

Council Vice President Fielkow to Hold Hearing on Taking Advantage of 2014 Panama Canal Expansion

Focus Will Be on How New Orleans Can Prepare to Benefit from Increased Global Trade

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New Orleans
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - March 23, 2009
- New Orleans City Council Vice President and Special Projects & Economic Development Committee Chair Arnie Fielkow will hold a committee hearing on Tuesday, April 7th to discuss how the New Orleans region should best prepare itself to reap the benefits of the 2014 expansion of the Panama Canal.

The Special Projects & Economic Development Committee meeting will be held at 10 a.m. The widening of the Panama Canal, scheduled to be completed in 2014, presents unprecedented international trade opportunities for the New Orleans region.

"After visiting Panama last year and learning first-hand the size of the ships that will come through the widened Canal in 2014, I knew that the New Orleans region needed to quickly address needed improvements to our shipping facilities," says Council Vice President Fielkow. "New Orleans cannot afford to fall behind in international trade again, especially when we have the infrastructure, natural resources and local talent to ensure that our region is a top player in international trade for decades to come. The Panama Canal expansion is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our entire region, but it is essential that a unified regional plan is developed and that funding for this plan be pursued in the upcoming legislative session."

Invited guests to the hearing include Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser; Port of New Orleans Director



Gary LaGrange; GNO, Inc. President & CEO Michael Hecht; House Speaker Jim Tucker (R-86); State Senator A.G. Crowe (R-1); and World Trade Center Managing Director Eugene Schreiber. All members of the New Orleans state legislative delegation have also been invited.

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.