



## Harrison County Board of Supervisors recently approved the sale of 23 acres in the Bernard Bayou Industrial District to SOPREMA, INC.

**SOPREMA, INC.** is a major producer of roofing and waterproofing materials. The company, which was founded in Strasbourg, France, maintains plants in seven locations in Europe and North America. Gulfport will be the second location in the United States with the other in Wadsworth, Ohio.

Gilbert Lorenzo, vice-president of SOPREMA, said, "We are anxious to get started with our construction and the hiring of a local person as plant manager." In addition to hiring all employees locally, SOPREMA will also use local contractors to build the plant and office.

SOPREMA is present in over 50 countries through subsidiaries and exclusive dealers and is France's number one exporter of roofing and waterproofing materials for the construction industry, with 25% of their production sold abroad. The Gulfport plant will produce roofing and waterproofing materials for the Southeast United States.

Although Europe remains their principle market, North America is a major area of expansion for the company. The Harrison County Development Commission began meeting with SOPREMA in early 2005, as they were deciding on their second U.S. location. Despite Hurricane Katrina, SOPREMA recognized the potential in Harrison County and decided to locate in Gulfport.

SOPREMA proposes to create 50 new jobs with a payroll of \$1,800,000 per year. The immediate site and plant investment will involve a minimum of \$14 million.

According to Bill Hessell, director of property management for the Harrison County Development Commission, "This is the type of industry that the county wants to attract due to the creation of new jobs and the added diversity to our industrial base."

SOPREMA products are used in commercial, industrial and institutional buildings and can be found on the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington, D.C., Eiffel Tower in Paris, Lester B. Pearson Building in Canada and at Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

*Created in 1958, the Harrison County Development Commission is the lead economic development agency for Harrison County, including the cities of Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Biloxi and D'Iberville. HCDC is committed to promoting Harrison County as a positive place to do business, to developing quality jobs for our citizens and to "moving the Mississippi Gulf Coast forward." Contact information: Larry S. Barnett, Executive Director, 228-896-5020*



*Moving the Mississippi Gulf Coast Forward*

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