Cargo Activities Cease, Port Ready for Gustav

About 10 vessels seeking safe harbor in New Orleans

New Orleans— The Port of New Orleans finished its cargo operations Saturday evening and about 10 vessels have sought safe harbor in the Port’s jurisdiction as Hurricane Gustav approaches. The Port is in phase IV of its four phase storm plan, with cranes locked down, key operations and security personnel in place, hazards removed from the wharves and the Port’s floating equipment secured.

“We are prepared for Gustav to make landfall sometime Monday evening, probably somewhere west of New Orleans,” said Gary LaGrange, President and CEO of the Port of New Orleans. “Our hurricane preparations have gone very smoothly, and we have been able to accommodate a number of customers and vessels seeking safe harbor while we buttoned up our facilities and prepare to hunker down.”

The port’s last container vessel before the storm, the MSC Chile, departed New Orleans Saturday evening, and work on a series of breakbulk vessels ceased yesterday so that final preparations for the Hurricane could take place. A mandatory evacuation has been called effective noon Sunday for most of the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Each of the vessels staying in port have been tied down to the wharf with multiple lines, and crews are required to be on standby to respond if the ships break free from their mooring.

Movement of deep draft vessels has stopped as pilot services are no longer available due to unsafe weather and vessel boarding conditions. The Coast Guard will move to Port Condition Zulu at 4 p.m. Sunday, which will shut down all traffic on the river and other waterways without prior approval from the Coast Guard Captain of the Port. Immediately following the storm, all waterways the Coast Guard will evaluate whether the waterways can provide safe transit.

Port Bridge Update

The Florida Avenue Bridge has been raised 40 feet to prevent damage. The St. Claude Avenue bridge is in its lowered position and available for vehicular traffic to assist in the evacuation of the city or emergency response. Railroad operations at the Almonaster Railroad Bridge have been completed and the bridge is in its raised position.
Port Headquarters Update

The Port Headquarters building will be closed on Tuesday. Only essential emergency employees are required to report to work on Tuesday. For up to date employee information, please call 504-528-3388 or 1-866-476-7866.