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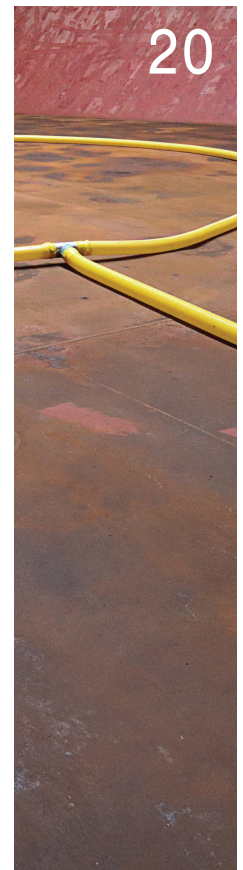
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Cover image: PhilaPort

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A new era

Definitive investments trigger trade growth

By Lori Musser



IT ISN'T JUST a refrigerated cargo port, although it is the largest one in the nation. And it isn't just a niche port — it handled 7.1 million tons of diverse cargo last year. With container counts jumping 16 percent in 2021 over 2020, the Port of Philadelphia (PhilaPort) is one of the fastest-growing seaports in the United States.

That growth has been broadly acknowledged, coming on the heels of a \$300 million investment announced by the state of Pennsylvania in 2016. Another whopping state investment — \$246 million this time around — was announced by Governor Tom Wolf in February 2022.

The state contribution will help ensure that port infrastructure is ready for even

more cargo throughput, according to Sean Mahoney, director of marketing at PhilaPort. Regarding the initial \$300 million state investment, “That got us caught up,” he said, particularly in making the port big-ship ready. “But now we can step on the gas and [use the new state funding] to help build substantive volume,” he said.

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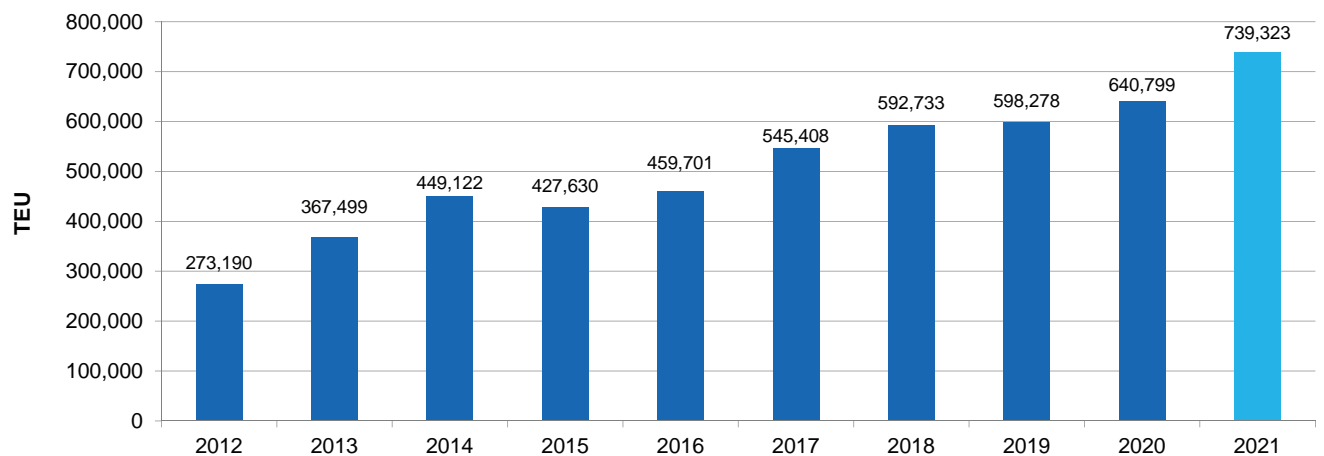
A \$246 million state investment will help insure the port is ready for even more cargo throughput.



Holt Logistics Corp.

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PhilaPort container volumes



Note: Compound annual growth rate is 12 percent per year.
Source: PhilaPort

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In 2021, PhilaPort logged its sixth straight year of container growth and its best container year yet. Mahoney said compound annual growth in containers since 2012 is approximately 12 percent. Two-thirds of port cargo is containerized, and more than half of that number is moved in refrigerated containers.

PhilaPort's perishable business thrived throughout the pandemic and recent global supply chain crisis. "Having 60 ships anchored in San Pedro Bay doesn't work for perishables," Mahoney said. While some diversion of cargo to PhilaPort from US West Coast gateways was expected, the port also welcomed, almost improbably, some perishables that had traditionally been routed over West Coast ports. Some of these reconfigurations will result in permanent reroutings.

Perishable growth will continue to grow, Mahoney predicts. Factors elevating those volumes include year-round consumer demand for fresh and healthy foods, the port's proximity to massive and wealthy Northeastern consumer markets, expanded sourcing, and more perishables meeting phytosanitary criteria and being allowed in by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The port's total of 7.1 million tons of cargo in 2021 showed 10 percent year-over-year growth.

Roll-on/roll-off (ro/ro) tonnage, while somewhat flat in 2021, is expected to pop back up once the widely reported global microchip problem is fixed, according to Mahoney.

PhilaPort serves numerous industries with strong growth prospects. It also has strong business lines in liquid bulk and forest products, which comprise 13 percent and 12 percent of

total port cargo, respectively. The port also has niche markets in autos, steel, and cocoa beans (each with under 4 percent of total port cargo).

There are well over 1 million tons of forest products moved through Philadelphia each year, some via container and others via breakbulk through Philadelphia Forest Products Center and Tioga Marine Terminal. Packaging products are doing particularly well, with demand that Mahoney described as "exploding."

"The investment from the state [in PhilaPort] has been a force multiplier. It will continue to spur private investment."

Cocoa bean cargoes, moving through the port to various processors, are also robust. Approximately 100,000 tons annually of this beloved commodity arrive by the shipload in sacks, mostly from western Africa, although Ecuador is an up-and-comer, according to port statistics.

PhilaPort's steel was big news in 2021, with a 196 percent increase in tonnage. Much of this originated in South Korea and Europe, Mahoney said. The American housing boom and infrastructure push is likely to bolster this market in the near term.

