

Study: Millennium Port Could Increase Nola Containers Eightfold

By RICHARD EBERHARDT

Eight times as many containers could be moved through Louisiana, primarily through the Port of New Orleans, in the next 20 years if port officials aggressively develop the container-on-barge concept and utilize the Lower Mississippi River, a study released by Louisiana's Millennium Port Authority concludes.

Edward "Ned" Peak, executive director of the state's Millennium Port Authority, released the study and said a significant increase in containers moving through New Orleans could be realized in just two years.

Last year approximately 251,000 20-foot equivalent unit boxes (TEU's) were shipped through New Orleans. That number could jump to 600,000 TEU's within two years if the proposed Sea Point container terminal is built near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

If port officials continue "business as usual," the study projected a half-million containers would move through the Port of New Orleans yearly in 20 years. Aggressively luring Asian shippers to the mouth of the Mississippi River with container-on-barge could make that number jump to 6 million boxes, Peak said the study revealed.

Reston, Va.-based Norbridge Inc. analyzed post-September-11 shipping of containers and suggested Louisiana port officials should focus on luring mostly Asian container business from the chokepoint ports of

Los Angeles/Long Beach.

Even assuming the average eight-day delay for offloading container ships is corrected in Los Angeles, and there are no dockworker strikes like the one that crippled West Coast shipping last year, moving containers on barges up the LMR could save shippers time and money to the targeted inland ports of Kansas City, St. Louis and the major railheads of Memphis.

Unlike competing ports of Houston and Mobile, New Orleans has six railheads and moving barges on the river gives it an advantage to reaching the 55 million customers of Mid America, Peak said.

Key to the immediate increase in container traffic is the proposed \$150 million Sea Point trans-shipment facility to be located approximately 10 miles upstream from the mouth of the Mississippi River. The brainchild of former Lykes Lines executive Jim Amoss, the mid-stream facility would unload, sort and reload to barges the boxes from container ships in one move.

Those barges could get underway quickly to different destinations, saving time and keeping the containers off the crowded urban highways as they connect to the rail system much closer to the final destination. Shipping by water costs one-tenth the trucking costs and one-quarter the rail cost of moving similar loads, Peak explained.

With container-on-barge technology, the impact of

1,000 TEU's arriving would be distributed over multiple terminals best suited to connect with each railroad, reducing costs and traffic congestion.

Containers can carry 15 percent more weight if moved by barge than by trucks, which have an 80,000 pound weight limitation including the weight of the truck itself, he pointed out. "That means every seventh container moved by water is essentially free," he said.

Container shipping is particularly schedule- and time-sensitive. Peak said container ships are reluctant to travel very far up the Mississippi River for fear of getting "trapped" by weather (fog), an oil spill or collision leading to river closure by the Coast Guard.

Maintaining scheduled port call timetables is crucial to carriers. Locating Sea Point only 10 miles from the mouth of the river alleviates a lot of those fears and will allow for larger ships to be utilized, although initial plans concentrate on Panamax-class vessels.

Chinese shipping officials said they would route container ships through the Panama Canal to New Orleans as an alternative to Los Angeles if Sea Point is built, Peak said, adding that Sea Point officials are now awaiting a response from the Chinese as to the number of boxes a week to expect if the dock is ready at a specific date.

Once that response is received, construction bonds can be sold.

New Port of Will County Open For Business Near Chicago

By KATIE ANTALICK

The newest and largest port near Chicago opened for business on March 31. The Port of Will County, located 45 miles from downtown Chicago, is a private partnership headed by Gerard Keating, and is located on 257 acres along the Des Plaines River Mile at 284.5.

"We have been operating well," said Keating. "Since our opening date, we have already secured a contract for 400,000 tons of sand to offload.

Everything has been going beyond our expectations for the past two weeks."

The port's location is on what used to be an industrial manufacturing facility. Keating said that site had been closed for 13 years. After examining the property and its potential, the decision was made to buy it and redevelop it.

"It was attractive because of its location," he said. "It is located at the intersection of I-50 and I-55, the crossroads of the U.S. The sheer size of the land lent

itself well for a port. It was also already permitted to be a port. So I'd say location number one, fully permitted number two and the fact that the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Canadian National Railroad service the area as the third reason to develop the site as a port. It is truly an intermodal facility with the best location in Chicago."

Business at the port has concentrated on transloading product from the Gulf of Mexico, primarily steel and aggregate products, from downstate Illinois and St. Louis. He said the port is also speaking with Oprey Line about the possibility of being involved with container-on-barge business by unloading containers.

"We want to focus on steel, steel containers and lumber," he said. "We think there is a large market for those products. Will County is the fastest growing county in Illinois and the 10th fastest growing in the U.S. There is a strong demand to serve the market."

