of marine cargo containers. The San Francisco-based company operates offices in 22 locations around the world.

TIP, or Transport International Pool, is one of the largest trailer rental, leasing, sales and financing companies in the world.

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Houston Community College System's Northeast College Recognizes ITMA Scholarship Program

Houston Community College System's Northeast College recently recognized the International Transportation Management Association for its scholarship program. The college also spotlighted ITMA's two most recent scholarship recipients, Anett Mier and Wanda Matthews, at a spring banquet. Attending the banquet were, from left, Mary Ann Chambers of ITMA, Dr. Margaret Ford of the Northeast College, Dr. Ruth Burgos-Sasscer of Houston Community College System; Mier and Matthews; and Dr. Elaine Adams of Houston Community College System.

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Seaboard Adds Larger Vessel

Seaboard Marine has added a newly built vessel to its service between the U.S. Gulf and the South American west coast.

The M/V PACIFIC is the third new ship Seaboard has acquired this year.

Seaboard provides fortnightly service from the Port of Houston to major ports in Peru and Chile.

Construction of the PACIFIC was completed this year. The 700-TEU ship has equipment that provides a lift capability of 300 metric tons, allowing the line to handle the large project cargo that typically moves in this trade. The ship has an overall length of 329 feet and beam of 66 feet.

"The markets in South America are becoming increasingly more competitive, and this new vessel will help us maintain a superior service to these major markets," said Robert Schicchi, vice president of Seaboard's South America division.

Seaboard vessels call at the Port of Houston Authority's Turning Basin and Woodhouse terminals.

ACL Announces IMC Compliance

The M/V ATLANTIC CONVEYOR, operated by Atlantic Container Line, recently was certified under an international pollution-prevention and safety code.

The CONVEYOR is the fifth and final ACL ship to be certified as compliant with the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention.

With its entire fleet certified, ACL is compliant with the code well in advance of the deadline set for certification.

ACL is a publicly held ocean carrier that has been operating on the North Atlantic for 30 years. ACL operates a fleet of sophisticated container, cargo and RO/RO carriers and serves 20 direct ports of call in this trade. In Houston, ACL vessels call at the Fentress Brace- well Barbours Cut Container Terminal.

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The Port of Houston Authority recently sponsored the opening festivities for a national traveling exhibition presented by the Houston Public Library. Titled The Frontier in American Culture, the exhibition was open to the public during August and September.

In addition, special programs exploring the frontiers of Houston and Texas were featured at various locations throughout the city. The Port Authority participated in this effort by loaning the library a display illustrating the history of the city's maritime industry and the growth of the port. During the hoe-down, the Lonestar Bluegrass Band (top photo) provided lively musical fare, the Alabama-Coushatta Native American Dancers performed (center) and a Wells Fargo Stagecoach lent a touch of frontier realism to the library's plaza (below).
MSC Announces Service Addition

Mediterranean Shipping Co. now offers a new service from the U.S. Gulf and Atlantic coasts to the east coast of South America.

Three 1,200-TEU vessels are deployed in the independent service, which offers sailings every 14 days.

MSC opened its own offices in Buenos Aires and Sao Paolo to support the new service and planned to announce subagents to other Brazilian locations.

The ships will call at Houston and other U.S. ports, Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Buenos Aires and Rio Grande. With inauguration of the new service, MSC now calls at 11 South American ports.

MSC operates a fleet of more than 100 container vessels, adding up to a total capacity of over 285,000 TEUs.

The company also operates a fleet of 270,000 containers.

Maritrend Plans Move to Houston

Maritrend Inc. has announced plans to relocate its corporate offices from New Orleans to Houston.

The move was announced by Gary Kovac, the stevedoring company's newly appointed president and chief executive officer.

Kovac was vice president of marketing for National Marine Inc. in New Orleans for seven years. National Marine and Maritrend are subsidiaries of the Vectura Group Co.

