



Port of Benton History Worksheet

In 1958, the Port of Benton was one of nine ports created by the voters in Washington State. Governed by three elected Commissioners, the Port of Benton covers two-thirds of Benton County. The port provides property for businesses, airport operations in Richland and Prosser, 16 miles of rail and barge facilities. The Port of Benton has a strong focus on small business and industrial development. Today's Port of Benton Commissioners are Mrs. Jane Hagerty, Mr. Robert Larson and Mr. Roy Keck.

The Port of Benton was created mainly from property received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Richland. The first property was 290 acres known as Camp Hanford in 1959 now known as the Technology and Business Campus. The Port of Benton was officially declared a "Nuclear Port" in 1965 and is only one of five ports in the nation authorized to handle radioactive materials. The public dock is primarily used by the U.S. Navy to off-load decommission materials for long term disposal out at the Hanford site. The dock is located near the ports USS Triton Submarine Sail Park, a 23 foot tall sail and a key feature in north Richland. The Port recently received 760 acres of land for industrial development focused on clean energy manufacturers. Currently, the Port of Benton owns over 2,500 acres of land and manages over \$80m in assets.

The Port of Benton was one of the first ports in the State of Washington to start incubator building to support small businesses. The Port also works closely with the agricultural community primarily in Prosser beginning in 1963 with Seneca juice company a facility now owned by Tree Top along with shipping facilities destined for Asia are owned by Zirkle Fruit. A dominate presence in the wine industry beginning in 1982 working with Hogue Cellars that has led to numerous others starting or expanding their wine tasting rooms and production facilities within port properties.

This partnership includes higher education with 21 acres being donated by the Port in 1988 in Richland to WSU Tri-Cities campus. This was followed by an additional 3.5 acres for the development of the Wine Science Center facility that serves wineries throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The Port of Benton also manages 270 acres of Crow Butte Island for a camping, hiking and day use park facility located on the south end of Benton County along the Columbia River.

More information available at www.portofbenton.com or historylink.org