

Sister Port visits from China

On Thursday Dec. 18 representatives from the Port of Hueneme's Chinese Sister Port of Qinhuangdao visited the Port of Hueneme interested in learning more about our governance as a special independent (enterprise) district. Upon the group's arrival they were met by Board President Jess Herrera. Deputy Executive Director Pete Wallace and the District's Director of Marketing & Public Information Will Berg represented the port and Port customers from NYKCool (Mike Karmelich), GAPS (Michael Wynn), and Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (Len Mazzella & Jerry Mahoney).

President Herrera made an initial presentation welcoming the delegation and introducing the port and its activities as well as port customers in attendance. Other District Commissioners also made introductory comments and later added to the conversation. President Herrera acted as host and moderator throughout the visit.

Port customers also made introductory comments describing their 'partnerships' with the port and how their particular partnerships worked. This was followed by a presentation on port governance by Deputy Executive Director Pete Wallace and how our relationships engage not only our customers but the cities of Port Hueneme and Oxnard. Mr. Wallace stayed engaged throughout the rest of the visit as Deputy Mayor Liu returned to him for clarifications.

Deputy Mayor Liu asked questions throughout and followed up with a presentation on the current changes in governance of China's ports including Qinhuangdao. When the District first established a relationship with Qinhuangdao in 2002 China's ports were under national administration via the Ministry of Communications. Today China is pursuing more localized control encouraging ports and the municipalities they are in to create new partnerships aimed and benefiting both the community as well as the port. The Deputy Mayor is studying how the partnerships the Port of Hueneme operates under both with customers and the local municipalities operate. He was impressed by the partnership that the city of Port Hueneme and the port has benefited both. He commented favorably on the value of our City-Port Committee formed to develop mutual policies that benefit both and commented how it served as an example of how ports and municipalities can successfully work together for the benefit of the community.

The city of Qinhuangdao was clearly on a fact finding and marketing mission. They wanted to learn more about how the District structures contracts with our customers and the City of Port Hueneme. The port of QHD like other Chinese ports is challenged to find new sources of revenue beyond their traditional cargoes assigned years ago by the central government (Ministry of Communications). QHD remains the largest and most active coal port in the world but tonnage is down as the oil and power generation industries become more economically stressed in today's marketplace. Previous ideas discussed with QHD such as refrigerated cargoes are now back on the table now that the political reorganization of the port system seems complete. The city of Qinhuangdao is taking an active role in working with the port of Qinhuangdao to develop and expand business. Mr. Lin Wending (QHD port General Manager) and the local office of the municipal Communications bureau (Mr. Liu Chunrong) accompanied Deputy Mayor Liu on this trip. In China, communications includes transportation projects including the maritime transportation system.

Deputy Mayor Liu warmly invited the Port of Hueneme to visit again but made a strong point to bring our customers with us. Deputy Mayor Liu commented that the business paradigm developed between the port and its customers could be duplicated at the Port of Qinhuangdao.

The visit concluded at noon with an exchange of gifts. The delegation included:

Mr. Liu Cheng
Deputy Mayor/ Qinhuangdao Municipal Government

Mr. Liu Chunrong,
Director/ QHD Communications

Ms. Yang Xiaowei (return visitor)
Interpreter, QHD Port Group

Mr. Lin Wending
Deputy General Manager, QHD Port Group