



MEDIA CONTACT:
Kimberly Aguillard
Cell: 228-323-0295
Office: 228-865-4300
Email: kaguillard@shipmspa.com

July 6, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PORT OF GULFPORT SIGNS DEAL WITH CHIQUITA AFTER ONLY TWO YEARS IN NEW ORLEANS

GULFPORT, Miss. – Commissioners for the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA) have finalized a lease agreement with Chiquita Fresh North America, confirming that the company will be restoring operations at the Port of Gulfport. The term of the lease is for 40 years, providing Chiquita the opportunity to remain in Gulfport through 2056.

“Chiquita’s return demonstrates the ‘Port of the Future,’ or the Port of Gulfport, is the right fit for companies with international shipping needs,” Gov. Bryant said. “It also reinforces the fact Mississippi has a business environment that helps companies maintain their competitive edge in today’s demanding economy.”

Under the agreement, Chiquita will return to their previous location in the North Harbor, and will also expand operations into Terminal 1. Encompassing a total of 32 acres, the company will double the terminal space, occupy a new maintenance and repair building, utilize 110,000 square feet of warehouse space in the new West Terminal Transit Shed, and the Port will construct 20,000 square feet of temperature controlled space.

“We are pleased to return our port operations to Gulfport where our Chiquita ripening and distribution facilities are located,” Andrew Biles, Chiquita’s president and CEO, said. “We believe that Gulfport is optimally situated to service our customers most efficiently with both north and southbound vessel services.”

“We never lost sight of a possible return by Chiquita, and it is with great excitement to announce their return to Gulfport,” said Jonathan Daniels, MSPA executive director and CEO. “The State of Mississippi provided no financial incentive for Chiquita to return, and that speaks for itself. Our new facilities and the efficiency of the ILA Local #1303 ultimately made the business case for the Port of Gulfport.”

“The return of Chiquita is a testament to the improvements made through the Port of Gulfport Restoration Program, to the extraordinary teamwork exhibited daily by the leadership at the port and also to the outstanding workforce in Mississippi,” said Mississippi Development Authority Executive Director Glenn McCullough, Jr. “The success of Chiquita and the other tenants utilizing the Port of Gulfport is very important to Mississippi as we continue to grow our economy and create new opportunities for Mississippians throughout the state.”

Chiquita is expected to directly employ 10 management and operations personnel. Their return to Gulfport will have the most impact on the ILA Local #1303.

“I’m thrilled for the members of Local #1303 to have Chiquita back, and their return further increases job stability for our longshoremen,” said ILA Local 1303 president, Darius Johnson. “I’m looking forward to having every piece of Chiquita’s operations back in Gulfport, and our longshoremen are ready to provide Chiquita with a strong workforce.”

With a lease agreement in place, the Port of Gulfport will begin seeing Chiquita containers arriving as early as the middle of July, with the first vessel set to arrive in August.

###