

BUILT FOR WHAT'S AHEAD



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Port Milwaukee continues to serve our city and region by adding strength to our economy. Cargo efficiently moving through the Port adds value to local manufacturing and agriculture. The Port opens world markets and sustains jobs, all while making good use of city land adjacent to Lake Michigan.

The success of this enterprise relies on a strong team of Port employees. People in engineering, finance, marketing, and operations are united in a common goal of maximizing the Port's effectiveness. Under the leadership of Port Director Jackie Carter and her successor, Director Benji Timm, Port Milwaukee demonstrated how a well-run department can achieve its objectives.

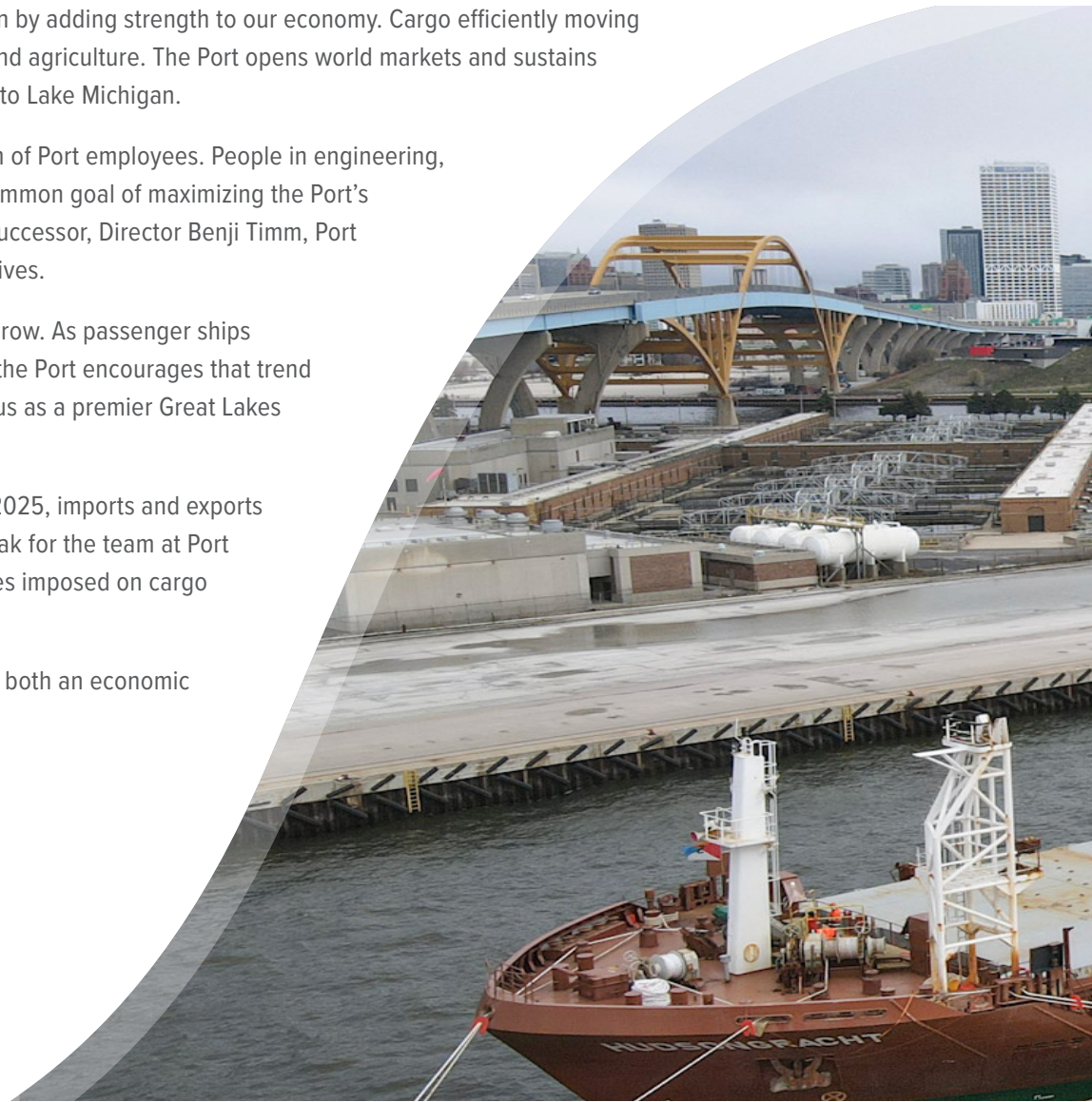
I applaud Port Milwaukee's ongoing work to capitalize on opportunities to grow. As passenger ships increase the frequency of their visits and bring more people to Milwaukee, the Port encourages that trend with the construction of a new cruise dock. Milwaukee is cementing its status as a premier Great Lakes cruise destination.

