



HANCOCK COUNTY PORT & HARBOR COMMISSION

Economic Development • Stennis International Airport • Port Bienville Industrial Park • Port Bienville Railroad

Bill Cork  
Chief Executive Officer  
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In his current role, Cork oversees Stennis International Airport, Port Bienville Industrial Park maritime port and the Port Bienville Railroad, with an FY2019 annual budget of more than \$47.7 million. He is also the lead economic-development official for the region, which is home to NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC).

With industrial park buildings at maximum capacity and employing over 6,000 people, asset development is crucial and the focus of current efforts. But even with these constraints, in the last 12 months alone Port and Harbor's Economic Development Department under Cork's leadership attracted \$25 million in new investment and assisted in creating 81 new careers. The present pipeline of prospects is well over \$1 billion in capital investment and 3,800 jobs at an average wage of \$72,000. Together, Port and Harbor—controlled assets and industries it stewards help to generate 13% of the county's *ad valorem* tax and 24% of the county school system's *ad valorem* tax.

Since Cork arrived in Mississippi in 2016, he has become one of the leading public voices in defense, aerospace, and chemicals development in the state. He has been working closely with Stennis Space Center, the regional players and the Mississippi Development Authority to advance the cluster development in these areas.

This work includes the implementation of a Mississippi Economic Development Council award-winning Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program; the ACT Work Ready Community Initiative, which achieved 97% of goal in the first year; and the Aerospace Optimization Plan for the Hancock County and Southeast Louisiana trade area. In addition, Port and Harbor has initiated Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) licensure for a "spaceport" at Stennis International Airport; acquired 2,000 acres of land for new mega-sites; enhanced key airport infrastructure — a new runway overlay, radar systems and pilot-control lighting and signage, and new hangars and spec buildings — as well as thousands of linear feet of new dock at Port Bienville Industrial Park, and much more.

Cork has collaborated with Hancock County leadership to establish two ad hoc planning committees — the Council of Governments and the Military Affairs Committee — creating alignment on public policy matters and regional political strategy.

Prior to his arrival in Mississippi, Cork owned Cork Consulting Group, a real estate, urban planning and public finance consulting firm. He also was CEO of TexAmericas Center in New Boston, Texas, from 2007 to 2014, where he led the transformation of a former U.S. Army Ammunition Plant and Depot into a 13,000-acre mixed-use development.

Prior to 2007, he enjoyed a successful career in private commercial real estate development, energy commodity

and services sales, military base redevelopment planning, and environmental management planning and analysis.

Cork is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. His wife of 35 years, Nina, is a commercial artist and educator. They have four children and two grandchildren.

Cork serves in the following professional memberships:

- Governor Phil Bryant's Ocean Task Force
- Governor Phil Bryant's Military Defense Initiative Task Force
- Mississippi Economic Development Council
- Southern Economic Development Council
- International Economic Development Council
- Association of Defense Communities
- Transportation Policy Committee member, Mississippi Gulf Coast Metropolitan Planning Commission
- Treasurer, Mississippi Coast Foreign Trade Zone

Personal Memberships & Volunteerism

- Permanently Instituted Acolyte, Roman Catholic Diocese of Biloxi
- Marine Corps League
- American Legion
- 4<sup>th</sup> Degree member of the Knights of Columbus
- Non-attorney member of the Federalist Society