For imports, the port's top three trading regions for containers are South America, Central America, and Oceania, at 77 percent. Oceania, South America, and Europe lead for export containers, with 72 percent.

The Philadelphia trade and logistics gateway is not without its challenges. Complacency and tradition can be hard to counter when courting new business, according to Mahoney. "We have a growing and viable alternative gateway, but we need to challenge beneficial cargo owners to not just accept traditional routings — and delays," such as those in the mega gateways, he said.

Similarly, Philadelphia is working hard to

ensure it is not cast in the same light as the many true bottlenecks in global supply chains. "Ports have been unfairly cast as the logjam — but many port delays are a manifestation of higher problems throughout the supply chain, including the inland supply chain's workforce shortage," Mahoney said.

With a new capital investment program and funding in hand, PhilaPort's next challenge may well be related to delivering on its capital improvements fast enough — moving ahead with engineering, consulting, contracting, and managing projects.

In a year of unprecedented supply chain challenges, PhilaPort experienced one noticeable hiccup, which was soon set right, according to Dominic O'Brien, the port's senior marketing manager. "We sell

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velocity," he said, explaining that during months of chassis-pool-related delays, the port community pulled together and came up with a multi-layered solution, including additional chassis purchases, collaboration with rail, and extended evening and weekend gate hours. Sometimes several small, but incremental, advancements by a variety of partners were all that were needed to eliminate the problem, O'Brien said.

Port deepening is foundational to nearly every capital project. It allows the port to accommodate today's larger ships and grow its cargo volumes.

The \$450 million channel deepening project takes the Delaware River's main channel from 40 feet to 45 feet for a stretch of 120 miles. The 10-year project is set to be completed in early 2023.

Additional capital commitments include a new \$42 million PhilaPort Distribution Center; densification of Packer Avenue Marine Terminal (PAMT), at approximately \$50 million; two additional near-dock warehouses, totaling \$100 million; a \$60 million investment in land acquisition and development; a \$4.75 million investment in Tioga Marine Terminal gantry crane upgrades; and a new \$70 million

Southport berth, to be funded largely by a \$49 million federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant. The new berth is the port's first in nearly 50 years.

The new Southport berth will expand the port in the south district of PhilaPort. Mahoney anticipates a great deal of further development and investment in the nearby areas, which he called the "fastest-growing real estate market after the Inland Empire in California."

"The investment from the state has been a force multiplier. It will continue to spur private investment, like the \$100 million in private money invested by our terminal operator complementing our projects at Packer Avenue Marine Terminal," Mahoney said.

At PAMT, operator Greenwich Terminals, part of Holt Logistics Corp., has invested in two additional super post-Panamax cranes, an \$8 million state-of-the-art perishables inspection building, warehousing, equipment, and other assets.

The substantial PAMT densification project involves the reassignment of 62 acres located across the street from the 160-acre main terminal, while introducing electric rubber-tire gantry cranes (eRTGs), ultimately increasing capacity from 700,000 TEU to 1.2 million

TEU. The changes can't come soon enough. "They will allow better operation on the terminal and help attract more liner services," Mahoney said.

Holt Logistics provides end-to-end port, warehouse, and logistics solutions for importers and exporters. The Holt name has been associated with international trade and transportation in the region for 92 years.

Christian Holt, sales and marketing representative at Holt Logistics, said the completion of the port's \$300 million public-private Capital Investment Program has not only increased container capacity at the port, but it has also improved every touch point for containers, enhancing the port's competitive position for all containerized trades.

Packer Avenue Marine Terminal can now accommodate 14,000-TEU ships and welcomes trucks with customer-pleasing extended gate hours. It is home to a total of five new electric super post-Panamax cranes, 2,500-plus reefer plugs, newly renovated berths, and more efficient truck-entry gates with modern gate technology that includes radiation portal monitoring and optical character recognition. It also houses the Customs Examination Station.

Sophisticated, seamless solutions; commitment to sustainability

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Distribution is proud to serve as the trusted name in transportation and warehousing in Philadelphia.

Headquartered in Elizabeth, New Jersey, East Coast Warehouse's state-of-the-art, Safe Quality Food (SQF) certified facilities, expedited US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) exam services, and transportation capabilities offer an end-to-end solution that is sophisticated and seamless. With nearly 72 million cubic feet of temperature-controlled space; access to multiple port-centric locations across the US; and nationwide, fast, reliable, and cost-effective truckload, less-than-truckload, drayage, brokerage, transportation management, and final-mile delivery services, East Coast Warehouse helps customers optimize supply chain efficiencies. The company's comprehensive global platform, strong corporate values, and an unwavering commitment to customer service excellence are why it boasts many of the world's most recognizable food and beverage brands as loyal customers.

In Philadelphia, the company is quickly

becoming a major port player via its designation as a centralized examination station (CES) by CBP and via its services, which include container storage, cross docking, drayage, and a full suite of transportation and brokerage services through Safeway Trucking Corporation and Safeway Logistics Solutions, respectively.

From expanding its Philadelphia location to receiving and maintaining the SQF certification, the company continues to look for ways to increase its footprint; it has plans for additional expansion in 2022 and beyond, in addition to its recent foray into the Baltimore and Savannah areas. Recently, Sam Zell's private investment firm, Equity Group Investments (EGI), announced

an investment in the company as it expands into new geographies.

Inbound Logistics named Safeway Trucking a Top 100 Trucking Company in 2019, 2020, and 2021, and *Food Logistics Magazine* has recognized East Coast Warehouse as one of their Top 3PL & Cold Storage Providers each year since 2015. In addition, the company has received several awards for its ongoing commitment to sustainability and its work in driving sustainable improvements in the supply chain — from becoming one of the largest solar-powered warehouses in the Northeast to the implementation of programs and initiatives that promote environmental stewardship. ■



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The PhilaPort Distribution Center will provide 200,000 square feet of much-needed near-dock warehouse space.



PhilaPort

“The on-dock inspection building ensures cargo never has to leave the port. This expedites the inspection process and keeps the product intact,” Holt said. “It was

designed side by side with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to make sure the process is most productive for CBP, the port, customers, and the commodities.”