Much of the Port's commercial activity involves international trade, and, in 2025, imports and exports were roiled by the tariff landscape here and in other countries. I know I speak for the team at Port Milwaukee when I say we look forward to stability and predictability in duties imposed on cargo here and in other countries.

The people of Milwaukee are rightfully proud of Port Milwaukee. It provides both an economic and human connection to the world. It is truly Built for What's Ahead.

CAVALIER JOHNSON

Mayor, City of Milwaukee



LETTER FROM THE PORT DIRECTOR



I was honored to be appointed as the new Port Director in late-2025 after serving more than 20 years with the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development. My work in real estate and economic development connected me with Port Milwaukee over the years and helped me develop a deeper understanding of its role in our region's economy.

Port Milwaukee connects to national and global markets, moving cargo that supports construction, manufacturing, and Wisconsin agriculture. It is also a growing Great Lakes cruise destination, with new investments, such as the South Shore Cruise Dock, expected to bring even more visitors to the city.

Overall, 2025 was a successful year for trade and development at Port Milwaukee. The flooding in August 2025 created unprecedented challenges for the city. The Port's Operations team worked tirelessly to clear debris and to maintain navigation in our waterways.

Port Milwaukee and other Great Lakes ports also navigated headwinds from global tariff uncertainty and shifting trade policies. Port leaders proactively engaged partners and leveraged tools like Foreign-Trade Zone designations to help businesses mitigate impacts while advocating for sensible outcomes. The Port kept cargo moving and demonstrated resilience through positive international tonnage growth and continued infrastructure advancements.

As we move into 2026, I want to build on the successes of my predecessors, but also chart my own path by investing in infrastructure, working to attract new businesses, and continuing to be a leader in cleaning our waterways. Port Milwaukee is a key driver of our region's economy, and we have a strong team to keep it moving forward.

BENJAMIN "BENJI" TIMM

Director, Port Milwaukee

WHAT GUIDES US



OUR MISSION

Port Milwaukee strengthens the overall economic and social environment of the city and region by increasing international trade, business development, job creation, and public access to the waterfront. The Port is a premier provider of domestic and international transportation and freight distribution services for its commercial customers.



OUR VISION

The Port sustains Milwaukee as a water-centric city, where businesses thrive in a robust, port-led regional maritime economy, and where everyone can work, live, and play through access to water-based commerce, recreation, and leisure.

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BUILDING FOR BETTER

Several infrastructure improvements and investments to support a variety of projects were made in 2025, all essential to maintain smooth and efficient operations, and position the Port for future growth. Federal, state, local, and private funding contributed to making these investments possible.

Construction of the new South Shore Cruise Dock began in 2025. The dock is designed to meet the physical and operational demands of larger cruise ships while delivering an efficient and welcoming experience for passengers. The dock is currently on schedule to receive its first vessel in the summer of 2026. The dock includes a 50,000 square foot main platform with catwalks along the north and south for access to vessel mooring lines, totaling 744 feet in length. Dredging will also take place adjacent to the dock to achieve adequate draft for the largest cruise vessels on the Great Lakes. Additional landside improvements include a new access road, lighting, and sewer and water facilities serving the dock.

Dock wall repairs were made at multiple locations along the Municipal Mooring Basin in the inner harbor. In addition to the dock wall reinforcement, new fendering and safety ladders are also being installed. Commodities such as cement, salt, and agricultural products will pass over this dock.

Construction also began on the Phase 2 expansion of the Agricultural Maritime Export Facility. In partnership with The DeLong Co., this project will result in additional storage capacity and conveyance equipment to handle multiple regional agricultural products for export overseas.

In addition to routine maintenance and repairs of the Port's 14 miles of railroad track, a vital crossing, was also completely reconstructed. This will ensure continued rail service by multiple companies and Class 1 railroads doing business at the Port, as well as a smooth crossing surface for vehicular traffic.



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- Projects valued at nearly \$35M completed or in progress during 2025
 - Over \$14M in state and federal grants received
 - Over \$300k in railroad track upgrades and maintenance in 2025

TUNED INTO TOURISM

Strong partnerships and cruising-related events remained steady throughout 2025. In early spring, Milwaukee hosted the Cruise the Great Lakes annual conference, a marketing coalition of the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers. A media event organized in conjunction with the conference was held at Discovery World, featuring industry leaders sharing perspectives and outlooks for the upcoming cruise season. Port Milwaukee thanks our partners, Visit Milwaukee, and Discovery World, for putting together memorable opportunities for Port and cruise line representatives during their visit.

After a several year hiatus, Victory Cruise Lines returned to the Great Lakes with stops in Milwaukee. Under new ownership, *Victory I* made its inaugural call on May 24 at Pier Wisconsin. While serving as a turnaround port for select calls in 2025, Milwaukee has been added as a routine port of call on Victory itineraries in 2026.

In June, the Port hosted a media event aboard Pearl Seas' *Pearl Mist*. Company representatives took questions and provided a comprehensive tour of the vessel for local journalists. This was a unique behind-the-scenes opportunity for the community to learn more about the growing Great Lakes cruising industry.

Port Milwaukee thanks all our partners who ensure our city remains a top destination on Great Lakes Cruise itineraries each year. We look forward to the 2026 season with more calls and passengers projected than ever before.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS:

11,255

CRUISE
PASSENGERS

23 VESSEL

CALLS BETWEEN SIX VESSELS

45

ITINERARIES INCLUDED
A CALL IN MILWAUKEE

3,700

CREW MEMBER
VISITS

13,900+

LUGGAGE ITEMS
SCANNED



NEW DOCK, FRESH EXPERIENCE

On September 4th, 2025, local and state officials as well as cruise partners from around the country celebrated the groundbreaking for the new South Shore Cruise Dock. The dock, adjacent to the existing South Shore berth, will accommodate the largest cruise ships that call on the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system. Due to draft restrictions at Port Milwaukee's two existing cruise docks, these vessels currently call on the Port's City Heavy Lift Dock, an industrial cargo facility on Jones Island.

The new dock solidifies the Port's position as a premier turn around port as cruising on the Great Lakes continues to grow. Three dedicated cruise docks are an investment in an industry that brings visibility, economic growth, and employment to Milwaukee with an exceptional experience for visiting cruise lines and passengers.



BY THE NUMBERS

Port Milwaukee uses a variety of metrics to measure its commercial performance each year, including revenues and expenses, the number of vessels transiting through Milwaukee's harbor, and freight tonnage, the industry's fundamental measure of port throughput.

TONNAGE (METRIC TONS)

DOCK	2024	2025	5-YEAR AVG. 2020 - 2024	10-YEAR AVG. 2016 - 2025
Municipal	1,851,276	1,906,233	1,864,197	1,903,733
Harbor	381,253	415,839	442,109	538,330
Total	2,232,529	2,322,072	2,306,306	2,442,063

VESSEL COUNTS

	2024	2025
Barges	236	173
American/Canadian Lakers	67	46
Foreign	42	60
Cruise Ships	27	23
Total	372	302

REVENUES AND EXPENSES¹

	2024	2025 ²
Operating Revenues	\$5,691,900.20	\$5,806,545.23
Operating Expenses	\$5,575,483.50	\$4,966,955.90
Net Income (Loss)	\$116,416.70	\$839,589.33

¹Figures not final as of this printing

²Not including an additional \$3,055,489.00 in revenue from Milwaukee World Festival's long-term lease of the city-owned Henry Maier Festival Grounds.





FOREIGN TRADE ZONE 41

	2025
Businesses	7 active operators
Jobs Supported	2,504
Total Value of Shipments	\$4.9 billion

Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ) are secured, designated locations around the United States in or near a U.S. Customs Port of Entry where foreign and domestic merchandise is generally considered to be in international commerce and outside of U.S. Customs territory. As a result, activated businesses in an FTZ can reduce or eliminate duties on imports and take advantage of other benefits to encourage foreign commerce within the United States.

A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR FOREIGN TRADE



Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) #41 experienced a surge in activity in 2025. Businesses have looked to harness the benefits of the FTZ program in a world of evolving trade policy. Whether it be through duty deferral, tariff inversion, or streamlined reporting to Customs, operators realized a positive impact to their bottom line by pursuing foreign trade zone designation.



During 2025, Port Milwaukee welcomed four new approved operators to FTZ #41, while two businesses activated their subzones. This marked the largest period of growth for FTZ #41 in recent years, an indicator that businesses find value in this unique program.



