



## EDA PARTICIPATES IN MEXICO SISTER CITY TRIP

Bay County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) Executive Director Ted Clem recently participated in the Sister-City trip to Merida, Mexico on Jan. 18 through 21 along with members of Port Panama City, USA and other community leaders.

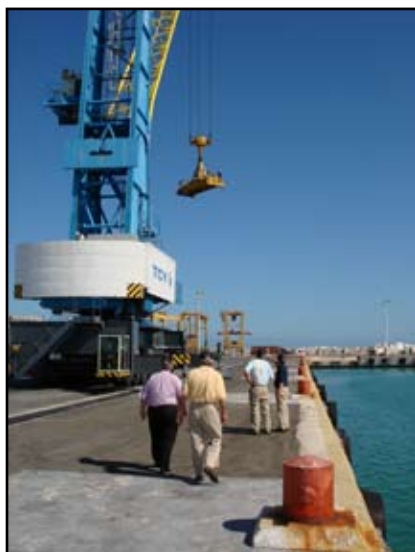
“We established a sister-city agreement with Merida in 2003 and this trip was an opportunity to continue to strengthen cultural and economic ties,” Clem said.

While in Merida, the group met with local and state economic development officials and discussed future investment possibilities in Panama City with area business leaders.

“Because of their strong manufacturing base, it was important for us to show what opportunities Panama City has for them for distribution networks,” Clem said.



*Pictured L-R: Wayne Stubbs, Harvey Hollingsworth, JoAnne Hollingsworth, Rayford Lloyd, Don Crisp, John Pilcher, Representatives from the Yucatan Economic Development Organization and Ted Clem*



*Merida's Port Progreso is located along the Gulf of Mexico and makes weekly shipments to Panama City.*

Among the more than two dozen participants was Port Panama City Executive Director Wayne Stubbs. A portion of the activities included a trip to the Port of Progreso facility, which is located along the Gulf of Mexico and serves as Merida's port.

Over the past two years, Port Panama City has seen a significant increase in their

container activity due to the addition of Linea Peninsular to the port's tenants. The company has weekly shipments between Panama City and Progreso that account for a large portion of their activity.

“Plans are also underway to host Merida officials later this year on an inbound trade mission to Bay County,” Clem said. “We are excited to showcase our county and highlight opportunities for future joint economic opportunities.”

The EDA used funds from the Florida International Business Expansion Initiative grant it received at the end of 2006 to assist in financing their costs of participation. The funds are for use in 2007 to expand on export development and foreign direct investment opportunities through partnerships with the port and the Panama City Port Authority. For more information, go to [www.BayCountyEDA.org](http://www.BayCountyEDA.org).