



May 2014

**From the Executive Director:  
'Incredible things are happening'**

Spring on the Mississippi Gulf Coast is upon us, and with the changing of the seasons comes some exciting new changes at the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission. The first is this inaugural edition of the Hancock Port and Harbor Commission newsletter, which we will begin publishing monthly.



The purpose of this newsletter is twofold: first, we will use this as an outlet to keep you informed of the goings-on at the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission and share important news information regarding Port Bienville Industrial Park and Stennis International Airport. Second, and perhaps most importantly, we will use this newsletter to tell your story - the story of enterprise in Hancock County. During the six months I've been on the job at HCPHC, I've come to learn that there are incredible things happening here in Hancock County - incredible success stories about our businesses and industries that simply aren't being told. We are beginning to tell those stories.

The next few months will also be an exciting time of growth at the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission. Soon, you will see site-clearing activities under way at Port Bienville and Stennis International Airport, which marks the launch of our effort to create new development-ready sites in our industrial parks. In conjunction with our site-clearing efforts, we will begin to implement a comprehensive infrastructure improvement plan designed to upgrade portions of our existing water, sewer and transportation infrastructure in addition to providing new infrastructure to our targeted development sites.

Finally, we are in the early stages of rolling out a new business retention and expansion program and a new marketing strategy that will transform the way the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission promotes our industrial assets. These elements all form the base of our new economic development strategy, which seeks to position Hancock County as a major, competitive player in the development arena.

On behalf of the entire team at the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, we want to thank all of you for your continuing efforts to make Hancock County the premiere place to do business in South Mississippi. We look forward to continuing to partner with you as we take Hancock County to new horizons and beyond.

Sincerely,

Ashley Edwards

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## New airport terminal, hangar nearing completion

Final construction is being completed this month on the new terminal building and adjacent hangar at Hancock County's Stennis International Airport.



The new facility will replace a building constructed as a school board office in the 1970s. "We expect this facility will take Stennis

International Airport at least 40 years into the future," said Bill Cotter, the airport's director.

The two-story, 10,000-square-foot terminal will house Million Air, the airport's fixed base operator, as well as the airport's administration and third-party tenants.

Million Air will occupy the terminal's first floor, which consists of two passenger lobbies, a sleep room for pilots, a meeting room and a small movie theater.

The second floor includes office space for the airport management staff as well as additional space for lease. Million Air will operate the restaurant to serve passengers, crews, airport staff and visitors. There are also a large viewing area to watch plane arrivals and departures and a meeting center with audio/visual equipment.

The new hangar has 22,000 square feet of aircraft storage with seven large workshops and twelve 144-square-foot offices.

## Rail dry bulk terminal now available to tenants and customers at Port Bienville

### **Area safer, more convenient for transloading operations**



A new rail dry bulk terminal is now available for use by tenants and customers at Port Bienville.

Port Director Steve Landry said the 40-acre site was developed with a new rail spur so that

tenants and customers could transfer shipments from rail to truck or from truck to rail in a convenient, safe way.

"From time to time we had gotten requests from tenants and/or customers who wanted to transload in the port but we didn't really have a suitable area for this type of work. So we developed a rail spur in an open area where someone can bring in cranes and other equipment to offload cargo onto a truck or bring shipments in by truck and load onto rail."

Landry said the work was done in two phases for efficiency. The rail spur was added first and then the limestone road and the laydown area were built. The project was paid for by grant money and funding from the Port and Harbor Commission.

The improvements to the unused, open area has created another site for Port Bienville to market. "Basically it gives us a site ready for a tenant," Landry said. "For now we will use it for transloading, but it can be developed into one large site or four smaller sites with rail in the center. It is money well spent."

Landry said in the past the Port used a makeshift area to handle transloading operations. Years ago when NASA was building a new test stand, several large tanks were brought by rail into the Port to be unloaded and trucked into Stennis Space Center. Another customer brought in steel beams by rail for unloading.

"We think this new area is safer and more convenient, and we can use it for several things including storing rail cars. And if we have a potential tenant who would like the site, we could work the rail into it," Landry said.

The site could be developed even more, depending on how much it is used. "We think this is something that is going to help the Port," he said. "It's one more thing our tenants can take advantage of."

## SELEX Galileo continues investing in Hancock County

SELEX Galileo Inc. is headquartered in Arlington, Va., and has six facilities across the United States, all with unique capabilities. In Hancock County, Avionic Systems Integration employees install state-of-the-art technology that brings new life into aircraft platforms.



"We upgrade and modify commercial and Department of Defense aircraft to meet the new mission requirements of our customers," said Darryl Davis, the general manager of the Hancock County facility's operation. "The Defense Department is our primary focus."

The company has been operating at Stennis since 2006. The initial work involved installing the SELEX Seaspray radar into the U.S. Coast Guard HC-130H fleet. This radar has gone on to support a number of key USCG search and rescue and drug interdiction missions. Then, as part of the USCG avionics upgrade, the SELEX Galileo team replaced the outdated cockpit with a modern glass system in both the prototype and verification aircraft.

Most recently, the hangars became host to C-130 aircraft from the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force which are undergoing an electronic propeller control system upgrade. Every aircraft and unit that leaves the Stennis facility takes off with a new capability that allows it to perform better on missions around the world.