Pennsylvania’s second tranche of port investment funds, at \$246 million, is just the investment needed to create even more jobs while increasing terminal capacity and speed-to-market for a variety of goods, according to Holt. The new capital projects will continue the port’s modernization efforts and improve regional economic stability, he said.

The PhilaPort Distribution Center, also operated by Holt Logistics, is a 200,000-square-foot, class A, dry food-grade warehouse located within 1 mile of PAMT. Scheduled to be completed in June, “it fills a much-needed void for additional near-dock warehouse space and will not only help attract new services and businesses for the port, but will also create more jobs for the port community,” Holt said. It will allow the Holt organization to move containers off the terminal, rapidly unload, and return them directly to the marine terminal — or move them inland to be loaded with exports — further expanding opportunities for local and regional commerce.

“The investments of the public-private partnership between Holt Logistics, Greenwich Terminals, PhilaPort, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have put Packer Avenue Marine Terminal in a position to scale and

Global solutions, personally delivered

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Logistics is a full service, family owned customs broker, freight forwarder, and global logistics provider committed to providing its employees with a cultural environment that is personally and professionally rewarding, taking care of clients as if they are second to none, while also embracing the role and responsibility of a good corporate citizen.

Founded in 2012 by experienced logistics executives with over 50 years of combined industry experience, the company has become one of the fastest-growing businesses in the port. Always striving to exceed client expectations, 721 Logistics embraces its role as a valued partner and true extension of the client’s organization, taking the time to understand its client’s unique product and service requirements, making sure the smallest detail of every shipment is treated as if it’s the most important detail, and caring for every shipment as if it’s the company’s own. Because importing into the USA is a right, not a privilege, 721 Logistics understands the

importance of regulatory compliance and emphasizes such with US Customs and Border Protection and other government agencies in order to keep merchandise moving through the supply chain.

Large enough to handle any size importer, shipper, or consignee, 721 Logistics has the characteristics of a smaller and more nimble organization. These qualities shine through in 721’s ability to leverage technology within

its strategic global network footprint to deliver a service offering far greater than any larger forwarder — global solutions delivered personally, professionally, and representative of the way clients expect their brands to be recognized. From origin to destination, and points in between, 721 Logistics is an organization that works “goal time,” not “clock time,” always keeping the axiom “Your cargo is our cargo,” in whatever solution it is asked to provide. ■



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January –December 2021 US Container Growth

US Trade	↑	14%
US East Coast	↑	16%
Baltimore	↓	-2%
Boston	↓	-30%
Charleston	↑	18%
Jacksonville	↑	7%
Norfolk	↑	25%
NY/NJ	↑	19%
Philadelphia	↑	16%
Savannah	↑	20%

Source: PhilaPort

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successfully grow throughout the supply chain crisis," he said. With scaled-up infrastructure in place, ports can deploy transparency, flexibility, critical thinking, technology investments, and better communication with customers to combat congestion, rising costs, and overload.

At PAMT, terminal operations are entirely automated. Radio frequency identification, GPS-enabled equipment, and other technologies and equipment have enhanced container-handling productivity, making PhilaPort one of the fastest draws on the East Coast in terms of lifts per hour.

In other developments, Holt is adding properties located within the port district for container and equipment overflow. It also has a 170,000-square-foot refrigerated/frozen cargo facility planned for 2023-24.

In addition, the public road that leads to PAMT will soon close to the public and be dedicated to port use, a move in the interest of both safety and efficiency.

While the new gate complex and the practice of segregating container piles are already a boon to truck drivers, expediting their turn times and supporting their quest for delivery reliability, the terminal's Intermodal

Capacity Building is intended to help Norfolk Southern and CSX grow intermodal business through the port, by facilitating provision of more efficient rail connections through Packer Avenue Marine Terminal.

PhilaPort has 10 containerized ocean carriers offering heavy coverage in Europe, South America, and Oceania, while also serving other markets. It has dozens of other water-borne services. The port hub grows and the economy strengthens as PhilaPort's ocean carrier base diversifies. New services include the Mediterranean Shipping Co.'s Indus 2, initiated in April 2022 and now offering Philadelphia shippers direct connections to India, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Cargoes are expected to include grains, stones, and other dry and perishable cargoes from the Far East. "Shippers want more efficient options, and this new India/Med service fits perfectly into our wheelhouse," Jeff Theobald, executive director and CEO of PhilaPort, said.

In April 2022, Mediterranean Shipping Co.'s Scan Baltic service made its first voyage to PAMT. The service gives US shippers direct connections to Bremerhaven, Germany; Gothenburg, Sweden; and

Collaborative, safe handling with strategic location

OUR MARINE TERMINAL operating piers 74A, 78A, and 80 within the Port of Philadelphia comprises almost 1 million square feet of dry warehousing. Our strategically located terminal on the Delaware River provides a geographical advantage for distribution to two-thirds of the Canadian and US population within 48–72 hours.

As the designated Forest Products Center within the Port of Philadelphia, JH Stevedoring and PENN Warehousing are recognized as one of the most cost effective and reliable labor forces in the North Atlantic. The productive and safe vessel handling by JH is unrivaled. PENN's proficient and safe operations ensure timely turn times for all modes within the distribution process. Our entire organization is supported by modern and specialized equipment and cutting-edge technology with 24-hour web access to your inventory.

We offer a complete menu of supply chain support services at our marine terminal. That is inclusive of breakbulk, container, intermodal, rail, and truck distribution services. Our facility is a half mile to the US Interstate Highway System and one mile gate-to-gate with the Port of Philadelphia main container terminal (Packer Avenue Marine Terminal).

Our cost effective, quality, and safe handling of products with our dedicated labor force minimizes damage. However, during the entire transport process products unfortunately incur damages. PENN is quite unique in providing on-site repair and rewrap services. Served directly by two Class I rail carriers, we have 15 rail sidings indoors for safe and damage-free loading or unloading

of products. Our truck turn times are closely monitored and are consistently less than one hour, gate-to-gate.

