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May 20, 2021

The Houston-Galveston Customs District handled 77.0 million metric tons of goods and commodities in the first three months of '21, a 17.7 percent decrease over the comparable period in '20. These shipments were valued at \$53.2 billion, down 10.2 percent from '20.

HOUSTON-GALVESTON CUSTOMS DISTRICT		
	Value	Metric Tons
	\$ Billions	Millions
March '21 YTD	53.2	77.0
March '20 YTD	59.2	93.6
% Change	-10.2	-17.7

Source: WISERTrade from U.S. Census Bureau data

Global shipments have been experiencing delays since the beginning of the year, limiting shipping capacity and inventories, due to large-scale restocking by businesses responding to increased consumer demand. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, global on-time arrivals of ships to their ports occurred only 40.0 percent of the time in March. Port Houston, however, did not experience backups as large as other areas, and the Houston Customs District ranked first in tonnage and seventh in value among U.S. customs districts during March of '21. Houston and New Orleans have been the busiest two districts in tonnage for decades. Houston has held the top spot in 10 of the past 13 years.

BUSIEST U.S. CUSTOMS DISTRICTS – MARCH '21 YTD				
	Value		Metric Tons	
Rank	District	\$ Billions	District	Millions
1	New York	109.7	<b>Houston</b>	<b>286.4</b>
2	Los Angeles	107.4	New Orleans	278.9
3	Laredo	84.5	Los Angeles	121.4
4	Chicago	74.3	Port Arthur	89.4
5	Detroit	63.3	New York	80.2
6	New Orleans	54.0	Columbia-Snake	52.5
7	<b>Houston</b>	<b>53.2</b>	Norfolk	61.1
8	Savannah	46.6	San Francisco	60.0
9	Cleveland	37.8	Mobile	50.5
10	San Francisco	33.7	Savannah	38.2

Source: WISERTrade from U.S. Census Bureau data

Houston exported to 191 countries and imported from 161 during the first three months of '20. China remains the region's top trading partner, followed by Mexico, Brazil and South Korea.

<b>TOP TRADING PARTNERS – MARCH '21 YTD*</b>			
<b>Houston/Galveston Customs District</b>			
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>\$ Billions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
1	China	5.1	9.7
2	Mexico	3.6	6.8
3	Brazil	3.1	5.9
4	South Korea	2.8	5.3
5	India	2.7	5.2
6	Germany	2.7	5.0
7	Japan	2.4	4.6
8	Netherlands	2.3	4.4
9	United Kingdom	1.8	3.4
10	Italy	1.4	2.7
<b>Total Top 10</b>		<b>28.1</b>	<b>52.9</b>
<b>All Others</b>		<b>25.1</b>	<b>47.1</b>
<b>Total Trade</b>		<b>53.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Combined imports and exports (sums may not total due to rounding)

Source: WISERTrade from U.S. Census Bureau data

Compared to the first three months of '20, export tonnage decreased 16.4 percent and 13.5 percent in value, which fell by 20.3 percent compared to last year. Imports also decreased by both measures, slipping 22.2 percent in weight and 3.1 percent in value. Mineral fuels, oil and refined products, Houston's top commodity for both exports and imports, fell in volume by 21.2 and 32.1 percent, respectively.

<b>HOUSTON-GALVESTON CUSTOMS DISTRICT</b>				
	<b>Value - \$ Billions</b>		<b>Metric Tons - Millions</b>	
	<b>Exports</b>	<b>Imports</b>	<b>Exports</b>	<b>Imports</b>
March '21 YTD	35.0	18.2	61.1	15.9
March '20 YTD	40.5	18.8	73.1	20.5
% Change	-13.6	-3.2	-16.4	-22.4

Source: WISERTrade from U.S. Census Bureau data

During the first three months of '21, the district handled goods and commodities from 97 trade categories—everything from gasoline to live animals to baskets and straw products. The top five exports, accounting for 81.6 percent of all exports by value, were crude and refined products, organic chemicals, plastics, industrial machinery and motor vehicles. The top five imports, accounting for 54.7 percent of all imports by value, were crude and refined products, industrial machinery, iron and steel, electric machinery and motor vehicles.

*Prepared by Greater Houston Partnership Research Department*

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