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PORT OF PALM BEACH TRADE MISSION 'HUGE SUCCESS'

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. – Returning late last week from a five-day Port of Palm Beach trade mission to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, a delegation of 34 public and private-sector leaders from Palm Beach County is encouraged by opportunities for extensive mutual benefits.

“The trade mission was a huge success,” said Wayne M. Richards, second-term port commissioner of the Port of Palm Beach District Commission, who headed the delegation. “During our time in both Caribbean island countries, we established and nurtured relationships that we can expect will reap significant gains for us all for many years to come. It is truly proving to be a ‘win-win’ proposition.”

During the Feb. 5-9 visit, formal actions included the signing of a sister port agreement between Port of Palm Beach and the Port of Bridgetown, Barbados, and agreement on a similar relationship with the Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corp. Ltd. (PLIPDECO), which operates the Port of Point Lisas, Trinidad.

Port of Palm Beach Executive Director Lori A. Baer is heading a working group effort to ensure that those agreements bear results for all parties through cooperation in such areas as port security and port operations training, work exchange programs and identification of joint-venture projects and funding sources. Assuming similar roles on behalf of their respective ports are Everton Walters, chief executive officer of Barbados Port Inc., and Rawle Baddaloo, vice president for commercial relations and harbor for PLIPDECO.

Formal and informal interactions, including one-on-one business meetings coordinated by the U.S. Commercial Service and receptions sponsored by leading Port of Palm Beach tenant Tropical Shipping, produced hopes for several future commercial opportunities, including those associated with warehousing and distribution centers for manufacturers and suppliers from Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

“We could not have asked for a more productive mission – for the ports, the represented companies, the participating cities and the Palm Beach County area,” said Alfred Zucaro Jr., chairman of World Trade Center Palm Beach, in conjunction with which the mission took place.

In addition to those representing Port of Palm Beach and numerous companies seeking import-export growth, trade mission participants included Riviera Beach City Councilwomen Ann Iles and Elizabeth “Liz” Wade, and Mayor Michael Brown, Belle Glade City Commissioner Gwendolyn Asia-Williams and Palm Beach County Director of Economic Development Kevin Johns.

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