Maritrend is relocating its offices because the Houston market has played an increasingly important role in the company's operations, company officials said.

Maritrend Plans

Port Commission Lets Contracts

The Port of Houston Commission recently awarded two contracts for forklifts and crane bars at Barbours Cut Terminal and a contract for wharf deck improvements at the Turning Basin Terminal.

Port commissioners awarded a contract to Bromma Inc. to provide one 40-long-ton and three 50-long-ton telescopic spreader bars for Barbours Cut Terminal.

Two bars will replace time-worn parts on existing cranes at Barbours Cut. The other two will be placed on new cranes under construction for the terminal. The bars will cost $450,000.

Commissioners also approved plans to purchase three 6,000-pound forklifts for use at Barbours Cut and the PHA container terminal at Galveston. Two forklifts will be placed on new cranes under construction for the terminal. The forklifts will cost $100,000.
lifts will replace older units at Barbours Cut; the third will be used at Galveston. Together, the units will cost approximately $66,000.

The Port Authority began seeking bids for a company to strengthen the concrete deck at Wharves 26 to 30 in the Turning Basin Terminal. The 8-inch deck is sturdy enough to support the terminal’s Paceco crane but requires strengthening to properly support the newer and heavier Bardella crane. A contractor will be chosen to install reinforcing steel under the deck and pump concrete to make the structure a foot thicker. The work will cost an estimated $675,000.

A contractor recently finished replacing the waterside rail along which the two cranes travel.

PHA Gets New Web Address

The Port of Houston Authority’s World Wide Web site now has a new address, and this one is easy to remember. The PHA home page can now be found at http://www.portofhouston.com.

The PHA Web site provides a variety of information on the Port of Houston and its public facilities. Users who visit the site can order Port Authority publications online, send e-mail to the Port Authority, obtain numbers for key PHA personnel and view and download the quarterly Houston Shipping Directory.

Companies that are listed in the directory may request that links to their own home pages be included at no charge.

The Port Authority’s e-mail addresses remain the same. The communications department, which maintains the Web site and produces PHA publications, can be reached at phacommm@neosoft.com.

E-mail for the market development department, which handles customer service inquiries and tracks trade and tonnage statistics, should be directed to mktressh@neosoft.com.

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Port of Houston Authority representatives recently traveled to Guatemala to sign a sister port agreement with the Port of Santo Tomas de Castilla. As part of the agreement, the two ports promised to exchange information on trends and technology and to promote trade with each other. While in Guatemala, they met with Guatemala's President Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen and Angel Gonzalez Garcia, director of the Port of Santo Tomas.

**Top:** A view of the harbor at Santo Tomas de Castilla.

**Above:** Attending the sister port signing were, from left, John Horan, Port of Houston Authority; Guatemalan President Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen; Alfredo Aguilar Galvez, Guatemala's consul general in Houston; and Rainer Lilienthal, PHA.

**Left:** Santo Tomas Port Director Angel Gonzalez Garcia signs the sister port agreement. President Arzu and Consul Aguilar observe.
AEI-Lusk Forwards Caterpillar Mining Machinery to Ghana

Caterpillar machinery destined for a gold mine in Ghana recently left the Port of Houston Authority’s Turning Basin Terminal aboard the M/V ARABIAN EXPRESS. Shown with the trucks prior to loading are (from left) Kent Iversen of Term, Frank Hester of Strachan Stevedoring and Mervin Schaefer of PHA. The vessel is operated by Term Lines, which is represented in Houston by Kerr Norton Marine. AEI-Lusk of Houston was freight forwarder for the shipment, and Strachan Stevedoring was stevedore for the vessel. The trucks weighed approximately 80 short tons apiece. Each truck is 16.5 feet high, nearly 20 feet wide and 32 feet long. The giant vehicles were stored just behind Wharf 32 in the Turning Basin Terminal until the shipment was complete. Wharf 32 offers 20 acres of paved marshaling area, as well as 806 feet of quay.
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