



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 11, 2003

Contact:

Felicia Griffin  
Communications Manager  
(713) 670-2644  
[fgriffin@poha.com](mailto:fgriffin@poha.com)

Argentina James  
Public Affairs Director  
(713) 670-2568  
[ajames@poha.com](mailto:ajames@poha.com)

**PORT OF HOUSTON AUTHORITY SIGNS  
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY**

*Goal to Spur Economic Development, Create Jobs by Increasing Trade between Asia  
and Houston through the Panama Canal*

**“All-Water Route” is Safe, Reliable and Economical Link  
to Bring Asian Goods to U.S. Consumers**

HOUSTON – With the majority of Panama Canal traffic originating from or traveling to the Gulf Coast and East Coast of the United States, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) today announced an historic move to boost trade by striking a strategic alliance with the Port of Houston Authority. The alliance will increase cooperation – such as joint marketing and coordination on modernization projects – between the Panama Canal and the PHA. Specifically, the two will seek to boost trade along the increasingly important All-Water Route, the global commerce link from Asia to America’s Gulf Coast and East Coast via the Panama Canal.

A ceremony at Houston’s Downtown Club at Plaza between the ACP and the PHA was highlighted with a formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Administrator of the Panama Canal, Alberto Alemán Zubieta, and H. Thomas Kornegay, the Executive Director of the Port of Houston Authority. Leading business

and government figures from Texas, shipping dignitaries and distinguished guests attended the ceremony.

Containerized cargo flowing through the Panama Canal on the Asia-U.S. Gulf Coast and East Coast route has experienced significant growth during the past few years because shippers' demand for all-water services. The PHA is creating jobs and producing economic development in the region because of increased volume and investment – and the two entities hope to continue this trend and increase traffic through the Canal.

Specifically, the parties involved may conduct the following activities:

- **Joint Marketing Activities** to generate new shipping business via promotions, advertising and public relations activities;
- **Data Sharing** to forecast future trade flows and market trends;
- **Market Studies Exchange** that may benefit either party in future product development or business venture;
- **Sharing of Information Related to Modernization and Improvement** projects that serve as a benefit to business and spur increased demand; and
- **Technological Interchange** of advanced technology capabilities and programs to spur cutting-edge programs in the shipping and maritime community.

All joint activities pursued will be done to provide the highest level of reliability and improved services for both parties' customers. The strategic alliance established through the MOU will continue for one year, and will be renewable on an annual basis.

“Through the years the Port of Houston has been the heart of Houston’s international infrastructure. As the nation’s leading foreign waterborne cargo port ranked second in total tonnage, the Port of Houston is confident that participation in this historic agreement with the Panama Canal Authority will help deliver the goods for this region by increasing trade and commerce, spurring economic development and creating jobs,” said Kornegay.

“Having recently shifted our model to run the Canal as a business, this alliance with our friends at the Port of Houston Authority is an example of the ACP’s aggressive strategy to improve services for our customers, generate economic development in Texas and increase trade along the All-Water Route,” said Alemán. “The Canal can no longer be a stand alone entity; we must continually pursue smart business alliances. Today’s

agreement will bring real tangible benefits – a win-win for our customers, the people of Texas and the people of Panama,” Alemán concluded.

### **About the Panama Canal Authority**

The Panama Canal Authority is the autonomous agency of the Government of Panama in charge of managing, operating, and maintaining the Panama Canal. The operation of the Panama Canal Authority is based on its organic law and the regulations approved by its Board of Directors. For more information, please refer to the Panama Canal Authority’s website: [www.pancanal.com](http://www.pancanal.com).

The Authority’s responsibility to the Panamanian people is paramount. The Canal belongs to the people and benefits from the Canal should accrue to as many Panamanians as possible. The Authority will plan its future so that it will continually contribute to the economic development and welfare of the people of Panama.

For nearly 90 years, the Panama Canal has served as the global gateway – a pathway for the shipment of major world commodities. Since the end of 1999, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) assumed the responsibility for the management, operation and modernization of the Canal and the protection and conservation of its watershed. In the past four years, the ACP has made significant strides – shifting to a market-oriented business model focused on customer service and reliability, making major capital investments for new and modern equipment and machinery, increasing safety and operational efficiency for customers, decreasing the time it takes ships to travel through the Canal and widening and deepening sections of the waterway. An important transportation link, the Canal serves more than 140 different transportation routes from every corner of the globe. It is where major trading routes of the world connect and intersect providing safe, reliable and secure passage for all vessels.

### **About the Port of Houston Authority**

The Port of Houston Authority owns and operates the public facilities located along the Port of Houston, the 25-mile long complex of diversified public and private facilities designed for handling general cargo, containers, grain and other dry bulk materials, project and heavy lift cargo, and other types of cargo. Each year, more than 6,600 vessels call at the port, which ranks first in the U.S. in foreign waterborne tonnage, second in overall total tonnage, and sixth largest in the world. The Port Authority plays a

vital role in ensuring navigational safety along the Houston Ship Channel, which has been instrumental in Houston's development as a center of international trade. The PHA's Barbours Cut Container Terminal and Central Maintenance Facility are the first of any U.S. port facilities to develop and implement an innovative Environmental Management System that meets the rigorous standards of ISO 14001. Additionally, the port is an approved delivery point for Coffee "C" futures contracts traded on the New York Board of Trade's Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange. For more information, please visit [www.portofhouston.com](http://www.portofhouston.com).

###