



**For immediate release  
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## **Port Houston Fire Department receives Meritorious Public Service Award**

**HOUSTON** – The Port of Houston Authority Fire Department was awarded the U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award, at a special ceremony conducted during the Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee meeting at the Houston Pilots facility in Houston, Friday.

According to a press release issued by the Coast Guard, the Port of Houston Authority Fire Department represented in person by Assistant Chief Glenn Hood and Senior Capt. Kirk Beverung, along with Houston Pilots Capt. Michael McGee and Capt. Michael Phillips; G&H Towing Capt. Douglas Scott and Capt. William Curry were presented the award by Rear Adm. Dave Callahan, the Coast Guard's 8th District commander, in recognition for their "prompt and effective response to prevent a major marine casualty."

The incident, involving *M/T Aframax River*, an 800-foot-crude oil tanker, occurred Sept. 6, 2016. There were no injuries or loss of life and impact to the environment and channel closure was "minimized" credited to the actions of those involved. In part, the Meritorious Public Service Award noted that Port Houston firefighters "applied their training and expertise to effectively battle the enormous blaze."

During an Oct. 25, 2016 Port of Houston Authority Port Commission meeting, Port Commission Chairman Janiece Longoria hailed the response to the incident and heroic life-saving actions of all involved. Coast Guard Captain of the Port Peter Martin, in attendance at the Oct. meeting, publicly praised the Port Houston crew members for their "diligence" and "immediate action." Chairman Longoria underscored the quick response of the port's fire department and their "excellent decision-making skills" to save the nearby vessels and docks and "quickly" extinguish the fire.

Port Houston maintains its own emergency first responders, Port Police and Fire departments. Members are well-trained in emergency response tactics. The Port of Houston Fire Department currently operates three fire stations, which are strategically stationed along the Houston Ship Channel. The personnel and equipment perform rescue, fight marine and land fires, hazardous materials and oil spills and releases and other emergencies throughout the ship channel.

Port Houston operates three fireboats along with three HAZMAT trucks, three class-A pumpers and one booster truck. Port of Houston fireboat captains are licensed U.S. Coast Guard masters; and its firefighters are certified by the state of Texas as Structural Firefighter, Marine Firefighter, HazMat Technician and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Regarding this high-level meritorious award, Port Houston Executive Director Roger Guenther offered, "We are extremely proud of all the members of the port's emergency management and safety teams. They serve with dedication and honor every day; and we are particularly proud of those presented with this distinguished honor by the U.S. Coast Guard. This recognition is well-deserved," he said.

The Meritorious Public Service Award is the second-highest public service honor bestowed by the U.S. Coast Guard.



Photo caption: (left to right) U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Houston Galveston Commanding Officer, Captain Peter Martin; Port of Houston Fire Department, Captain Peter Martin; Port of Houston Fire Department, Assistant Chief Glenn Hood; Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard Commander, Eight Coast Guard District, David R. Callahan (Photo: Business Wire)

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**About Port Houston**

*For more than 100 years, the port has owned and operated the public wharves and terminals of the Port of Houston – the nation’s largest port for foreign waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas, and the nation. It supports the creation of nearly 1.175 million jobs in Texas and 2.7 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling almost \$265 billion in Texas – 16 percent of Texas’ total gross domestic product – and more than \$617 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit Port Houston’s website at: [www.porthouston.com](http://www.porthouston.com).*