



November 2004

AROUND THE PORT . . .

Looking like the Normandy invasion, dozens of cargo ships loaded with holiday goods anchored off the Southern California coast in October as a shortage of longshore labor slowed vessel traffic at the San Pedro Bay ports.

Turnaround times for container ships – from arrival to departure – averaged more than seven days, five days longer than usual, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California.

The backup peaked during the second week of October with 94 ships (roughly half of them docked and half at anchor) at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, nearly twice the number for the same period a year ago.

In addition, the Marine Exchange, which monitors vessel traffic, reported that more than 20 ships had been diverted to other ports in October.

Slowed by the backlog of vessels, the volume of container cargo at the Port of Long Beach in September fell slightly below the level of recent months but remained well ahead of the same period a year ago.

Compared with last year, the total number of cargo containers rose 30.2 percent to the equivalent of 494,376 twenty-foot-long container units in September, the first time since June that the total slipped below 500,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

Historically, September and October have been Christmas time at the Port, marking the peak of the holiday shipping season when marine terminals see the most cargo.

In September, imports jumped 23.9 percent to 255,592 TEUs, compared with September 2003. Exports climbed 15.6 percent to 76,190 TEUs. Empties soared by 51.2 percent to 162,594 TEUs.

Spurred by more ship calls from China, container cargo trade at the Port of Long Beach jumped 22 percent for the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 to a record-breaking 5,355,972 TEUs.

Imports, including furniture, machinery, toys, shoes and clothing, increased 22.3 percent to 2,791,178 TEUs. Exports, including raw materials such as recycled paper, plastic and petroleum products, climbed 19.1 percent to 980,618 TEUs.

The number of empty containers, nearly all shipped overseas to be refilled with products, rose 23.4 percent to 1,584,176 TEUs.

In terms of tonnage, the Port saw total cargo volume jump 16 percent to 137.1 million metric revenue tons. An MRT is equal to 1,000 kilograms or one cubic meter.

Longshore union and trucking officials say more full-time workers are needed to ease the logjam of cargo ships at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union joined the California Trucking Association in calling for 1,000 more registered workers; and job guarantees and benefits so more part-time workers or casuals will take waterfront jobs. They also want nighttime truck gates and staging areas inside the terminals for quicker pick up of cargo.

The employers' group, the Pacific Maritime Association, said the backlog would dissipate by the end of the year, once more of the newly hired workers are fully trained.

In August, the PMA and ILWU agreed to convert 1,000 casuals to full-time union status in addition to 1,250 casuals who were added to union ranks earlier in the summer. In all, there are now more than 8,000 full-time longshore workers in Southern California and 5,000 casuals are being trained for part-time work.

At the urging of the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, the Marine Exchange is logging in ships 20 miles from the ports, rather than using their arrival time just outside the ports to determine the order for allocating longshore labor.

The change will improve air quality. In recent months, as vessels rushed to lineup for longshore gangs outside the ports, many ignored a Voluntary Commercial Ship Speed Reduction Program.

The program urges ships to travel at or below 12 knots within 20 miles of the ports. Ships traveling at slower speeds reduce emissions. Since the program was launched in May 2001, emissions from ships had been reduced by approximately one ton per day with about half of the vessels participating.

Traffic consultant Gill Hicks said several strategies for reducing

weekday truck trips on the Long Beach (710) Freeway could keep traffic from worsening through the year 2010 despite projected cargo growth.

In a presentation to the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, Hicks said extended gate hours would be the most effective way to get the most trucks off the 710 during weekdays.

With extended gates, a shuttle train service, increased use of on-dock rail, and creation of a computerized virtual container yard for swapping empties off site, nearly 20 percent of truck trips could be eliminated from the 710 on weekdays. The reduction would offset the growth in truck trips projected through 2010.

His remarks were based on a study funded by the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority. The next step will be to look at what is feasible based on the cost of each strategy.

One of the world's largest container ships, Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping's 8,200-TEU MSC Texas, made its maiden call to the Port of Long Beach, docking Oct. 12, at SSAT's Pier A container terminal.

While not quite as big as its namesake, the newly built MSC Texas is 1,095.8 feet long, which is longer than three football fields; 140.4 feet wide, which is 30 feet wider than the Panama Canal; and it has a draft of 47.6 feet.

The Texas rises 150 feet from the water to the top of its bridge and a fold-down mast, giving it five feet to pass under the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

The Texas is the first of at least eight 8,200-TEU vessels that Mediterranean Shipping Co. has ordered from shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries of South Korea.

MSC will deploy two of the giant vessels in a transpacific service with its French alliance partner, CMA CGM. The service calls in China in Xiamen, Chiwan, Hong Kong and Yantian, then across the Pacific to Long Beach and back to Xiamen.

The Texas was designed to minimize impact on air quality and to preserve seawater quality. Its less-polluting diesel engines and advanced waste-storage systems place the Texas among the cleanest of its class. Per TEU, the Texas' air emissions and fuel consumption are 20 percent less than for the previous generation of transpacific vessels. The ship's hull was painted with tin-free, self-polishing and anti-fouling paint.

