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Port President Recognized by American Association of Port Authorities *LaGrange Earns Professional Port Manager Certification (PPM)*

Port of New Orleans President and CEO Gary LaGrange has earned a Professional Port Manager Certification from the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA). LaGrange completed the certification after attending a series of educational seminars and submitting a research paper entitled: *Lessons Learned from a Natural Disaster: A Case Study About the Port of New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina*.

LaGrange has led the Port of New Orleans since September 2001. A native of South Louisiana, LaGrange came to New Orleans after serving as Executive Director of the Mississippi State Port Authority at Gulfport. LaGrange was at the helm when the Port of New Orleans recovered from the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history. With limited resources and personnel, he led the effort to bring the first container ship back to the Port of New Orleans just two weeks after the hurricane. Within six months, the Port was back to 80 percent of its pre-Katrina ship calls, and has since regained its pre-Katrina cargo volumes.

In order to achieve PPM certification candidates must have held a position of management for five years in the port or maritime industry, or be an academic who has at least five years experience teaching in port-related fields. In addition to his vast port management experience, LaGrange also taught Economic Geography and Urban Planning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the early 1970s.

AAPA/PPM candidates must also attend all AAPA core seminars and training conferences, successfully complete a certain number of elective seminars in the approved curriculum, and prepare and present an original written paper or document on a topic that advances port management theory or practice.

“It is quite a commitment for a port director to take on the requirements of AAPA's PPM certification program, but Gary pursued it with great energy,” said Bernard S. Groseclose Jr., chairman of AAPA's curriculum committee, which oversees the PPM program. “It is particularly notable that his final work to achieve the PPM status was a paper providing a detailed accounting of the disaster that was Hurricane Katrina and the efforts undertaken to recover and build back the Port of New Orleans. These very real experiences and preparations for a natural disaster of this type will serve as valuable lessons to others in our industry.”

LaGrange's paper lists the chronology of the events and history leading up to Hurricane Katrina. “The intended focus is to use Hurricane Katrina and its effects on the Port of New Orleans as a case study of lessons learned, which hopefully benefits others in their planning and preparation efforts for natural disasters as well as acts of terrorism or any other interruption of routine port operations,” LaGrange said.

Other awards of distinction for LaGrange include: Maritime Person of the Year, the Propeller Club of New Orleans in 2003; the Maritime Person of the Year, the Propeller Club of the Port of Gulfport in 2001; Man of Steel Award, the American Institute for International Steel (AIIS). He has also been

inducted into the National Rivers Hall of Fame and the International Maritime Association Hall of Fame at the United Nation's Building in New York City.

Other Port of New Orleans staff members who have earned a PPM include Chief Operating Officer Pat Gallwey and Director of Business Planning Joe Cocchiara Jr. Former Port President J. Ron Brinson and Former Chief Operating Officer Dave Wagner also hold a PPM.

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