

From Legacy to Opportunity: Port of Port Mansfield Shapes Willacy County's Future

The Port of Port Mansfield continues its mission for the future of Willacy County through the maintenance and development of the Harbor.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Along the Texas Gulf Coast, the [Port of Port Mansfield](#) is stepping into a new chapter of growth and opportunity. Long known for its fishing waters and small-town character, the port is now positioning itself as a vital hub for commerce, industry, and cross-border trade in South Texas.

A Legacy of Service

Founded in 1948 as a shallow-draft facility in Willacy County, the Port of Port Mansfield has always been more than a harbor. Today, under the stewardship of the Willacy County Navigation District (WCND), it is evolving into a driver of regional economic vitality.

"Our port is uniquely positioned to serve the needs of Willacy County's residents while pursuing expansions that drive commercial maritime development," said Ronald D. Mills, Executive Director and General Manager of the WCND. "We're committed to maintaining safe Gulf access, managing utilities, and engaging our community through transparent governance."

Spanning 1,700 acres with over 1,500 acres available for lease, the port offers prime land for residential and commercial development. Its waterfront facilities are suitable for small vessels, barges, and fuel handling. The Charles R. Johnson Airport, with a 3,600-foot runway, enhances intermodal options for air cargo and tourism.



Aerial view of the entrance to the Port of Port Mansfield

Strategic Connectivity

What sets Port Mansfield apart is its access to trade routes and highways. The Port Mansfield Channel, designed to 17 feet deep, connects directly to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, linking Florida to Mexico. A dredging project scheduled for late 2025 will restore the channel to full depth, ensuring safe navigation for regional shipping of agricultural products, construction materials, and energy equipment.

By road, the port ties into Interstate 69/U.S. 77 and State Highway 186, creating efficient connections to Corpus Christi, Brownsville, and the Mexican border. Planned upgrades will further accommodate oversized loads, making the port a competitive alternative for shippers navigating supply chain challenges.

Infrastructure Investments

Two major projects are reshaping the harbor's future: Seawall Repair and Construction Project – Launched in September 2024, this TxDOT-backed initiative is 40% complete. Originally estimated at \$12–13 million, the WCND secured state funding to cover most costs, reducing the county's share to less than 18%. The project not only strengthens flood protection but also incorporates environmental safeguards approved by federal regulators.

Ship Channel and Jetties Dredging Project – In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

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Alberto Treviño

dredging operations maintain a 14-foot-deep, 125-foot-wide channel across its 12.9-mile stretch. Sediment is being repurposed for beach nourishment, ensuring compliance with environmental standards while preserving Gulf access.

These projects are more than repairs—they are long-term investments in resilience, economic readiness, and environmental responsibility.

Balancing Commerce and Community

The Port of Port Mansfield's distinct identity lies in balancing industry with lifestyle. Nestled on the Lower

Laguna Madre—the rare hypersaline lagoon between Brownsville and Corpus Christi—the port



Port of Port Mansfield located between the Port of Corpus Christi and the Port of Brownsville, only 1 mile distance from the Intercoastal Waterway

supports eco-tourism, sport fishing, and outdoor recreation while fostering industries such as commercial fishing, light manufacturing, and logistics.

The WCND leadership has emphasized that future development will respect community needs. “Promoting growth while honoring the dynamics of the harbor and the residents we serve is our guiding principle,” Mills said.

Regional and Cross-Border Impact

As Texas continues to lead the nation in exports, the Port of Port Mansfield is positioning itself as a complementary hub. By easing pressure on larger ports and enhancing cross-border trade with Mexico, it could become a critical node in regional supply chains.

Environmental stewardship remains central to this mission. Protecting the Laguna Madre ensures not only the preservation of endangered species and migratory bird habitats but also the long-term sustainability of the port and its surrounding community.

Looking Ahead

For Willacy County and South Texas, the port represents untapped potential. With strategic projects underway and a commitment to balanced development, the WCND is laying the groundwork for decades of prosperity.

“Our mission is clear,” Mills said. “We will develop the harbor facility in ways that prioritize resident needs, minimize environmental impact, and fuel regional growth.”

The Port of Port Mansfield stands today not only as a working harbor but as a symbol of resilience and opportunity—ready to play a larger role in Texas’s maritime future.

About the Willacy County Navigation District

The WCND oversees the Port of Port Mansfield, a shallow-draft facility established in 1948. The district manages land leases, the Charles R. Johnson Airport, and environmental initiatives while supporting community and commercial growth. Learn more at (<http://www.portofportmansfield.com>).

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