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U.S. Department of Transportation Official Visits Port of Greater Baton Rouge To Officially Award MARAD Grant of \$1.75 Million for Container-on-Barge Service

(BATON ROUGE, LA) U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administrator Paul "Chip" Jaenichen visited the Port of Greater Baton Rouge's container-on-barge operation Tuesday while delivering his personal congratulations on the recent awarding of a \$1.75 million grant to the Baton Rouge port and the Port of New Orleans. The grant will be used to acquire specialized container loading equipment to increase efficiencies to the current container-on-barge shuttle service operated by SEACOR AMH between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Jaenichen said, "It is essential that we invest in integrated, multi-modal transportation systems that support the efficient movement of freight and people throughout this country. Our nation's extensive network of waterways and domestic seaports provide an opportunity to help stimulate economic growth while reducing congestion on our national freight transportation system."

According to Jay Hardman, executive director of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, "The container-on-barge service and the application for the MARAD grant have been joint projects for Baton Rouge and New Orleans, with both ports working together for more than a year."

"We are thrilled to have received this grant and to be working with the Port of Greater Baton Rouge and SEACOR AMH to offer container-on-barge service to our customers," said Gary LaGrange, President and CEO of the Port of New Orleans. "In addition to the economic and operational benefits, the service has a positive environmental impact, as well."

The shuttle service fulfills a market need by repositioning empty containers from Memphis to Baton Rouge for the increasing volume of resin exports from the Baton Rouge area. It also provides exporters with new, more efficient transportation options and offers a waterway alternative to re-position empty equipment that would otherwise move via truck or rail, said Hardman.

According to figures from a U.S. Department of Transportation study, there is a savings to the State of Louisiana of \$118 per round-trip 40-foot container between New Orleans and Baton Rouge if moved by barge rather than over the road.

Speaking on behalf of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, Baton Rouge Mayor-President Kip Holden said, "The mayors of the Mississippi River, from Minnesota to Louisiana, have worked tirelessly for four years to return container movement to the Mississippi River by restoring the Marine Highway Grant Program and forging a coalition of cities, states, companies, and the Federal government. The awarding of this grant, and others like it, is a tremendous step in establishing container shipping on the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis and beyond."

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