Throughout our terminal, we have state-of-the-art technology providing 24-hour web access to your inventory with EDI capabilities, supported by our experienced and stellar customer service team. Please allow us to demonstrate how we may add value to your supply chain. ■





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PhilaPort's perishables business has thrived during the pandemic and recent global supply chain crisis.

PhilaPort

Klaipeda, Lithuania. Scan Baltic provides access across the Baltic for cargoes such as forest products and seafood, reducing transshipment for customers and furnishing expedited transit times.

Other newer ocean services at the port include Mediterranean Shipping Co.'s

Canadian Gulf Bridge service, with three ports in Mexico, and Maersk's American Express service, which loops the US East Coast with ports in southern Africa.

Mahoney said there is demand for more ocean services and routings through PhilaPort, where liner services face less congestion than

that associated with larger port gateways on the East Coast. ■

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Overwhelming response drives continued expansion

MANFREDI COLD STORAGE is one of the East Coast's major warehousing sites specializing in chilled fruit, food, and frozen foodstuffs requiring temperatures from 0 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit, operating seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The company currently operates 425,000 square feet of temperature-controlled warehouse space with 30,000-pallet storage capacity in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.

Manfredi of Pedricktown, New Jersey, features inspection-capable docks, storage capacity for 4,400 pallet positions, and a 30,000-square-foot packing room. Phase two for New Jersey is already underway, adding an additional 2,200 pallet positions and 15,000-square-foot packing room.

Manfredi Cold Storage & Distribution uses low-density racking and computerized wireless information systems, improving air circulation and quick truck turnaround, while keeping our customers fully informed. We also have onsite IT with full capability for EDI services.

Pre-conditioning and ripening services are available. MCS&D has eight forced air ripening rooms and four pre-cooling chambers.

Rail service is also available. We have service for four rail cars and are in the process of expanding to accommodate an additional six cars.

In the event of a power failure, our warehouse has full automatic generator back up. Manfredi receives annual third-party audits from Primus and organic certification via CCOF.

Truckload and less-than-truckload distribution services are available via Manfredi Logistics asset-based and company-owned equipment throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast with daily lanes into the Midwest. Inland Transportation offers pier drayage from all Delaware River Ports utilizing company-owned-and-operated equipment. All drivers are TWIC certified, hauling both containerized and breakbulk shipments. National Refrigerated Freight is a freight brokerage company moving refrigerated freight throughout the US.

International Repack services include: quality personalized bagging, custom labeling, and reconditioning services. A running total of 13 packing lines feature a combination of 26 Giro, Daumar, and Volm

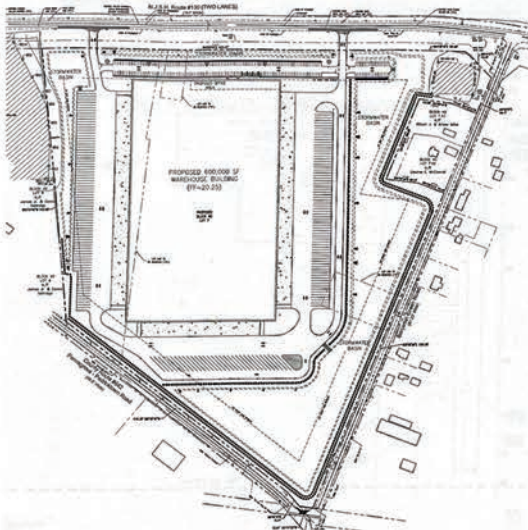
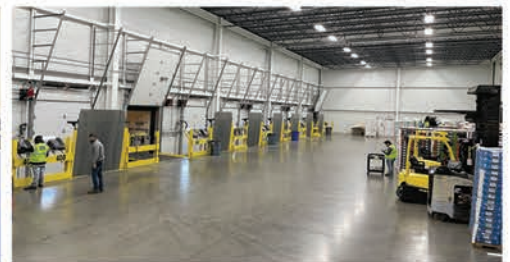
baggers. Inventories are updated real time, and customers can view progress through our inventory control system. Hand packing is also key to our business. A running total of 10 production lines are fully lighted and provide the most quality service available in the industry.

Manfredi takes pride in our ability to develop leadership and create an environment for employees to master processes while taking care of grower and customer needs. ■



OVERWHELMING RESPONSE DRIVES CONTINUED EXPANSION

Manfredi Cold Storage Expansion in NJ,



8 weeks after completing a new 100,000 square foot cold storage warehouse and packing facility in Pedricktown, New Jersey, Manfredi has broken ground on a new 50,000 square foot addition. The response has been overwhelming. The Pedricktown facility opened mid-July of 2021 and shovels were in the ground in mid-September for the addition. The Pedricktown facility occupies 52 acres and the approved and permitted site can grow to 600,000 square feet with a storage capacity of 30,000 pallets of low density storage and 100,000 square feet of packing space. MCS&P has direct access to Route 130 and minutes from the New Jersey Turnpike and all of the surrounding ports on the Delaware River. Pedricktown can be rail served through its direct access to CSX, a class 1 RR.

The addition will consist of additional storage of 2,000 pallets bringing total pallet capacity to 6,000 pallets, an additional 15,000 square feet of packing space and the balance will be dock area. The Central Plant refrigeration system was designed and built to supply the necessary cooling for 300,000 square feet, so the addition is a simple plug and cool. The facility features includes Vilter Compressor's, Colmac Coils, Danfoss Refrigeration Pulse Valves, Steel King Racking, Rite Hite Dock Levelers and Bi-Parting Doors. The construction project was designed and managed in house by the Manfredi Team. Opening for the new additional is scheduled for the end of the second quarter of 2022.

Recent additions to the Kennett Square facility bring the storage capacity to 30,000 pallets with 40,000 square feet of packing space



For more information please contact:

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Keeping cool

Philadelphia's cold chain leads market

By Lori Musser

EVEN IN THE dog days of summer, the Port of Philadelphia's freight-handling community keeps parkas handy. Perishables comprise 36 percent of the gateway's cargo base; temperature-controlled containers, warehousing, and services are scattered throughout the region, forming an important industrial cluster, which is now generations old. It has spawned an extended ecosystem of supplier companies that help make it competitive, flexible, and agile.

