

Satsop Business Park to Become Port Property January First

Local News

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ELMA, Wash. - It's official. Satsop Business Park will become a part of the Port of Grays Harbor. The Park's assets, liabilities and operations will transfer Jan. 1, 2013.

The business park was already on the cusp of change as several longtime employees announced retirement plans, including CEO Tami Garrow, who will retire in March of 2013. Those announcements brought to the forefront discussions that the Grays Harbor Public Development Authority, Satsop Business Park's governing board, had been having for more than two years regarding the best future for the Park.

In those discussions, the board determined that consolidating with the Port of Grays Harbor was the best way to achieve the economic development goals of the Park. This is a win for the Park, a win for the Port and a win for the community. - Tami Garrow, Satsop Business Park "We are very excited about this transition and feel it is the best for the people and businesses of Grays Harbor," said Garrow. "Of all the entities in the county, the Port's business is the most similar to what we do here at the Park. Having Satsop Business Park under the umbrella of the Port of Grays Harbor should open up even more business opportunities, which ultimately will bring private investment and jobs to the region." "The Port has name familiarity, global exposure and a deeper bench as far as staff and expertise," she said. "It is experiencing tremendous growth, and Satsop Business Park has the land and facilities to accommodate the Port's expansions and new business recruitments. This is a win for the Park, a win for the Port and a win for the community," Garrow said.

[This is] an opportunity to bring two extremely strong, competent organizations together to become a premier economic development organization for the state. - Gary Nelson, Port of Grays Harbor "We see this consolidation as an opportunity to bring two extremely strong, competent organizations together to become a premier economic development organization for the state," said Port of Grays Harbor Executive Director Gary Nelson. "We have an opportunity to not only serve our community in providing jobs, but to also be a model for the state in how rural economic development can work and serve the citizens," Nelson said.

The Business Park formally tendered its assets and liabilities to the Port Oct. 2, and on Oct. 9, the Port accepted the offer. It plans to operate Satsop Business Park as a division of its operations, similar to how the Port operates the Industrial Properties Division, the Westport Marina and the Bowerman Airport. The Port is currently seeking applications for a Director of Business Development for Satsop Business Park. (See boxed story below.)

"We're proud of what we've accomplished the last 13 years, taking a former nuclear power plant site and transforming it into a thriving business park," said PDA board chair Steve Poler. "The infrastructure here is complete; there are more than 40 businesses, an active training center, a thriving forest and a healthy balance sheet. It's not often a board votes itself out of existence. But in this case, it was the right thing to do and the right time to do it. - Steve Poler, PDA chairman "It's not often a board votes itself out of existence," he added. "But in this case, it was the right thing to do and the right time to do it. It's like we've nurtured Satsop Business Park up to this point, but we believe that for future growth, the connections and the property marketing ability that the Port of Grays Harbor can offer will open up Grays Harbor County and this whole region to more economic

growth.

"The easiest thing would have been to stay status quo and hire a new CEO, but I'm proud of our board for being forward-thinking and doing what we believe is best for our community,"

Poler said.

According to the consolidation agreement, all the current contracts, leases and agreements will be honored and all the Park's employees will be retained.

During the next two months, the Port and the Park will work with current customers, tenants and other partners to make introductions and ensure a smooth transition.