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DECEMBER 2011

Port Canaveral's

STAN PAYNE

BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

... **J. STANLEY "STAN" PAYNE.** Since taking the helm as CEO of Canaveral Port Authority, Payne has been the driving force behind what has become an economic juggernaut on the Space Coast. Conservative estimates are that the Port brings a half billion dollars into the local economy every year. Though he once referred to it as, "The Little Port that Could," the impressive growth, both in the burgeoning cruise ship industry and in cargo has caught international attention. Recently, Payne was named Maritime Person of the Year by the International Propeller Club, which represents the Maritime industry around the world.

In just the last twelve months, Vitol SA completed its fuel tank depot with a pipeline to the Orlando International Airport. The 35-acre tank farm can store 117 million gallons and cost \$150 million to build. In addition, the Port broke ground in August on a new \$52.6 million terminal complex that is scheduled for completion in 2012. An adjacent \$7.5 million parking garage will serve the terminal's passengers. Another critical project on the Port's drawing board is the widening and deepening of the main channel. Having widened the turn basin, the push is on to obtain the \$34 million funding for the project.

Building on Experience

After graduating from law school at William and Mary, Payne became general counsel of the Virginia Port Authority, before he was 26. As Payne recalled, "I moved into that opening when my boss became CEO, being a very young attorney they could mold." In a trend, which he adds, "that followed my career," he started out handling legal issues and gradually took over more management responsibilities, being the Port's legislative representative and then moving into project management. This included reorganizing a 120-man police department at age 29 and helping build one of the firsts of its kind, the Virginia Inland Port.

The experience he gained as a part of that turnaround team, along with the time he spent at the furniture and textile giant Bassett serving as general counsel and corporate secretary, was far reaching. At Bassett he received "an experience that resembled an MBA," working with board members like John Snow, who would later become the Secretary of the Treasury. This provided the knowledge and know-how needed for the challenges that awaited him at Port Canaveral.

Changing Course, Changing Culture

Though people consider Payne a "visionary," he doesn't necessarily see it that way. "Oftentimes there are too many 'visions' competing for supremacy. What I am, is someone who likes to see visions executed by identifying our goals and moving from concept to completion."

When he came to Port Canaveral there were two main problems that he saw had to be addressed. First, was the overlap between the elected board and the Port's staff. Payne recalled, "From the outset I told them I would not take the job unless everyone acknowledged there is a bright line of separation between the staff or day-to-day operations and the Commission." However he confided, "Not long after accepting the job I called my wife and let her know it wasn't working out. I felt there was something fundamentally wrong with the way the Port was being run." He told her, "I don't fit in."

This was the second challenge and one that took a more evolutionary approach to change, namely the functional culture of the Port. "When expectations for the staff and for the organization are set, you fully anticipate those expectations being met. However, that wasn't always the case." He continued, "What the Port needed was to be run like a business. In fact, when I was interviewed for the COO position, two out of the five commissioners told me, 'There is a country club atmosphere among many of the staff; they set their own hours and come and go as they please.'"

Showing the Substance

Like the ancient parable of the house built on rock versus the one with a foundation of sand, the proof of Payne's leadership and organizational skills became crystal clear when a hurricane of controversy recently hit the Port. What some like to call "Portgate," one of the commissioners was accused of

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accepting bribes and the FDLE moved in to investigate. Payne, who helped initiate the inquiry, was advised by the investigators to muzzle his desire to explain what happened and to exonerate the rest of the Port's staff and Commission.

Yet, what would have swept away most appointed public figures, while bringing plans and projects to a grinding halt, caused Payne's star to rise. He and his staff continued to ensure projects, to upgrade and improve the Port, to move forward unhindered. As he was quoted saying at the time, "We cannot let those events overshadow the positive developments taking place at the Port."

It is this kind of leadership, community involvement and integrity that makes Stan Payne our choice for the 2011 Business Leader of the Year.

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