The benefits of such geographic concentrations include a predilection for cooperative or competitive innovation, deep industry expertise, pools of skilled workers, and access to proficient partners and suppliers.

Perishable freight movements are particularly time-sensitive. With shelf life limited, any innovation that can keep cargo moving quickly has greater value for perishables than for other cargo.

The idiosyncrasies of the supply chain and the relatively high value of many temperature-controlled products mean that the cargo often commands a

premium rate, making a port with more than one-third of its cargo classified as reefer particularly appealing to carriers.

For more than 65 years, Elizabeth, New Jersey-based East Coast Warehouse & Distribution has provided integrated temperature-controlled logistics services to food and beverage importers.

The company came to the Philadelphia market in 2016 to operate a Centralized Examination Station (CES) for US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the port.

East Coast Warehouse offers 49 million cubic feet of state-of-the-art facilities strategically located in New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia. Another company site is set to open in Baltimore.

"Our goal is to help get cargo cleared and made available to the customer as soon as possible. That is our core service offering in Philadelphia. It plays well with our strong port-based presence and our history of drayage and moving containers," Kevin Daly, East Coast Warehouse's chief commercial officer, said.

While some customs exams are done

Perishables comprise 36 percent of PhilaPort's cargo base.

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on Philadelphia's marine terminals, East Coast Warehouse serves only those that are comfortably moved off site. "We just renewed our agreement with US Customs for another five years. We're excited about that and about continuing to expand our presence in the greater Philadelphia area," Daly said.

The approximately 50,000-square-foot East Coast Warehouse facility is the only off-port CES serving PhilaPort. It includes about 20,000 square feet for short-term storage and similar work.

Daly appreciates the efficient flow of cargo through Philadelphia. Compared with other ports, it is trouble-free, he said.

While currently focused on customs exams in Philadelphia, the company sees potential for business expansion, based on its vast corporate expertise in multi-temperature drayage and handling. East Coast Warehouse's soon-to-be-launched CES space in Baltimore already has public warehouse space available for business expansion.

"We are on a growth trajectory, looking for

and in front of Customs quickly, getting it through the Customs process, and making it available to the customer as soon as possible," he said. Those straightforward steps, taken in a timely manner, make all the difference in the import of a perishable shipment.

"For us, every day, it is about being creative and finding solutions to help customers and mitigate unplanned problems. We have no volume commitments, no guarantees. It all depends on what is going on around the world and what Customs must stop and inspect. We are a partner, a service provider," Daly said. Having sufficient capacity, workforce, and flexibility are critical.

Manfredi Cold Storage & Distribution's two facilities offer services for fruits and vegetables coming up the Delaware. The company drays, stores, packages, and distributes products. Its 425,000-square-foot Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, facility can accommodate 28,000 pallets. Its Pedricktown, New Jersey, location in Oldmans Township opened in 2021 with 100,000 square feet that will eventually be expanded to 600,000 square feet.

When the New Jersey site opened, "the response was overwhelming," CEO Frank Manfredi said. "That allowed us to start an

Philadelphia's established reefer cargo cluster has spawned an extended ecosystem of supplier companies that help make it competitive, flexible, and agile.

In the business of customs exams, getting the work done in a timely fashion is the goal, one that is a stretch for many terminals and markets, Daly said. Because the space on any marine terminal is key real estate, there has been a trend toward relocating CES inspections to an off-site location.

opportunities up and down the East Coast," Daly said. East Coast Warehouse's experience in various verticals, such as candy and confectionery and beer, wine, and spirits, have played a great role in the company's success. "The business is about being responsive when the freight is available, moving it to our facility

Our name says it all

FIRST CHOICE FREEZER & Cold Storage is dedicated to handling, blast freezing, storing, and transporting your inventory in a modern, temperature-controlled warehouse, using the safest and most efficient means. Our team's mission, backed by state-of-the-art equipment, is to provide you with excellence and complete customer satisfaction.

First Choice and its sister company, M&O, are both located in Vineland, New Jersey, convenient to the Port of Philadelphia. Together, they provide a unique advantage — a large volume of storage space within proximity to major cities on the East Coast.

First Choice (396 N Mill Road)

This facility was purchased in 2001, with major renovations and expansions completed in 2007, 2014, and 2017. It now offers over 300,000 square feet of storage. In 2020, the entire building was refaced and the wall panels replaced for better climate control and aesthetics.

M&O (1200 N Mill Road)

This facility was built in 2018 and opened in January 2019. Its first addition was opened in January 2020. The second was completed in October of 2021. The third addition is scheduled to open in Q3 of 2022 for a total offering of 400,000 square feet of storage.

Our facilities utilize the latest in cutting-edge inventory management, providing integrated supply chain execution capabilities and efficiencies in distribution, fulfillment, and public refrigerated warehouse operations that are second to none. RF-

driven capabilities allow real-time tracking and reporting, minimizing cost while increasing productivity. We also operate a dedicated fleet of refrigerated and dry trucks that run shuttle services daily to points between customer locations.

We are members of the Global Cold Chain Alliance, adhering to its best practices and industry standards for safety. We are regularly inspected by the FDA, USDA, and third-party entities to ensure we meet the strictest food safety standards. We have a certified HACCP plan in place for every critical control point of our operation.

First Choice Freezer & Cold Storage and M&O Freezer & Cold Storage are both owned and operated by The Levari Group, LLC, a family business that has experienced significant growth since it was formed in 2001. Representing over three generations of expertise in the agriculture transportation and warehousing industry, First Choice Freezer & Cold Storage is your choice. ■

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Blast Freezing



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FIRST CHOICE, and its sister company, **M&O**, offer a unique advantage—prime locations convenient to the Port of Philadelphia and within proximity to major cities on the East Coast. Combined, upon completion of the fourth phase of M&O (Third Quarter 2022), they will provide a total of over 700,000 square feet of storage.

These modern, safe, and efficient facilities, owned and operated by The Levari Group, a family business representing over three generations of expertise in the agriculture transportation and warehousing industry, are your *first choice* for freezer & cold storage.

