



Upcoming Events

- 84th Legislature Convenes, January 13, 2015
- 10th Annual Texas Transportation Forum, January 14-16, 2015, Austin Hilton
- Transportation Commission to consider Freight Mobility Plan, January 29, 2015, Greer Building, Austin
- Texas Port Association Legislative Reception, February 2, 2015, Austin

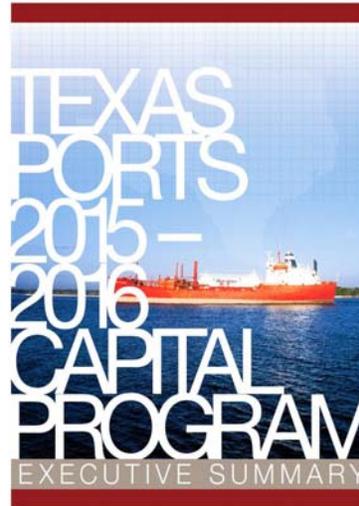
*Have a Safe
and Happy
Holiday
Season!*

2015-2016 Port Capital Program Accepted by the Transportation Commission

The 2015-2016 Port Capital Program (PCP), adopted by the Port Authority Advisory Committee at the quarterly meeting held on October 10th, was presented to the Transportation Commission on Nov. 20th in Austin, Texas.

Unlike previous years, where each port submitted a list of projects that were port specific, the PAAC chose to take a more strategic approach this year. Each port had the opportunity to submit projects based on the following criteria:

- The project must abide by the guidance in Texas Transportation Code, Title 4, Chapter 55, Funding of Port Security, Projects and Studies.
- Each port may submit one high-priority project in the \$10 million range.
- Each project must undergo an economic, environmental and engineer review.



- Large ports (more than 1 million tons of cargo/year) share the cost of the project 50-50 with the State.
- Smaller ports (less than 1 million tons of cargo/year) share the costs of the project 75-25 with the State.

Mr. John LaRue, PAAC Chairman and Executive Director of the Port of Cor-

pus Christy stated, “This year’s Capital Program focuses on high-priority projects that Texas ports need to implement now in order to capture markets, tenants, and to build revenues and jobs for our communities.” Mr. LaRue continued on by stating, “The projects in our programs vary in size, scope, and emphasis, but each serves as a catalyst for economic growth, improves port access, and enhances intermodal transportation opportunities.”

The 2015-2016 PCP can be found at www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/maritime.html under **Reports & Resources**.

TxDOT Approves Rail Projects for Ports of Beaumont and Port Arthur

The Texas Transportation Commission recently approved more than \$13 million for projects at the Port of Beaumont and Port of Port Arthur.

APAC-Texas Inc. is scheduled to build an overpass from Old U.S. 90 on the Orange County side of the Neches River into the Port of

Beaumont’s Orange County terminal.

APAC was also awarded \$4.3 million in order to install a new set of new railroad tracks inside the Port of Port Arthur.

According to the Hardin County News

(Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014) Commissioner Jeff Moseley was quoted as saying, “ We are pleased to see the projects moving forward and look forward to the benefits and opportunities they will create.”

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Port of Brownsville's "Brazos Island Harbor Channel Improvement Project" Gets Recommendation from the Corps

A proposal to deepen the Brownsville Ship Channel has been approved by Lt. General Thomas Bostick, U.S. Army Chief of Engineers and commanding general of the USACE.

In gaining the "Chief's Report" from the Corps, the Brazos Island Harbor Channel Improvement Project is now eligible for consideration in the next round of congressional authorizations.

U.S. Senators Unite to Send Letter to Senate Appropriation Committee Regarding Funding the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund

Twenty-four senators signed a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee leaders urging that FY 15 funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) meet the levels set in Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) 2014.

More than \$1.8 billion in annual HMTF revenue is collected specifically to meet the nation's annual authorized harbor maintenance needs for harbors of all sizes. Annual appropriations have been significantly less than collections, resulting in harbors and navigation channels getting narrower and shallower due to accumulating sediment, declining dredged material disposal area capacity and deteriorating harbor structures such as breakwaters and jetties.

The letter stresses the importance of harbors and navigation channels not only to local communities but to the national economy and job creation. WRRD 2014 established a 10 year path to fully appropriate HMTF collections beginning in FY 2015.

TxDOT Partners with USACE on Brazos River Floodgates



The Brazos River Floodgates (BRF) presents the single greatest challenge in terms of safety and navigation along the GIWW. The Maritime Division is partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to conduct a feasibility study to address modernization of the outdated structures.

Navigational difficulties for tow operators, due to the narrow width of the gate structures and the proximity of the structures to the river, account for most of the problems at the BRF. Because of this operators have to stop, break down their tow, and then take one barge at a time through the BRF. This results in significant time delays for tow boat operators that have to pass through the facilities. Additional annual operating costs created when tow operators break up their tows to accommodate the facility is \$11.4 million.

Additionally, an average of 36 accidents per year occurred at the BRF, resulting in an average annual damage cost of roughly \$800,000. With delay costs and damage costs, the total annual amount due to the inefficient design of the floodgates is almost \$12.2 million. TxDOT's partnership with the Corps will accelerate the project by at least 2 years.