SELEX Galileo has been expanding its presence at Stennis International Airport practically since it started operations there and now counts 88,000 square feet of hangar space, doubling its original 34,000 square feet. This means that they can accommodate up to three C-130s and multiple small fixed or rotary wing aircraft at the same time. "The business saw a great opportunity in the location and infrastructure unique to Stennis, and decided to make an investment to grow the business here," Davis said.

SELEX has a staff of 48 employees working on installing equipment. "We have everything from administrative assistants to logistics support, engineering support and aviation technicians," he said, "and we look forward to increasing those numbers as our workload expands"

Davis, a New Iberia, La., native and retired Marine, lives in Diamondhead.

"Two great things have come out of the SELEX investment in the county," he said. "One is that we employ a large portion of our employees from Hancock County; and two is that the remaining staff has moved to Hancock County from other locales, which has resulted in really great positive economic impact for the local community."

## **Operation PROP shares joy of flight at Stennis Airport**

Stennis International Airport hosted Operation PROP (People Reaching Outrageous Potential) on Saturday, May 17. Approximately 150 people signed up for Operation PROP and an estimated 200 turned out for the four-hour event.

The organization's goal is to share the recreational and vocational opportunities the world of aviation offers. Volunteer pilots came together to offer people with disabilities the chance to experience the joy of flight.

For more information, go to [OperationPROP.com](http://OperationPROP.com).

## **Port Bienville Industrial Park sites offers unique assets**

The Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission is taking a new approach to marketing development sites at Port Bienville Industrial Park.

Working in conjunction with existing industries and landowners, the Port has delineated 22 new development sites within the industrial park, ranging in size from five acres to nearly 500 acres.





Port and Harbor Executive Director Ashley Edwards said the Port undertook an effort to identify every available acre for development near Port Bienville.

"We wanted to identify every site near the Port, no matter how big or small, that could potentially be developed for industrial use," Edwards said. "Now we're working on site improvement plans to get those sites development-ready and market them to industries. We want to show development targets that we have the sites, assets and infrastructure to become one of the premier industrial parks in our region."

Edwards said Port Bienville Industrial Park features a wide range of sites with sufficient size and infrastructure to accommodate an array of industrial developments. Edwards said Port Bienville's proximity to transportation connections, such as Interstates 10, 12 and 59 and U.S. 90, makes the Port an ideal location for new development.

As the economic development authority for Hancock County, the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission owns and operates the 3,600-acre industrial park, which sits near the mouth of the Pearl River and is home to 16 companies.

The Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission also owns and operates Port Bienville Short Line Railroad, which features 15 miles of railroad track that connects to CSX's Class I railroad 4.5 miles from the Port.

Five miles of canals on Port property connect to the Pearl River and Intracoastal Waterway, allowing barge traffic from across the Southeastern United States to access the Port and its industries.

The park is isolated in the southwestern corner of Hancock County and is unlikely to be affected by encroachment of nearby communities due to the surrounding geography, making Port Bienville Industrial Park a superior site for industrial operations, as evidenced

by the large cluster of industrial companies already located within the Port.

"Port Bienville is very unique in South Mississippi given its vast size, infrastructure and availability of development sites," Edwards said. "I've heard Port Bienville referred to as 'Hancock County's best kept secret'. We're going to work very hard to make sure it isn't a secret any longer."



## New 'welcome mat' greets Stennis Airport visitors

The front door to Stennis International Airport got a boost in visibility this week with the placement of the new Stennis International Airport sign at the intersection of Mississippi 603 and Stennis Airport Drive.

Hancock County Port and Harbor Executive Director Ashley Edwards said the new sign serves as an appropriate welcome mat to the facility.

"We decided to go with a large, modern and highly-visible sign as a showcase for the entrance to Stennis International Airport, which is itself a large, modern, highly-visible aerospace asset," Edwards said. "We want people traveling up and down Highway 603 to see this sign and be reminded of the world-class airport we have here in Hancock County."

Stennis International Airport, with its 8,500-foot grooved and lighted runway, features one of the longest runways in the State of Mississippi. Centrally located in Hancock County north of Interstate 10, the airport also features more than 1,800 acres of industrial park space and is home to a growing cluster of defense-sector and technology firms, such as SELEX Galileo, Optech and LogLinear Group, LLC.

"Our new sign is symbolic of the growth that is occurring at our airport," said Airport Director Bill Cotter. "This new sign is as nice as any other airport entrance sign."

## SpaceX joins list of Hancock County aerospace

# companies

Hancock County, the state of Mississippi and NASA's Stennis Space Center officially welcomed commercial spaceflight pioneer SpaceX at a ribbon cutting ceremony April 21.



SpaceX will test its Raptor methane rocket engines at Stennis, joining other major aerospace companies along with federal agencies and contractors at the facility.

The ribbon cutting "adds SpaceX to a growing list of aerospace companies that call Hancock County home," said Ashley Edwards, Executive Director of the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission. "SpaceX is leading a paradigm shift in the space industry. As the home of Stennis Space Center, Hancock County is an important marker on the path of human space exploration. We are honored to partner with a company like SpaceX, which is revolutionizing our approach to the frontier of space."

SpaceX, founded in 2002, designs, manufactures and launches advanced rockets and spacecraft. The company's goal is to revolutionize space technology so people can eventually live on other planets.

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