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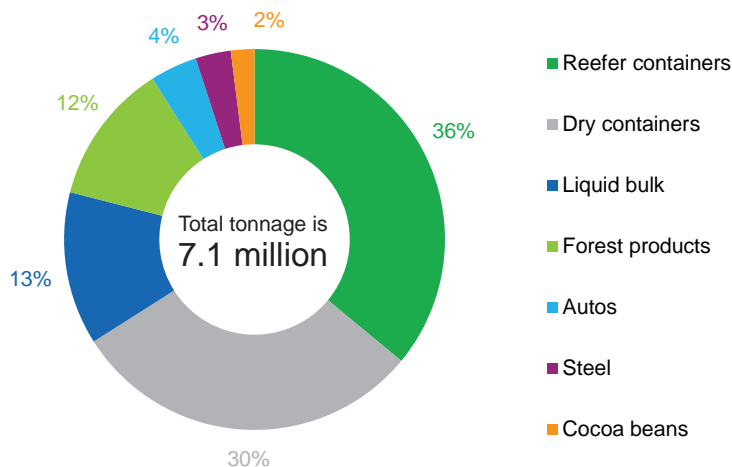
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PhilaPort cargo commodity tonnage 2021



Note: Container tonnage is 64 percent, compared to other commodity tonnage of 34 percent.
Source: PhilaPort

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addition two months after opening.”

The company strives to meet customer needs by creating economies of scale. It deploys a team approach with a positive mindset, which proved valuable in training and transferring staff to the New Jersey location. “It was seamless. New Jersey was up and running problem-free within a week,” Manfredi said.

The Manfredi Company can house and consolidate various import fruits and vegetables, often eliminating the need for a customer to go to multiple warehouses. The strategy is working, and the expansion continues. A current priority is the installation of citrus packing equipment.

The company can currently put through more than 6,000 pallets per day, in both locations combined, but instead of racking and stacking to the rafters, Manfredi has taken a different approach. “Our buildings are low density, with easy access to every pallet. We don’t stack high or deep. To get to anything requires a one-pallet move,” he said. The low-density system allows for better air flow, keeping products fresher. “We’ve been doing this for 20 years. It enhances the quality of product. Our costs per pallet space are more, but the easy access helps keep labor costs low. Now there are many new boutique varieties [of food products] that require low-density storage,” Manfredi said. His company is already able to meet that need.

The Manfredi Company’s campuses are wireless; warehouse equipment is outfitted with onboard computers directing employees where to go and pick. “We can load customers’ trucks in real time. Every pallet is staged in our

building. There is no need to call ahead. When a truck shows up, we can immediately load,” Manfredi said.

Some pandemic-inspired changes, such as truck loading procedures, actually increased throughput and velocity, with 30 percent more pallets now handled by a single person than two years ago.

“Throughout the pandemic, [the dedicated frontline workers] showed up — you can’t work remotely on a forklift.”

“Also, we are installing a second kiosk, so drivers don’t have to come back to the office to get bills of lading. It will enable a driver to go to the exit, see the kiosk, scan the paperwork, and make copies of paperwork. The kiosk will save a driver 15 minutes to a half hour,” he said, an appreciable amount of time in a time-sensitive industry. “The whole industry is about keeping moving.”

Michael Levari is owner and operator of Vineland, New Jersey’s First Choice Freezer & Cold Storage. The company’s flagship facility was built in 2001 and underwent three significant expansions — in 2007, 2014, and 2017. It now measures 300,000 square feet. The company’s sister facility, called M&O Freezer & Cold Storage, opened in January 2019, with a first addition completed in January 2020, a second addition in October 2021, and

a third under way now with completion expected in August. At that time the facility will reach 400,000 square feet, bringing the two-facility total to 700,000 square feet of primarily frozen (75 percent) and refrigerated space.

First Choice offers blast freezing, which is in constant use due to constant demand.

In addition to warehousing, the company also runs a fleet of 15 tractor trailers to better serve customers, Levani said, explaining that the reason the company has been able to expand every year for the last five years is superior customer service. “It is a family-run company, and we treat customers like family,” Levani said. “We have been in business for a lot of years. We understand the silent needs and how to service them. We offer a personal touch.”

First Choice specializes in food products. Pandemic- and e-commerce-related growth have driven changes and opportunities for food supply chains. “Distribution centers have given a big lift to our industry. We aren’t fulfilling local orders, but we ship out to DCs,” Levani said. The company now provides freezer facilities for the meal-kit industry.

Food service industries are subject to many regulations. For instance, First Choice is a member of the Global Cold Chain Alliance, adhering to its best practices and industry standards for safety, and is regularly inspected by the Food and Drug Administration, the US Department of Agriculture, and third-party entities to ensure it meets the strictest food

safety standards. “We also have certified plans in place for every critical control point of our operation,” Levani said.

First Choice Freezer & Cold Storage and M&O Freezer & Cold Storage are part of a family business now represented by three generations of expertise in the agriculture transportation and warehousing industry. “We are proud of our level of service and what we’ve been able to accomplish” throughout the expansion, supply challenges, and the pandemic, Levani said.

John Gaudet is vice president of business development for RLS Logistics, a cold chain third-party logistics provider (3PL) with a string of recent national expansions to its credit. RLS’ cold storage in the greater Philadelphia area includes warehouses in Delanco, Vineland, and Newfield, New Jersey. The company offers

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traditional storage, temperature-controlled freight consolidation, crosspack, and fulfillment serving the East Coast. Its services are tailored to the food industry — mostly finished frozen and fresh goods.

Gaudet said the company's 350 employees move a lot of cargo — thousands of pallets a week in and out through the company's freight program, serving all the major retailers. According to corporate surveys, the company's top strengths include its professional, dedicated staff and its fully integrated solutions. "We are a one-accountability partner who manages every aspect and touch point," Gaudet said.

Customers appreciate RLS' responsiveness and its comprehensive food safety initiatives. It is British Retail Consortium certified at the highest level. RLS' robust IT platform was also recognized for its ability to give customers access to data on their warehoused products. "They can easily read and access information and then export it, including business intelligence and analytics," Gaudet said.