The port boasts two 125 ton cranes and 64,000 square feet of warehouse on 117 fenced and secured acres. There is 35,000 tons of vertical storage ideal for cement, fly ash and other products.

A number of marine companies operate in the area, so Keating said they will

handle harbor and floating responsibilities. Garvey Marine, St. Charles, Ill., is handling boat movements and Boat Docks, Peru, Ill., is handling the stovedoring.

(Editor's Note: For pictures of the Port of Will County, please see the WJ Photo Page on the inside back cover.)

Forthcoming Events

The Waterways Journal will be glad to list the city, date and place of your meeting in this column, provided it is of interest to the barge and towing industry or allied businesses, is national or regional in scope, and is received at least three weeks prior to the meeting date. Address your announcement to Forthcoming Events Editor.

April 20-22, 2005. Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals, Annual Conference, New Orleans. Contact: IRPT, e-mail admin@irpt.net; Internet www.irpt.net.

April 25-29, 2005. Informa Economics Inc., U.S. Grain and Oldseed Transportation Seminar, Memphis, Tenn. Contact: Informa, 901, 766-4513; Internet www.informacon.com.

June 19-22, 2005. Western Dredging Association, WEDA XXV & Texas A&M 37th annual Dredging Seminar, Astor Crown Plaza Hotel, New Orleans, La. Contact: Western Dredging Association, P.O. Box 5797, Vancouver, Wash. 98665-5797; Internet www.westerndredging.org; e-mail weda@wrednet.com.

June 25-26, 2005. Great Rivers Towboat Festival, Grafton, Ill. Contact: Debbie Wokling, chairman, 618, 796-3428.

August 9-10, 2005. Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association, 100th Annual Convention, Victoria, Texas. Contact: Raymond Butler, 281, 900-0915; Internet www.gicaonline.com.

September 14-15, 2005. National Waterways Conference, annual meeting, New Orleans Hilton Riverside. Contact: Worth Hager, 703, 243-4090, e-mail info@waterways.org.

September 14-16, 2005. Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association, 2005 River and Marine Industry Seminar, Hotel Intercontinental, New Orleans, La. Contact: Alan J. Savoie, 985, 783-6606, or Fred Renouard, 985, 536-0218; Internet www.gnoba.com.

October 18-20, 2005. Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Opportunities Conference, Beau Rivage, Biloxi, Miss. Contact: Agnes Zaborce or Don Walden, 663, 328-3286; e-mail: tnston@bbi.com.net.

November 1-3, 2005. American Salvage Association, National Maritime Salvage Conference, New Orleans, La. Contact: www.american Salvage.org.

Mineta To Speak At Benefit Dinner

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta will be the keynote speaker and award presenter at a gala honoring American Maritime Labor to be held by the United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Foundation on May 19. The event will benefit the US Merchant Marine Museum at Kings Point and will be held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

"The appreciation America has for its maritime labor and their contributions to our country's world commerce is evidenced by Secretary Mineta's appearance at this significant event," said Eugene McCormick, foundation president. "The museum at the Merchant Marine Academy preserves the legacy of the single industry that serves as a foundation of our country's development-ocean shipping-and the seafarers that sail and service our vessels."

The unions being honored are: American Maritime Officers American Radio Association; International Longshoremen's Association; Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific; International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union; International Organization of Masters Mates & Pilots; Marine Engineer's Beneficial Association, District 1; Marine Fireman's Union; Sailors Union of the Pacific; and Seafarers' International Union of North America.

Capt. Timothy Brown, a Kings Point graduate himself and president of MMP, is serving as event chairman.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for our industry and friends to help support this wonderful museum, which is available for public viewing, and at the same time to pay homage to our labor force," said Brown. "In addition, the Starlight Ballroom venue and events for the evening will make this a memorable event to attend and support."

For attendance information, contact Carly Gottsegen at Ruth C. Schwartz and Company at 800, 897-1757.



Keating

BARGE GRAIN MOVEMENTS (1,000 tons)

River/Lock	Week Ending 4-2-05					Week Ending 4-9-05				
	Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total	Corn	Wht.	Soy	Other	Total
Miss/IL	147	0	0	0	147	170	0	24	0	203
Miss/24	125	0	0	0	125	269	11	54	6	350
Miss/MP	256	3	43	5	307	115	19	82	8	224
Miss/27	317	3	64	5	389	415	19	82	6	524
IL/2	73	3	11	0	87	129	7	37	0	173
Ohio/22	58	2	17	3	80	93	11	32	3	139
Ark/1	0	22	3	0	25	0	37	5	4	46
Cumulative to date for Week 27, Ohio/22 and Ark/1										
Year	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other grains	Total					
2005	6,590	381	2,053	235	9,259					
2004	5,549	637	1,548	237	7,971					

Other grains include barley, sorghum and rye. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Sources: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation & Marketing Division; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers