

MARYLAND DAILY RECORD

Port is ready for its next chapter

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By Alexander Pyles

Daily Record Business Writer

The Port of Baltimore's future began its journey to the Seagirt Marine Terminal in April. By September, the monstrous Chinese cargo cranes now installed on rails atop the terminal's 50-foot berth will be fully operational.

Mark Schmidt, a 23-year veteran of the Port of Baltimore, spent the last three years preparing for the new cranes.

That will mark the end of an important chapter in the career of Ports America Chesapeake Terminal Manager Mark Schmidt, who came to work at Baltimore's waterfront in 1989 and hasn't left since.

The next chapter could be even more important. Schmidt says the four 400-foot cranes — larger, faster and more reliable than the terminal's seven older models — will improve efficiency at Seagirt long before gargantuan Asian ships start to visit Baltimore, which boasts one of only two United States ports on the East Coast large enough to handle the Super-Post Panamax vessels that carry 22 cargo containers across the deck.

The port already moves 37 containers per hour, a rate Schmidt says is the highest on the East Coast. With the new cranes, that rate is destined to increase.

"We can move heavier boxes, faster," Schmidt said. "We know it's significant. ... We'll gain some moves per hour."

The last of the four cranes — which combined to cost port operator Ports America Chesapeake \$40 million — was raised to its full height Friday. The cranes were broken down in order to pass under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Francis Scott Key Bridge in June. The raising of the four cranes — which took longer than 12 hours and more than 20 workers per crane — has been done off-and-on since they were unloaded on June 20.

Schmidt said electricians would spend the next several days making electrical connections and testing voltage. Then, it will be time for technicians and crane operators to go through 40 hours of training provided by the behemoths' manufacturer, Shanghai, China-based ZPMC.

Just one person is responsible for driving 1,550 metric tons of crane, Schmidt said, and the training shouldn't be terribly challenging. He likened it to learning how to drive a new car.

"The principles are the same," Schmidt said.

Once training is completed, the cranes will be ready for day-to-day use. Larger ships from Asia won't sail east until the Panama Canal is reopened following widening — a project that may not be finished until 2015 — but the greater load-bearing capacity of the ZPMG cranes can be put to use immediately. The cranes can move 65 tons at once, compared to the 50 tons handled by the terminals' older cranes.

Some large ships may also start arriving in Baltimore from the Suez Canal, said Richard Scher, the port's spokesman. Only Baltimore and Norfolk, Va., have both a 50-foot channel and a 50-foot berth, necessary amenities for the Super-Post Panamax vessels.

"These cranes will be able to handle the largest ship out there now," Scher said. "There are no bigger ships."

For now, the speed and strength of the cranes will be a boon to the port, Schmidt said. The new cranes have a 140-foot working height, a 30-foot improvement over older cranes that will help longshoremen to work more efficiently. The cranes also have smart landing gear, which can sense an impending impact and automatically slow the speed of the crane as it nears cargo.

The large ships should start drifting into Baltimore a few years after the Panama Canal reopens, Scher said. Meanwhile, the port has plenty of room to grow.

"Seagirt is really half-filled to what it can be," Scher said. The terminal has capacity for about 1 million containers, but moved about half that many in 2011.

That's where Schmidt, the 23-year veteran, comes in. He's spent three years — since 2009 — securing the Chinese cranes, waiting for them to arrive, and preparing them for operation. Once that task is complete in the next month, he says there won't be a sigh of relief.

"I can go back and figure out what I can do with the rest of the site," Schmidt said.

In 2009, the Maryland Port Administration came to a 50-year agreement in a public-private partnership with Ports America Chesapeake, allowing the firm to

run day-to-day operations at the port. Ports America spent \$110 million to build the 50-foot berth and buy the supersized cranes.

JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

Baltimore Builds Growth in Container Cargo

Peter T. Leach, Senior Editor | Aug 3, 2012 2:40PM GMT

June volume declined 2.8 percent year-over-year, but first half volume is up 5 percent

The volume of containers handled by the Port of Baltimore declined 2.8 percent in June from the same month last year but increased 5 percent year-over-year for the first six months of 2012.

Baltimore's terminals handled 53,781 20-foot-equivalent units in June, compared with 55,331 TEUs a year earlier, but first half volume increased to 325,825 TEUs from 310,176 TEUs in the first half of 2011.

During the six-month period, Baltimore's public marine terminals handled a record 4.83 million tons of general cargo, surpassing the previous record of 4.69 million tons set during the first half of 2008 before the onset of recession.

The new record is also a 10 percent jump from the first six months of 2011 when the port handled 4.38 million tons of cargo.

The port's public marine terminals handled 8.89 million tons of non-bulk general cargo last year, up 9 percent from 2010 and just short of the all-time record of 8.96 million tons set in 2008.

The majority of Baltimore's general cargo includes containerized goods, autos, forest products, and roll-on, roll-off farm and construction equipment.