RLS' direct-to-consumer business unit isn't new. For more than 20 years, the company has done what was called "mail order" — now re-branded e-commerce by some but dubbed "fulfillment for fresh foods" by RLS. This

business unit is booming. Because 99 percent of the US population is located within a two-day drive and more than 80 percent within one day, almost anyone can now receive, for example, a subscription-based meal plan for their cat, complete with dry ice, packaging, and label, moved out efficiently through Amazon, UPS, or another final-mile carrier.

Gaudet emphasized the need to celebrate the company's frontline workers. "Throughout the pandemic, they showed up — you can't work remotely on a forklift," he said. A dedicated workforce supports the integrity of America's food supply chain, he said: "Maybe it isn't sexy work, but it is critical to the country, the nation, and to families."

Looking to the future, Gaudet said there is room for more advancements in pick and pack automation. On the sustainability front, cold chain warehousing shows exceptional promise for deploying solar and helping limit emissions. "In Delanco, 100 percent of our electricity comes from our solar array. This is about today and tomorrow. We want to be a good steward and partner to the earth," Gaudet said.

Cold chain prospects are many. Consumers want more of what used to be seasonal produce, year-round. And in the wake of the

pandemic, many may continue to avoid the grocery store, driving greater frozen food product sales.

"Technology is changing. We are seeing more influence from mobile racking in our warehouse and more offerings per SKU. Manufacturers had gotten carried away with the number of SKUs. The movers moved, but now they are dropping the slower turning items. Just-in-time is a thing of the past, and inventories are rising, just in case," Gaudet said.

Investments in the port have provided exceptional opportunities for perishable cargo warehousing and transportation services. "The port is doing a phenomenal job growing and turning cargo. We're seeing additional cargo as a byproduct of their good work," Gaudet said. The port's ongoing expansion and development, and its proximity to several massive consumer markets, helps cold chain businesses expand. But it's a two-way street. Without the efficient assets and expert work of privately owned cold-sector companies, the port would have no temperature-controlled business. ■

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Ready to step on the gas

EBULLIENT. ECSTATIC. EXCITED. All terms that could apply to the feeling at The Port of Philadelphia regarding their record growth, record investments, and prospects for the future.

Port officials are proud of their 16 percent growth in 2021. "When you build a better mousetrap, the market reacts positively," stated Jeff Theobald, executive director and CEO of PhilaPort. "We started to make critical infrastructure investments five years ago. Fortunately for us, we built capacity at just the right time, which allowed us to handle record volumes. And we are only getting started."

"Where we are today is only a whisper of where we will be in ten years," said Jerry Sweeney, chair of the PhilaPort Board of Directors.

Last year, The Port of Philadelphia handled 740,000 TEU. PhilaPort's goal is to reach 1.2 million TEU as rapidly as possible. To reach any goal, a port needs a methodical, phased-in approach to infrastructure improvements. With the opening of the new, 200,000 square-foot, near-dock PhilaPort Distribution Center this June, PhilaPort will have completed their Port Development Plan 1.0.

PhilaPort 1.0 was \$330 million and included a rebuild of the main container facility, the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal (PAMT). This involved five super post-Panamax cranes and a new berth at PAMT. Additionally, the plan created new warehousing at the Tioga Marine Terminal and the development of Southport Auto Terminal.

In February, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced PhilaPort Development Plan 2.0, a \$246 million program. 2.0 will build new vessel berths and near-dock cold and dry warehousing.

Most importantly, it will build additional container throughput capacity at the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal.

Supply chain directors, after years of struggling with their traditional models, are now, finally, looking at alternatives. The undeniable truth is that PhilaPort sits in the richest consumer market in the world and offers amazing connections to Midwest and Canadian markets as well.

"Market forces sniff out better efficiencies. Clearly, we are pleased to be considered as a better solution to their logistics challenges," stated Sean Mahoney, PhilaPort's Director of Marketing. "The Delaware River is one of the great physical assets of North America. It is a natural highway from global markets to US consumers."

The euphoric feelings at The Port of Philadelphia appear to be justified. ■



PhilaPort
THE PORT OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA TRADE & LOGISTICS



Safe passage

Efficient fumigation, pest control keep cargo flowing

By Lori Musser

THE SAME TRADE in merchandise that fuels economic growth and is critical to America's prosperity can also expose the nation to unwelcome pests. Fortunately, there are efficient methods of eradicating invasive hitchhikers from import produce and other imported and exported products. When done well, fumigation and pest control can become an important part of a trade gateway's value proposition.

The greater Philadelphia trade and logistics community has come to rely on several exceptional fumigation and pest control specialists to ensure a seamless flow of goods that helps feed America safely, minimizes the risk of introducing invasive organisms that could harm

native species, and protects domestic agriculture. The same treatments can also minimize transmission of pests from the United States to other countries — a critical step in fulfilling official quarantine requirements for export shipments — without which exports of certain goods to specific countries at certain times of the year might otherwise be prohibited or mired in supply chain delays.

Fumigation is highly regulated, with multiple, sometimes complex standards and considerations. Advancements in safer chemicals can generate safety benefits to providers, customers, consumers, and the planet. Some advancements help expedite treatment

and/or ventilation times, keeping the supply chain moving.

Methyl bromide is one of the important fumigants used to control pests in agriculture and shipping. It is, however, known to deplete the ozone layer, and the United States has phased out production and consumption of methyl bromide with important exceptions for critical uses and for cargo quarantine and pre-shipment, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In these limited and exempted applications, methyl bromide is used very carefully, and under strict regulation, to treat commodities such as grapes, asparagus, logs, and other goods.

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Diverse methods of pest control and fumigation are vital to minimizing supply chain risk factors.

Regardless of the important role it plays in America's imports and exports, there is a race to replace the use of methyl bromide with chemical and non-chemical alternatives. Research is ongoing.

Shannon Sked is director of Western Fumigation, an East Coast leader in certified treatment of cargo for importers and exporters; food processors; and warehousing, storage, and distribution companies. The industry is changing quickly, he said, and Western Fumigation, in collaboration with fumigant manufacturing and government agencies, is on the cutting edge of research and development — helping find and deliver new ways to keep cargo flowing safely to market.

