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PROJECT EARNS PORT FREEPORT MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

FREEPORT, Texas (October 8, 2008) – A project to remove an abandoned mobile offshore drilling unit from the west bank of the Freeport Harbor Jetty Channel has earned Port Freeport top honors from the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA).

AAPA, the organization representing the interests of seaports throughout the Western Hemisphere, recently honored Port Freeport as the sole recipient of its Environmental Improvement Award for Stakeholder Awareness, Education and Involvement.

Judges cited as a key to their decision the fact that Port Freeport involved a local school in the effort. Port Freeport Environmental Coordinator Lisa McMichael led the initiative to engage seventh- and eighth-grade students at Lake Jackson Intermediate School who, as the Mission Possible Environmental Team, were educated on environmental issues while tracking the project. The students became involved to the extent that they wrote letters to Congress supporting the unit’s removal.

Decontamination and removal of the “Zeus” unit – a collaborative effort of numerous federal, state and local entities – took away a potential source of ecological peril for a nearby county park and other recreational areas, said Port Freeport Director of Engineering / Construction David Knuckey. The unit’s removal, utilizing \$2 million in state funds, also opened opportunities for future development of upland property and eliminated the possibility of disruption of harbor commerce that could have occurred – at a cost of some \$19 million a day – if the unit had capsized into the channel.

“The Port staff, with strong support from the commissioners, strives to always keep the environment at the top of our priority list,” said Port Freeport Port Commission Chairman James F. “Jimmy” Brown Jr. “The removal of the Zeus unit sends a strong message to the community that we will work tirelessly to keep our waterways and shorelines clear of potential environmental hazards.”

Port Freeport currently ranks 14th among U.S. ports in international cargo tonnage handled. With a current channel of 45-foot depth, soon to be widened and deepened, just 3 miles from open Gulf of Mexico waters, Port Freeport offers more than 7,500 acres for future development. Port Freeport serves its customers and stakeholders through development and marketing of competitive world-class navigational capabilities, technically advanced marine and multimodal terminal services and port-related industrial facilities while achieving profits and creating jobs as a leading economic catalyst for the Texas Gulf Coast.

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