



George County Board of Supervisors
Community Development Office
Ken Flanagan, Director
Office: 601-247-2104
Email: kflanagan@georgecountymys.gov

George Co. and Alabama State Port Authority discuss regional development

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Economic development buzzwords like “regional partnerships” were turned into actions when the Alabama State Port Authority recently hosted a meeting with the George County Board of Supervisors and Mississippi Export Railroad.

Although separated by a state line, George County’s Industrial Park is just 40 miles southeast of the Port of Mobile. The 1,200 acre Industrial Park is directly connected to the Port’s public seaport and rail terminals with two means of transportation - U.S. Highway 98 and the Canadian National Railroad.



“Beyond the buzzwords, there is a real ‘regional partnership’ opportunity here. The 9th largest port in the United States is a 50 minute drive from our Industrial Park. And dozens of railcars already roll through the County’s Industrial Park each day heading to the Port of Mobile,” Board President Larry McDonald said.

Along with transportation, County supervisors and State Port representatives pointed out key secondary connections like shared business partners Mississippi Export Railroad and American Tank & Vessel and the dozens of George County residents working on the Port’s docks and wharfs.

“This was a getting reacquainted meeting. Based on the hospitality and the professionalism the Port of Mobile showed us, I feel we already have a solid relationship to build on,” Supervisor Henry Cochran, Dist. 5, said. “Our Board is at the beginning of a new 4-year term. This is the ideal time to reach out for new projects.”

George County provided an update on the major utility upgrades currently underway at the Industrial Park including – increased water capacity, development of a new electric substation, and several road widening projects. The County’s Industrial Park currently has 353 acres designated as “Project Ready” by Mississippi Power.



“We told them, ‘our arms in George County are open wider than many locations along the Gulf Coast.’ A lot of groups talk about regional development but we are activity looking for it. We have a great relationship with the Port of Pascagoula and feel it’s important to develop similar relationship with the Port of Mobile,” Cochran explained.

Following the meeting, the Port gave an extensive guided tour of their railcar switching yards and covered storage facilities around Water Street in Downtown Mobile. The trip also included a visit to the state-of-the-art carbon steel slab handling facility on Pinto Island.

“This is an impressive operation. The Alabama State Port Authority’s marine cargo activity is clearly one of the largest economic drivers for our entire area. This was a very productive meeting with conversations ranging from the aero-space industry to waterfront access for railcars,” McDonald said.

This is not the first time George County and Mobile County officials have talked economic development but is the first since utility upgrades began at the Industrial Park. More information about George County Industrial Park along with the Port of Mobile can be found at www.georgecountymys.com/industrial_park.html .

Cutline:

George County Supervisors recently toured the Alabama State Port Authority’s facilities on Pinto Island. Pictured are (L to R): Sup. Fred Croom, Sup. Henry Cochran, Sup. Kelly Wright, Ken Flanagan, Judy Adams, Alabama State Port Authority; Christopher Watkins, MS Export Railroad; and Sup. Larry McDonald.

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