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PORT'S CONTAINER TRADE REBOUNDS IN MARCH

Bouncing back from a decline in February, shipping terminals at the Port of Long Beach moved the equivalent of 360,279 twenty-foot-long container units in March, based on preliminary figures. The total is a 2.7 percent increase from March 2000, and a 15.6 percent increase over this February's total.

"The recovery in March suggests that the low numbers in February were due more to the Chinese New Year than to a softening of the U.S. economy," said Don Wylie, the port's managing director of maritime services. "The imports and exports in March were our strongest since November."

There had been concern that a sharp drop in imports in February might have reflected a downturn in consumer demand. Long Beach is the leading U.S. gateway for trade with Asia. Far East nations are leading producers of such consumer products as clothing, toys, shoes and household goods.

In March, the number of imported cargo containers climbed to 195,605 twenty-foot equipment units (TEUs), a 9.6 percent increase from March 2000 and a 26 percent improvement from this February. While questions remain about the strength of the U.S. economy, it now seems that the decline in February imports was due at least in part to the Chinese New Year at the end of January, when a holiday shutdown in China reduced shipments into early February.

The number of exported containers fell to 84,349 TEUs, a decline of 13.8 percent from March 2000 but an 11.7 percent increase over this February's exports. While the level of export is lower than a year ago, the March export total ended a three-month slide in which exports had declined from the previous month. Exports shipped through Long Beach include raw materials such as plastics, chemicals, recycled paper and cotton.

Port of Long Beach Container Traffic (TEUs*)

LOADED		TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
Inbound	Outbound	LOADED	EMPTY	CONTAINERS

Mar-01	195,605	84,349	279,954	80,325	360,279
Mar-00	178,489	97,871	276,360	74,404	350,764
% Change	9.6%	-13.8%	1.3%	8.0%	2.7%
Oct-00	235,511	88,541	324,052	108,880	432,932
Nov-00	213,065	90,756	303,821	107,076	410,897
Dec-00	180,631	79,351	259,982	91,408	351,390
Jan-01	194,746	77,073	271,819	82,622	354,441
Feb-01	155,148	75,520	230,668	81,044	311,712
Mar-01	195,605	84,349	279,954	80,325	360,279
Sep '00-Mar '01	1,174,706	495,590	1,670,296	551,355	2,221,651
Sep '99-Mar '00	1,133,781	522,102	1,655,883	528,201	2,184,084
% Change	3.6%	-5.1%	0.9%	4.4%	1.7%

*TEUs: 20-foot equivalent units or 20-foot-long cargo container

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