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## **PORT OF HOUSTON AUTHORITY NAMES SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

*Community and Civic Leaders Among Those Chosen*

HOUSTON, April 22, 2002 – The Port of Houston Authority today appointed 19 initial members of a Small Business Development Advisory Council assembled from community and business leaders throughout the Greater Houston area to help the Port guide the effectiveness and operations of its new Small Business Development Program.

“Tapping the diverse experience of community and business leaders enables the Port to ensure the Small Business Development Program continues to be a valuable tool for small businesses interested in seeking contracting and procurement opportunities. With close to half of Texas’ workforce employed by small businesses, the Port is committed to helping these companies and the Greater Houston economy continue to thrive for years to come,” said Jim Edmonds, chairman of the Port of Houston Authority.

“The expertise and insights the Advisory Council members bring will be valuable resources for small businesses and the Port,” said Cheryl Thompson-Draper, chairman of the Port’s Small Business Opportunity Task Force.

The initial members of the newly formed advisory council include: Darcey Baron, Houston Women’s Business Council executive director; Richard Huebner, Houston Minority executive director Business Council; Sherry Trainer, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce executive vice president; Josena Arqueta, Women’s Contractor Association executive director; Milton Wilson, Jr., Small Business Administration district director; Jenny Ko, Asian Chamber of Commerce executive director; Richard Torres, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce president and CEO; Carroll Cocchia, Native American Chamber of Commerce president; and Alfred Calloway, Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce vice president and chief of staff.

Advisory Council members also include; Bill Sherrill, University of Houston College of Business executive professor and director of CEI; Sharon McLean, Deer Park Chamber of Commerce president; Rey Gonzales, Universal International Services president; Dr. Tatcho Mindiola, University of Houston director and associate professor of sociology; Jacob Monty, Monty Law Firm partner and Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans chairman; Gilbert DeLa Cruz, Hunt Construction Group project coordinator; Robert Gallagos, Houston Independent School District director; John DeLeon, City of Houston/Office of the Mayor, Affirmative Action Contract Compliance director; Jew Don Boney, former Mayor Pro Tem; and Willie Jordan, ESPA Corp. director of Architecture.

The Port's Small Business Development Program was launched in January 2002 as a way to provide additional opportunities for local small businesses to participate in contracting and procurement at the Port.

Under the program, all eligible Port Authority contracts have a goal of including a 35 percent small business participation, including those owned by minorities and/or women. Certified small businesses from the Texas counties of Harris, Galveston, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Liberty, Waller, Chambers and Brazoria are eligible to participate.

#### The Port of Houston Authority

The Port of Houston Authority owns and operates the public facilities located along the Port of Houston, a 25-mile long complex of diversified public and private facilities designed for handling general cargo, containers, grain, other dry bulk materials, project and heavy lift cargo and other types of cargo. The Port of Houston Authority plays a vital role in ensuring navigation safety along the Houston Ship Channel, which has been instrumental in Houston's development as a center of international trade. The port is ranked first in the United States in foreign waterborne commerce and second in total tonnage. Each year, more than 7,000 vessels from around the world call at the port.

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