Utilization of existing subzones increased 30% from 2024 to 2025*. This growth is a testament to the advantage that this program offers for businesses involved in international trade.



Port Milwaukee acts as Grantee for FTZ #41 which encompasses the 12 counties in Southeastern Wisconsin. Details on the program can be found at portmilwaukee.com.

*Measured by total value of merchandise throughput.



CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

Throughout 2025, Port engagement efforts reached community members, businesses, government officials, and international partners, highlighting the Port's capabilities and its role in driving regional economic impact and job creation.

Engaging with local schools and non-profits remains central to raising awareness of Port operations and maritime careers. For the second year, the Port hosted a "Leadership and Career Summit" for Future Urban Leaders and Project Kindred, in partnership with Port tenant, Amrize. New this year, We Work the Waterways partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools and the Port for an Industry Interaction Day, welcoming over 200 high school juniors for a day of learning and hands-on demonstrations with Port tenants, local businesses, and volunteers.



Port Milwaukee was honored to have U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore and County Executive David Crowley visit the Port during the summer of 2025. The event showcased how Port Milwaukee promotes the movement of goods, supports job creation, and drives sustainable growth across the Great Lakes region and the local economy.

Connecting with international stakeholders is central to the Port's efforts to raise awareness and strengthen its role as the region's vital link in the global supply chain. Representatives from the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Belgium—a key trading partner—visited for an afternoon of meetings focused on sharing capabilities and exploring business development opportunities, followed by a tour of Komatsu Mining Corporation's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

Building relationships with international partners and colleagues elevates the Port's profile and ensures that it remains top of mind as business opportunities arise. During the year, the Port welcomed visitors from the Canadian and United Kingdom Consulate Offices in Chicago for an overview and tour. Meetings were also held with representatives of Galway, Ireland, a Milwaukee Sister City, to provide an overview of the Port and its capabilities.

“Outreach and engagement with industry and community partners remain vital to the Port's success. These efforts strengthen advocacy with key stakeholders and inspire the next generation to pursue careers in the maritime industry.”

– Benjamin “Benji” Timm, Port Milwaukee Director





Back row: Claude J. Krawczyk; Ald. Andrea Pratt; Craig A. Mastantuono; Alex Carson, Assistant City Attorney
Front row: Kathleen M. Smith; Diane S. Diel; Tim K. Hoelter, President; Sally R. Peltz

BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS

2025 brought changes to the Port's leadership team and staff. New appointments were made to the Board of Harbor Commissioners with Sally Peltz and 1st District Alderwoman Andrea Pratt, who serves as the Common Council Representative. The Port is grateful for their willingness to serve and looks forward to the contributions and leadership both women will bring as they help guide the Port's growth and foster its mission for years to come.



BENJAMIN "BENJI" TIMM

Director, Port Milwaukee

Benjamin (Benji) Timm was sworn in as Port Director. His experience in real estate and economic development with the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development will play a vital role in the Port's future growth.



ALICIA HARWELL

Finance Specialist, Port Milwaukee

Alicia Harwell joined Port Milwaukee in 2025 as the new Finance Specialist, handling all accounting functions including accounts payable and receivables.



SELENA COLE

Business Operations Manager, Port Milwaukee

Selena Cole was promoted in 2025 to Business Operations Manager with budgetary, fiscal, and human resources responsibilities for Port Milwaukee.

PEOPLE PROPELLING PROGRESS

Ongoing and cross-training activities provide Port staff with opportunities for advancement and the ability for the Port to maintain consistent and efficient operations.

Port Operations Technician Sean Hendley spent time learning and honing crane operation skills, an important service the Port provides to its tenants and customers.

The city invests in its personnel, including current and future managers, by offering executive and leadership development opportunities. Several emerging leaders at the Port participated in programs designed to strengthen leadership effectiveness and support long-term organizational success. Maria Cartier, John Dermeyer, and Brian Kasprzyk successfully completed the Certified Public Manager (CPM) program, and Selena Cole and Eric Polzin successfully completed the City of Milwaukee Leadership Academy program.





Port Milwaukee is an economic entity of the City of Milwaukee government overseen by the seven-member Board of Harbor Commissioners, a panel appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Milwaukee Common Council. It administers operations on more than 400 acres that make up the Port. It promotes shipping and commerce throughout the region by providing access to domestic and international vessels, rail, and over-the-road transportation.

[PORTMILWAUKEE.COM](https://portmilwaukee.com)

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