



# Texas grant provides funds for port worker training

**I**n a move to ensure enough qualified workers to fill future jobs at Texas ports, the Texas Workforce Commission awarded nearly \$1 million for a training program to teach current and new port workers skills for success on the docks, the Port of Houston Authority announced.

The funds, which were awarded to a local college and the West Gulf Maritime Association, will give more than 1,000 current port workers and nearly 600 new hires the opportunity to increase their skills in technology, safety and homeland security.

San Jacinto College and its Continuing and Professional Development Division developed the training and created customized programs for nearly every job category at a port. Programs will be offered to longshoremen, industrial truck operators, clerks, gang and walking foremen, container handlers and yard tractor operators.

"This grant establishes the beginning of a long and dynamic partnership to build and expand the highly skilled and high-wage jobs at all port locations," said William Lindemann, chancellor of San Jacinto College. "This funding forms the


foundation to seamlessly replicate and sustain a professional training program that will affect the Gulf Coast region for the next 10 years."

Phase 1 of the training began in January and will end in November.

The program also has support from the International Longshoremen's Association, the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region and the Worksource, a private-public organization that helps industries fill jobs in the 13-county Houston-Galveston Gulf Coast region.

Training will occur at the college and at various port sites in Texas. It is intended to help the region keep pace with the anticipated increase of work at the ports.

State officials expect Texas ports to expand about 10 percent each year during the next decade. At the same time, work on the docks is becoming more sophisticated as more technology is introduced.

"With equipment and technologies becoming more sophisticated and expensive, a highly skilled and trained work force will be essential for the ports of Texas to compete," said Walter Niemand, president of the West Gulf Maritime Association. 

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