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DOE

EXCESS DOE HANFORD LANDS TRANSFERRED TO PORT OF BENTON FOR PORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Tri-Cities area is now better positioned for economic diversification as a result of teamwork by federal agencies to transfer excess Hanford land to local control. The Port of Benton is the new owner of Hanford's 3000 Area located in North Richland. The Department of Energy (DOE), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Maritime Administration (MARAD) worked about a year to transfer the nation's first piece of real property under the provisions of the 1994 Defense Authorization Act, which authorizes federal agencies to transfer excess land and equipment to local organizations for port and economic development.

"I am delighted with the teamwork of all parties to make this unprecedented land transfer happen. This is an example of the effective transfer of surplus federal land to local control for economic diversification. We will look for more opportunities to do this as circumstances permit," said Hanford Manager John Wagoner.

The 3000 Area contains 16 buildings and comprises over 71 acres. It was originally used for administrative office space and maintenance activities. It also housed crafts personnel and other employees engaged in architectural, engineering, and construction work at the Hanford Site in Southeastern Washington. DOE determined it had outlived its usefulness at Hanford in September 1995, and subsequently began working with GSA to excess the property.

Because federal regulations require excess property and equipment first be made available to other federal agencies, the transfer was initially slowed due to the precedent setting action of the 1994 legislation. However, after working through the issues, DOE was able to declare the land excess and reported it to GSA - the government's business and real estate manager. Having already submitted its proposal for the land, the Port of Benton ultimately gained the approval of MARAD for the land transfer.

"The Port of Benton's ambitious redevelopment program will provide additional port facilities, create jobs and increase waterborne commerce on the Columbia River," said Maritime Administrator Albert J. Herberger. Under the transfer program, the property must be used and maintained as a port facility.

"The partnership among the federal agencies and port officials will pay dividends to the region and set a standard for future cooperation," Herberger said.

"I am really pleased the property transfer was a success and congratulate the Port of Benton on receipt of this land. I am sure they will do an outstanding job leveraging it to grow jobs in the community," said Wagoner.

Under its proposal, the Port of Benton will use the land for industrial purposes and to promote foreign

trade, particularly among nations along the Pacific Rim. Bob Larson, President of the Port of Benton Commissioners, said, "This land is strategically located in terms of proximity to the Columbia River for the distribution of commercial products in the Northwest and to nations abroad. An infrastructure is already in place that is fundamental for economic development. I am really excited about the opportunities which lay ahead."

Jay Pearson, GSA's Regional Administrator, said, "It is a pleasure for us at GSA to make the nation's first assignment for port use under Public Law 103-160. We are particularly pleased by the cooperation of the Maritime Administration, Departments of Labor, Commerce and Energy, and the Port of Benton. We are confident that the Port of Benton's future use of the property will enhance the economy in the Tri-Cities area."

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