The number of automobiles handled at the port increased 27 percent in the first half year-over-year.

GREATERBALTIMORE.ORG

Port of Baltimore reports record first half of 2012

Thursday, August 2, 2012

The Port of Baltimore handled 4.83 million tons of general cargo during the first half of 2012, a record for the first six months of a year.

That is a 10 percent increase compared with the first half of 2011, the Maryland Port Administration said Thursday. The previous six-month high through June

came in 2008, when 4.69 million tons of cargo were shipped through the Port of Baltimore.

General cargo, or non-bulk cargo, is containerized goods, automobiles, forest products, and roll on/roll off equipment (farm and construction equipment).

Roll on/roll off increased by 36 percent at the port in the first half of 2012. Automobiles increased by 27 percent and container shipments increased by 7 percent.

The Port of Baltimore is on pace to break its general cargo figure from 2011, when it handled 8.89 million tons.

The all-time record for general cargo at the port was set in 2008 when 8.96 million tons passed through Baltimore.

Seagirt Marine Terminal in Dundalk, meanwhile, recently added new super-sized cranes to handle containers from larger cargo ships when the Panama Canal is widened in 2014. The cranes extend 22 containers across the cargo ships, up from 18 containers, and can go 140 feet above decks.

CONGOONEWS.COM

Port of Baltimore continues record run in first half 2012

(Risi ~ Forest Products industry)

BALTIMORE, MD, Aug. 3, 2012

Surpasses Previous Mark Set Before Recession; Continues Port's Strong Momentum From 2011

Governor Martin O'Malley today announced that the Port of Baltimore's public marine terminals handled a record 4.83 million tons of general cargo during the first six months of 2012 topping the previous record of 4.69 million tons set during the pre-recession first half of 2008. The new record is also a 10 percent jump from the first six months of 2011 when the port handled 4.38 million tons of cargo.

"This latest record achieved by the Port of Baltimore further proves that one of Maryland's main economic engines has fully bounced back from one of the most challenging economic periods in our country's history," said Governor O'Malley. "The more cargo that comes across the port's docks, the more good news that is for the thousands of men and women who work there and depend on it to support their families."

The Port of Baltimore's public marine terminals handled 8.89 million tons of general cargo last year, which was up nine percent from 2010 and just short of the all-time record of 8.96 million tons set in 2008. General cargo is defined as non-bulk cargos. At the Port of Baltimore, the majority of general cargo includes containerized goods, autos, forest products, and roll on/roll off (farm and construction) equipment.

Among the key commodities at the Port of Baltimore's public marine terminals during the first half of 2012, roll on/roll off (farm and construction) equipment was up 36 percent, the number of automobiles handled at the Port of Baltimore was up 27 percent, and containers were up seven percent.

In 2011 the Port of Baltimore saw a 15 percent increase in cargo from 2010 which marked the greatest increase of growth by any major U.S. port. The Port's public and private marine terminals saw 37.8 million tons of cargo cross their docks in 2011, up from 32.8 million tons in 2010. The total dollar value amount of that cargo was more than \$51.4 billion, the Port's highest dollar value ever and a 24 percent jump from 2010. The port also set seven other cargo records in 2011.

PORTTECHNOLOGY.ORG

Port of Baltimore posts record half-year handling figures

06 Aug 2012

Baltimore handled a record 4.83 million tonnes of cargo in the first six months of 2012

The Port of Baltimore handled a record 4.83 million tonnes of general cargo during the first six months of 2012 to surpass the port's previous 2008 record of 4.69 million tonnes.

The new record is also a 10 percent jump from the first six months of 2011 when the port handled 4.38 million tons of cargo.

"This latest record achieved by the Port of Baltimore further proves that one of Maryland's main economic engines has fully bounced back from one of the most challenging economic periods in our country's history," said Governor Martin O'Malley.

"The more cargo that comes across the port's docks, the more good news that is for the thousands of men and women who work there and depend on it to support their families."

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Among the key commodities at the Port of Baltimore's public marine terminals during the first half of 2012, roll on/roll off (farm and construction) equipment was up 36 percent, while the number of automobiles handled at the port was up 27 percent, and containers were up seven percent.

Container volumes at the port increased 5 percent year-on-year to 325,825 TEU for the first six months of 2012. However, containers handled in the month of June fell 2.8 percent to 53,781 TEU, compared to the 55,331 TEU handled a year earlier.

Last year, the Port of Baltimore saw a 15 percent increase in cargo from 2010 marking the greatest increase of growth by any major US port. The port's public and private marine terminals saw 37.8 million tonnes of cargo cross their docks in 2011, up from 32.8 million tons in 2010.

THEREPUBLIC.COM

400-foot cranes expected to improve efficiency, handle larger vessels at Port of Baltimore

(picked up from the Daily Record)

August 07, 2012 - 8:21 am EDT

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