

April 24, 2008 - Murtha: Brownsville Marine Products Awarded \$532,226 Maritime Administration Grant

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration has awarded a \$532,226 Assistance to Small Shipyards grant to Brownsville Marine Products.

The purpose of this grant is to make capital and infrastructure improvements, and Brownsville Marine Products will use the funding to purchase hydraulic buggies, winches, mobile cranes, a jib and an overhead crane that will allow them to expand their current barge production line.

"This is absolutely wonderful news for Brownsville Marine Products," said Don Bewlew, General Manager of Brownsville Marine Products. "This funding will allow us to continue to develop and grow our business, and provide good paying jobs here in the community."

Brownsville Marine Products is currently the third largest barge builder in the United States, producing over 100 barges every year. They have 250 employees.

"We've put hundreds-of-millions of dollars into improving the locks and dams in Southwestern Pennsylvania," commented Murtha. "People may not realize it, but studies have shown that our river system supports 45,000 direct jobs and hundreds-of-thousands of indirect jobs. I'm proud of the work that Brownsville Marine Products is doing, and I'm delighted to know that this federal funding will allow them to expand their operation as their business grows."

Under the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act, this first ever grant program will provide 19 small shipyards across the United States with \$9.8 million in federal funding. The Maritime Administration is the agency in the Department of Transportation dealing with waterborne transportation. Its mission is to improve and strengthen the U.S. marine transportation system, including infrastructure, industry and labor, to meet the economic and security needs of the United States.

"Small shipyards are vitally important for the health of the maritime industry, and for the economy of the Nation," said Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton.

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