



Press Release:

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For Immediate Release

Gary Nelson presented Distinguished Service Award by American Association of Port Authorities

Aberdeen, WASH. – The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) presented retiring Port of Grays Harbor Executive Director Gary Nelson with a Distinguished Service Award at its Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C. last week. AAPA, the unified and recognized voice of seaports throughout the Americas, represents more than 130 public port authorities in the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America. Mr. Nelson has been active with AAPA since being hired by the Port in 2000 and served as AAPA’s Chairman of the Board from 2019-2020.

“It is an honor and a privilege to be recognized by my Port industry colleagues,” shared Executive Director Gary Nelson. “It has been a pleasure to be a part of the leading voice of ports throughout the Americas and I am incredibly proud of the work AAPA has accomplished over the years. I am confident more great things are coming for AAPA and its members.”

Mr. Nelson joined the Port of Grays Harbor in April 2000, bringing with him a strong background of private sector management, particularly in trading wood products throughout the Pacific Rim. Since then, Mr. Nelson has worked with port customers, staff, state and federal agencies and the local community to position Grays Harbor as a major hub for international trade and economic development. During his tenure, the Port of Grays Harbor has experienced exponential growth in cargo shipments, private investment and business activity. Mr. Nelson retires on March 31, 2024, with current Deputy Executive Director Leonard Barnes taking the helm as of April 1, 2024.

“The Port of Grays Harbor Commission could not be prouder of Gary’s leadership and service to the Port and our community over the last 24 years,” stated Port Commission President Phil Papac. “We are so very grateful to AAPA for Gary’s well-deserved recognition of his contribution to the industry over his career.”

Founded in 1911, the Port of Grays Harbor is one of Washington State’s oldest port districts and Washington’s only deep-water port located directly on the Pacific Ocean. The Port of Grays Harbor operates 4 deep-water marine terminals, the Westport Marina, Bowerman Airport, Grays Harbor ship assist services, numerous public waterfront access facilities, in addition to industrial and business parks throughout the County. The addition of Satsop Business Park increased the Port’s properties to more than 1,000 acres of industrial properties and an additional 1,200 acres of sustainably managed forestland. Strategically located midway between Seattle and Portland and less than 1 ½ hours from open sea, the Port of Grays Harbor provides businesses a diverse portfolio of facilities. More information on the Port of Grays Harbor’s facilities and operations is available at portofgraysharbor.com or satsop.com.



Port of Grays Harbor Executive Director Gary Nelson (center) is presented AAPA’s Distinguished Service Award by Northwest Seaport Alliance CEO John Wolfe and AAPA President & CEO Cary Davis at AAPA’s Legislative Summit Last week.