

Q&A WITH PORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER PAULA MIRANDA



A native of Brazil, Paula moved to the United States in 1988. She has lived in several states, including Florida, Hawaii, Colorado, California, Washington and Oregon. Paula was hired in 2007, bringing a wealth of experience to her position. Prior to joining the Port staff, she spent five years at the Port of Portland, working in the areas of contract administration, property management, which included tenant negotiation, and providing support in many other areas of port development work. Between 1993 and 2002, she worked in the residential and commercial real estate industry.

Q&A Why Did You Come to the Port of St. Helens?

At the Port of Portland, we were running out of large properties that could attract large tenants. But here, the opportunity for new tenants and new developments is huge. When I saw what the Port had in terms of properties, I saw an opportunity to be a part of it and really make a difference.

Q&A What Types of Businesses Are Showing Interest in Port Properties?

All different types of industries, but mostly renewable energy related industries, including solar, biomass and bio-diesel, are expressing interest in our properties. We have also been entertaining diverse types of manufacturers who are interested in our Southern Columbia County sites.

Q&A What is the Biggest Challenge for the Port in Terms of Attracting New Business?

Finding buildings to meet the needs of potential tenants is always a challenge. Because it is difficult to fund capital projects like buildings without a tenant, the end result is that we don't have excess inventory. However, we have been considering build-to-suit possibilities if we can find tenants willing to sign a long-term lease.

Q&A What Properties Have the Greatest Potential for New Industries?

Different sites have different potential. That is one of the greatest things about Port properties. We have a great airport in Scappoose, filled with all sorts of synergies and a tremendous potential to attract new aviation industries; in Clatskanie, Port Westward Energy Park has been attracting prospectors from all over the energy sector; in Columbia City, we have been focusing on attracting light manufactures; in St. Helens, we have a great accessible site for a large heavy manufacturing development at our McNulty Industrial Park. We are also working with DEQ and the City of St. Helens in creating a very desirable site at the old Poleyard at Railroad Avenue; and more recently, we are working to rebuild our Multnomah Industrial Park, which will provide a great opportunity for a new tenant to start up with a brand new building.

Q&A How Has the Economic Downturn Impacted Your Work?

While some interested parties seemed to be temporarily on hold, some lenders and investors are now starting to move forward again. Prospectors are still contacting us, but these things take time. Overall, Columbia County has a lot to offer. Rail and water are typically a great attraction for businesses. The price of land is still relatively low and land is readily available, and we have large parcels of land already zoned. That is all extremely attractive to potential business and developers. So, we expect to have some really good things happening here within the next couple of years.

COMMISSIONER CLIFF TETREAUPT HONORED AT RECEPTION

Outgoing Port of St. Helens Commissioner Cliff Tetreault was the guest of honor at a reception prior to the Port Commission meeting on June 24th.



Columbia County Commissioner Earl Fisher read a statement thanking Tetreault for his commitment to the Port district. New Commissioner Chris Iverson and re-elected Commissioner Terry Luttrell were sworn in at the July 8th meeting. Pictured here (from left to right) are Cliff Tetreault, Port Commission President Robert Keyser and County Commissioner Earl Fisher.

FEATURED PORT-BASED BUSINESS: METALCRAFT, INC.

The Port of St. Helens recently voted to approve a lease agreement with MetalCraft Machine, Inc., a well-established Columbia County business.

Currently based in Scappoose, MetalCraft will be moving to a Port-owned facility on Port Avenue in St. Helens, after improvements are made to an existing building.

"We are excited to have this growing business as a tenant," stated Robert Keyser, president of the Port Commission.

MetalCraft, a small parts manufacturing business, was started in 1994 by President and COO Sven Christofferson. Machinists at MetalCraft make parts for a wide-variety of customers, from Freightliner to Scappoose's SportCopter International.

New clients include Portland's Porteon Electric Vehicles and Brammo Motorsports, an Ashland company that makes electric motorcycles.

Christofferson projects growth for his business over the next 24 months, including the possibility of new "capital equipment" and up to six new employees (one office manager and five machinists).

"We are growing and doing well," says Christofferson, "and that's a great place to be in."

PORT OF ST. HELENS COMMISSIONERS

ROBERT KEYSER

President

e-mail: keyser@portsh.org

COLLEEN DESHAZER

Vice President

e-mail: deshazer@portsh.org

MIKE AVENT

2nd Vice President

e-mail: avent@portsh.org

TERRY LUTTRELL

Treasurer

e-mail: luttrell@portsh.org

CHRIS IVERSON

Secretary

e-mail: iverson@portsh.org

The Port of St. Helens has five elected officials who serve as commissioners

Terms of office are 4 years

Commissioners are elected from across the entire Port district

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Website: www.clatskanie.com/chamber • Phone: 503-728-2502

Email: chief@clatskanie.com

RAINIER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Website: www.rainier97048.org • Phone: 503-556-7212

Email: postmaster@rainier97048.org

SOUTH COLUMBIA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Website: www.sccchamber.org • Phone: 503-397-0685

Email: mgr@sccchamber.org

VERNONIA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.vernoniachamber.org • Phone: 503-429-6081