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Diahann Howard Named Port of Benton Executive Director

Richland, Wash. – On Tuesday, the Port of Benton’s Board of Commissioners announced Diahann Howard as the Port’s executive director. Howard has served as interim executive director since June 2019.

The Port Commission hired the Prothman Company to conduct an executive director search. The process included a national search and community input regarding the final four candidates.

“I am humbled and honored by this opportunity to serve the port and its stakeholders in this new role,” said Howard. “I’m excited about the future and to continue working with the port team on our important mission of advancing beneficial economic development projects for the region and on the effective and efficient management of our assets on behalf of the taxpayers and customers we serve.”

Howard has served as the Tri-Cities Research District as its Executive Director since 2007, Richland Rotary president (2017-2018) and was named Rotarian of the year (2011-2012). In September, Howard was awarded a Professional Port Manager (PPM®) certification from the American Public Ports Association. She was recently appointed to the U.S. Department of Energy Environmental Management Advisory Board.

Howard previously served as Port of Benton’s director of economic development and governmental affairs. Before joining the Port, she was the economic development manager at the City of Richland.

Howard is a Tri-Cities native and holds her Bachelor of Science in International Affairs from Eastern Washington University. She is the first female to hold the Port of Benton executive director position and the first executive director with Latina heritage among the 75 port districts within Washington State.

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.
