

## Press Release – February 24, 2020



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### **Miles Thomas of Community Planning Resources to join Port of Benton team**

Miles S. Thomas, AICP, of Community Planning Resources is joining the Port of Benton team on a part-time contract basis to support the Director of Economic Development and Governmental Affairs position. He brings over 10 years of community and economic development experience, with an emphasis in developing public/private partnerships, building strong business/community ties, and augmenting public policy to support entrepreneurship. Mr. Thomas has a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning with a specialization in Economic Development from the University of Illinois along with a Bachelors of Arts in Architecture from the University of North Carolina. He has been an accredited member of the American Institute of Certified Planners since 2018.

For the Port of Benton, Mr. Thomas will be focused on planning, business recruitment, new development, governmental affairs, and execution of economic development components of the Port's 2020 Communication and Marketing Strategy.

He will also be the Port's lead representative and staff member to the 2,875 acres Tri-Cities Research District (TCRD), a state of Washington Innovation Partnership Zone, helping to facilitate and coordinate the TCRD marketing, communications, events, recruitment and trade shows.

"We were extremely pleased that Miles is joining us. The Port has key future development opportunities that match perfectly with his skill set and complements our team. The timing is just right," stated Diahann Howard, PPM® Executive Director for the Port of Benton.

#### **About the Port of Benton:**

The Port of Benton covers two-thirds of Benton County and includes more than 2,500 acres, 13 development sites, 50 buildings, two general aviation airports, a barge slip and a dually served short-line railroad along with Crow Butte Park. The Port's mission is economic development with a focus on small business, value-added agriculture, wine and industrial manufacturing.

The port also administers the Tri-Cities Research District, a state of Washington Innovation Partnership Zone, providing a staff member to serve as the Executive Director for the 2,700-acre research park. The research district is governed by a board of directors that includes WSU-TC, CBC, TRIDEC, PNNL and the cities of Richland and Pasco. Its mission is technology-focused economic development.

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