Mediterranean Shipping Co. is a privately owned shipping line, founded in 1970, which has rapidly grown from a small conventional ship

operator to become one of the world's leading global shipping lines.

The Texas is among a new generation of 8,000-TEU vessels that have begun to call at the Port of Long Beach, one of the few U.S. ports with the deep channels, large shipping terminals, large cranes and tall bridges capable of handling these giant vessels fully loaded.

An 8,000-TEU vessel is able to carry enough cargo to completely fill a 1 million-square-foot regional shopping center with clothing, shoes, toys and other products stacked eight feet high.

Four other lines have 8,000-TEU ships calling in Long Beach: Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL), China Shipping, China Ocean Shipping Co. (COSCO), and CMA CGM. Hanjin Shipping has announced it will have an 8,000-TEU vessel calling in Long Beach beginning in 2005.

On Oct. 13, Port officials welcomed the 8,000-TEU COSCO Shenzhen during its maiden call at SSA Marine's Pacific Container Terminal at Pier J.

Named after one of China's fastest-growing port cities, the COSCO Shenzhen is the sister ship of the COSCO Long Beach, named after another fast-growing port city. The 8,000-TEU Long Beach made its first call at PCT in August.

Both vessels are deployed in COSCO's Southeast Asia (SEA) service, which calls in China at Ningbo, Xiamen, Hong Kong and Yantian, before crossing the Pacific to Long Beach and Vancouver, and back to Asia and Yokohama, Japan, and then Ningbo.

After surviving a transpacific journey and a perilous storm in Long Beach, Shanghai's Zhenhua Port Machinery Co. has delivered two more ship-to-shore gantry cranes for the Total Terminal International facility at Pier T, and one more to SSA Marine's PCT facility at Pier J south.

The ZPMC vessel with four 300-foot-tall cranes aboard (including one destined for the Port of Tacoma) was anchored in Long Beach Harbor south of the Queen Mary on Oct. 19 when a storm hit with 50-knot winds. At Jacobsen Pilot Service, a radar alarm showed that the wind-blown ship with its cranes was dragging its anchor. Jacobsen sent a pilot and two Millennium tugs to the rescue, helping the vessel to safely ride out the storm.

The ZPMC cranes, safe and secure, are the 13th and 14th at Pier T. A soon-to-be completed wharf extension will allow Total Terminals to work as many as four vessels simultaneously. The crane at Pier J is the third ZPMC crane delivered in recent months.

The Board of Harbor Commissioners has approved a \$736,227 contract with architectural firm M. Arthur Gensler Jr. and Associates to develop plans for a new headquarters building and maintenance facility.

San Francisco-based Gensler will prepare site plans, floor plans, design and engineering plans, and cost estimates.

After the plans are completed, commissioners will decide whether to renovate the existing seven-story building or build a new complex.

More than 200 people work in the existing building. Estimates for retrofitting the 1958 structure range from \$35 million to \$40 million, and would require the building to be vacated for two years.

The Port's maintenance yard stands in the way of a proposed replacement for the Gerald Desmond Bridge. Port officials have identified a container freight station site across the street from the existing Administration Building as a likely location for the new combined headquarters and maintenance facility.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed Assembly Bill 2043, introduced by Long Beach Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal, to establish a statewide strategic plan for ports and the maritime industry.

Under the bill, the California Marine and Intermodal Transportation Systems Advisory Council will meet, hold public hearings, and compile data on growth and congestion issues at California ports.

By January 2006, the group will issue its findings and recommendations to the Legislature for dealing with port growth, security and related environmental issues.

The Los Angeles Transportation Club will honor incoming President Steven C. Finley and its other 2005 officers and directors at a Nov. 6 dinner at the Reef Restaurant in Long Beach. For more information, call (562) 856-9197.

Bruce Wargo, general manager of newly formed PierPass Inc., will discuss plans for nighttime truck gates at a Nov. 17 luncheon at the Coast Hotel in Long Beach.

The Propeller Club and the Harbor Association of Industry & Commerce will host the luncheon. For more information, call (818) 951-2842.

The Pacific Rim Academy, an international trade program at Long Beach Poly High School, is looking for mentors to join its Poly Pac Rim Pals in working with its students.

Volunteers are asked to be a role model and positive influence by helping students for a few hours each month with their international

business plans. Anyone interested in being a mentor is invited to a luncheon Nov. 23 at Poly. For more information, call Greta McGree at (562) 591-0581 ext. 5196.

PORT PEOPLE. . .

After nearly 14 years at the Port, interrupted by a brief interlude in higher education, Communications Director Yvonne R. Smith has announced her retirement.

Smith, her husband, Vic Smith, and their dogs, Bert and Ernie, will retire to their home in Cambria, on California's central coast. A retirement party is planned for 11:30 a.m. Nov. 16 aboard the Motor Yacht Spirit, next to Parkers' Lighthouse at Shoreline Village. To join in the festivities, call (562) 901-1721.

The Long Beach Area Council of Boy Scouts has awarded its 2004 "Good Scout of the Year" to Marine Terminals Corp., making the presentation to MTC President and CEO Douglas Tilden, a former Eagle Scout.

Port of Long Beach Executive Director Richard Steinke was the master of ceremonies.

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