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April 24, 2006

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**TOP CORPS OF ENGINEERS OFFICIAL TO BE BRIEFED**  
**AT PORT OF PALM BEACH FRIDAY, APRIL 28**

**RIVIERA BEACH, Fla.** -- John Paul Woodley Jr., assistant secretary of the U.S. Army for civil works, is slated to be briefed on channel enhancement progress and needs at the Port of Palm Beach on Friday, April 28, at 4 p.m. He is to be accompanied by U.S. Rep. Clay Shaw.

Woodley, who is the highest-ranking U.S. official over port dredging projects and their funding, is also to be presented a resolution of commendation from the Port of Palm Beach District Board of Commissioners during his visit to the port. The resolution expresses appreciation for the swift response by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers following the hurricanes of the past two years that caused loss of channel depth at the port.

“This visit indicates the Corps of Engineers’ interest in and understanding of the vital nature of the growing role of Port of Palm Beach in international commerce and the need to ensure that channels remain open to vessels,” said George E. Mastics, chairman of the Port of Palm Beach District Board of Commissioners.

“We are truly honored to receive Secretary Woodley and welcome the opportunity to recognize the agency for its efforts,” Mastics continued. “We look forward to showing first-hand how Port of Palm Beach serves as a model of effectiveness for cooperative relationships between ports, communities, congressional leaders and the Corps of Engineers.”

Shaw, whose congressional district includes the port and its surrounding areas, has been instrumental in expressing the urgency of port post-hurricane needs and has served as a catalyst in the re-energizing of a tri-party coalition of representatives of the port, the Town of Palm Beach and Palm Beach County in ensuring that port channel issues are addressed.

Woodley is to be briefed on key needs of Port of Palm Beach to be funded through the federal operations and maintenance budget funding. Port officials are seeking to ensure full federal funding of a project to expand the port area's settling basin as well as 50-50 funding of a three-year, \$2 million channel dredging study that is an essential first step in deepening and widening the channel so that the port may fully realize its potential for handling vessels carrying bulk and breakbulk cargoes.

"These are matters essential to the future of our port and our region," said Mastics, who added that the briefing also is to include discussion of the tri-party coalition's united position calling for contracting of appropriate dredging equipment to capture precious sand for beach placement.

Port of Palm Beach is a trade hub for the Caribbean region and ranks among the nation's 20 busiest container ports while also handling numerous bulk and breakbulk cargoes. The port, governed by a board of five elected commissioners, annually contributes \$260 million to the regional economy while directly and indirectly bringing some 3,000 jobs.

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