

## County rail expansion dedicated

By: Royce Armstrong

[roycearmstrong1219@att.net](mailto:roycearmstrong1219@att.net)

Release Date: November 18, 2021



Twenty-three or 24 rail cars will soon be departing the Enviva wood pellet mill in the George County Industrial Park and traveling south to the Port of Pascagoula, with a part of that journey on all new railroad tracks.

The nearly 3,000 feet of new county-owned rail line was dedicated Tuesday morning with county and state elected officials and local business leaders present. Dignitaries participated in a golden spike driving as a part of the ceremony.

Speakers for the event included Dist. 1 supervisor Frankie Massey, Mark Miller the recently retired CEO of Mississippi Export Railroad, Rick Fredrick of Enviva Pellets and County Board President Henry Cochran. Massey, after some brief remarks, served as master of ceremony,

introducing the other speakers. Miller noted the amount of work and effort that goes into a project such as this one and thanked the various partners in accomplishing it. Fredrick told the gathering that the Enviva Plant, Lucedale is the 10<sup>th</sup> plant owned by Enviva.

When it opens in the next few weeks, it will be the largest industrial pellet plant in the world, with pellets going to Europe and Japan. Cochran thanked all the various partners, specifically recognizing state Senators Dennis Debar, Joseph M. Seymour and state Representatives Doug McLeod and Manly Barton.

The rail expansion includes two No. 10 turnouts, five high-strength rail crossings, and is built using 115-pound rail. It is designed to carry heavier trains at higher speeds than the existing track, according to county Economic Development Director Ken Flanagan. It also provides the link between Enviva and the MSE.

The new line was built using 7,500 tons of limestone, the 115-pound track and 9,000 spikes.

The dignitaries, using gold painted hammers, each drove a commemorative spike into railroad ties as part of the ceremony.

Project partners included American Tank and Vessel, the Luce family/Luce Packing, Chancery Clerk Cammie Byrd, the Miss. Public Service Commission (Southern District), Continental Construction, Project Engineer Kevin Yates, AT&T, Atmos Energy, Lumen, Mississippi Power and Singing River Electric Cooperative.

The project cost nearly \$1.7 million. Most of that cost was paid using \$1.25 million state appropriation and grant funding. Only about \$50,000 was direct county funding, Flanagan said.