

Open letter to the Citizens of Caddo and Bossier Parishes

The Port would like to express its sincere appreciation for the trust and confidence the citizens of Caddo and Bossier Parishes have placed in us. On April 9, 2016, a substantial majority of citizens throughout Caddo and Bossier parishes voted to renew a 2.5 mil property tax to support The Port of Caddo-Bossier. In order to continue fulfilling our mission to attract investments and create good paying jobs, these monies will be used to purchase land and to continue developing a multi-modal transportation network to attract world-class industries to North Louisiana.

Since commencing operations in the mid-1990's, the Port's mission has been to serve, not only as a multi-modal commerce hub, but also as a key economic development agency working to attract investments and create and retain jobs at The Port complex, as well as throughout Caddo and Bossier parishes.

While it is a fact that some of the very successful companies at The Port complex today already had established operations within in our community, before moving to The Port complex, these same companies were planning eminent moves out-of-state. Fortunately, The Port has a successful track record of creating, as well as retaining jobs. As a result, **1,700** people work at the companies at The Port complex alone.

Shortly after Benteler Steel chose The Port complex as the site for their \$975 million steel tube manufacturing facility, The Port began a thoughtful process for land acquisition for one reason: Only 700-acres of greenfield sites remained available and that acreage was made up of much smaller tracts of land. The Port no longer owned a site that could accommodate another Benteler Steel or Pratt Industries in our area.

As part of an in-depth Five Year Master Plan, this comprehensive expansion plan was completed in the fall of last year and revealed 18 viable sites in both Caddo and Bossier Parishes. These sites were determined "viable," because each site met a list of pre-determined criteria. Within these 18 sites are hundreds of separate tracts of land. The Port's goal is to purchase 3,000 acres and develop at least two 500-acre "mega" sites

for large footprint companies. The remainder of the property would be for smaller developments in the 10-100 acre range. We believe additional land will facilitate the fulfillment of The Port's mission, which is to enhance commerce, attract dollar investment and create employment for the parishes of Caddo and Bossier.

Understandably, the mere mention of a "Port Expansion plan" has raised concerns among some of The Port's surrounding neighbors and neighborhoods. It was never the intention to place industry in anyone's backyard, or to disrupt peoples' lives. The Port has a clear record of acting responsibly and courteously with regard to our neighbors and the environment.

Let it be understood that within each candidate site, there are tracts of land that could remain undeveloped well into the future or may never be purchased. The boundaries of each candidate site merely represent contiguous tracts of land. The boundaries are no indication The Port would purchase every tract within that site.

We have received feedback regarding the sites surrounding The Port complex and the neighborhoods in south Shreveport and south Caddo Parish, and we want the citizens to know we hear you and are continuing to listen. We also want you to know the only action taken thus far has been to answer the question of whether or not there is land in our area that meets the criteria for expansion. Before The Port buys land, we will carefully weigh all considerations and issues, including those of home and landowners. Before we purchase land, we will evaluate the likelihood of a company choosing a site adjacent to nearby homes, and we will conduct this process in the open, just as every meeting regarding the Port Expansion Study has been conducted. Finally, before we buy land, The Port clearly acknowledges that placing heavy industry in someone's backyard is not a desirable outcome.

At the May 19, 2016 meeting of The Port, the commissioners ratified an action of The Port Expansion Committee, which was to **remove** all potential sites within the area of the remaining alternatives of La. Hwy. 3132 from consideration until the Stage 1 Study

of this highway project is completed. That process could, and most likely will, take a year or more to complete. The La. Hwy. 3132 proposed routes B1 and B2 impact candidate sites B, and C, and portions of candidate sites E and F.

The greatest concentration of feedback we have received to date is from home and land owners adjacent to these sites. During this interim period we will not conduct any further due diligence on these tracts. We hope this time will be used for a productive exchange of ideas about how we can successfully work together to strengthen our community by continuing to bring good jobs and grow our economy, without impinging on the quality of life of our neighbors.

Within the next few weeks, our Port website, www.portcb.com, will have a special Web Page clearly devoted for receiving input directly related to our expansion efforts. In addition, the Port will hold a special meeting on June 16th at 3 p.m. at the Regional Commerce Center dedicated to receiving public comments, questions and feedback, especially from the leadership and the residents of the neighborhoods of the South Shreveport Neighborhoods Group, regarding the expansion plan. We look forward to hearing from you.