The company just completed a trial with a private-industry partner and the US Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. "It was a pilot study on a newer chemical, ethyl formate, with 100 times lower risk for human exposure," Sked explained. "While the USDA has already performed many studies, we tested it with practical application. Preliminary results were very successful."

Ethyl formate is a naturally occurring, non-residual substance with zero ozone-depleting characteristics. While not approved yet in the United States, it has potential for treating produce, packaged and stored foods, and processing equipment.

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Efficient fumigation helps speed produce to market.

Substances with lower toxicity profiles can make fumigation easier, faster, and less expensive. “Ethyl formate doesn’t have the same safety problems as methyl bromide. If

approved, we will be able to make it easier for customers to import certain fruit commodities coming from specific regions of the world,” Sked said. The company anticipates

eventually deploying ethyl formate in markets from Maine to Virginia, including the Delaware River ports area.

That is especially good news for produce customers. “In the past, fumigation has been seen as a bottleneck, an unnecessary cost. But we have always known that our calling is more than that — we help provide nutritious food and protect domestic agriculture. There is potential for throughput to flow in a much easier way,” Sked said. Any new chemicals that come with less “heavy-handed” regulations can foster creativity within the supply chain and expedite cargo processing, while still ensuring safety and compliance.

“Having the ability to offer more environmentally friendly and sustainable options for the entire supply chain — food manufacturers, exporters, importers, etc. — by using fumigants with lower risk and lower environmental impact helps partners along the entire supply chain reach their goals, too,” Sked said.

To keep ahead of regulatory changes, Western Fumigation invests heavily in its people. Its union contract workforce is highly certified, he said. “We have five certification programs run internally. We are even building

An important food protection partner

ECOLAB SPECIALTY PEST Services provides industry-leading expertise to protect your product and maintain a safe, healthy, pest-free environment. Our dedicated fumigation team has been a trusted partner providing specialized services at ports throughout the United States since 1976.

As the largest fumigation provider in the US, Ecolab is a critical piece of this supply line. Our capabilities expand to over 40 inland and seaport fumigation centers, backed by experienced and licensed experts to navigate and meet the unique requirements of the import and export industry. Whether your commodity is facing the quarantine regulations of imports or the foreign-country requirements of exports, Ecolab is fully registered, expertly trained, and uniquely experienced to provide compliant, effective fumigation.

Ecolab is the fumigator for the Chilean fruit and other commodities that arrive at the Port of Wilmington, and our expansion in the Philadelphia region has added a high level of confidence to our trade partners for food protection. South America and other regions trust their grapes, tropical fruits, bananas, blueberries, kiwi, and other temperature-sensitive commodities to our fumigation experts.

Ecolab is a leader in sanitation and disinfection. Our vessel disinfection program leveraged Ecolab products that meet the Environmental Protection Agency’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV2, the cause of COVID-19. Highly-trained technicians disinfected port facilities and vessels to protect people and keep commerce flowing.

Ecolab is also a leading provider of treatments for the

brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) according to Australian and New Zealand guidelines. BMSB treatment providers go through a rigorous approval process. Ecolab has more than 15 approved locations to provide treatment virtually anywhere in the continental US.

Across the inland US, we deliver comprehensive commodity storage pest management solutions. From fumigation of large-scale structures to that of warehouse-stored bags and totes, bins and silos, or on-ground piles, Ecolab fumigation professionals understand the pest protection needs of stored commodities and have the experience and expertise to deliver unmatched value.

We are committed to a higher standard. Ecolab goes beyond pest control, putting our expertise to work every day to solve the industry’s most complex pest challenges. Through our proactive people and innovative spirit, we protect you today, while advancing new and better solutions to protect you tomorrow. ■



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our own training center to keep up and lead the science.”

Expert staff is critical to delivering expert service, ultimately growing the company and the gateway. Sked sees many opportunities for existing and new food products, as well as dry cargo, to increase volumes through the Port of Philadelphia.

Rapid cargo expansion in recent years has required some “out-of-the-box” thinking to find operational locations, according to Sked, but, with new and safer fumigation products subject to less-stringent regulations, there may be no need to build additional dedicated fumigation space.

Domestic agriculture is subject to seasonality, and expectations for year-round access to all foods is driving a rise in produce imports. “The US has to import, but to do that it also has to prevent invasive species from being introduced that could have a catastrophic effect on American agriculture. We see our job as a noble cause,” Sked said.

Western Fumigation’s work at the Port of Philadelphia is done at night for safety.

Essentially, the company converts a logistics warehouse space into a fumigation chamber with drop-down tarps.

Western Fumigation also services exports such as forest products and industrial equipment. “Other countries are worried about the accidental introduction of pests from our area of the world,” Sked said.

The brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), for example, is an East Asian pest now found in the United States. Because it currently doesn’t exist in Australia and New Zealand — a large export market for the Port of Philadelphia — Western Fumigation works diligently to prevent its accidental introduction, in support of the goals of those nations’ ministries of agriculture.

Fumigation companies that help expedite supply chains of various commodities make those commodities more competitive. There are opportunities to work with government agencies to support the strict regulations while introducing advantages to customers. For example, some fumigants may allow for shorter withholding periods and a shorter ventilation period.

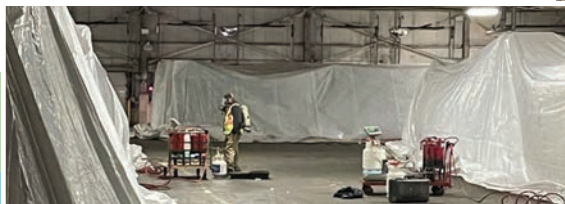
Jared Freudenberg is business operations manager of the east region for Ecolab Specialty Pest Services. As the largest commercial fumigator in the United States, the company handles all types of fumigation in all 48 states, he said. Ecolab operates at two sites at PhilaPort in conjunction with terminal operator Holt Logistics — Pier 122, for export commodities, and Pier 82, for perishable breakbulk cargo, including large volumes of import Chilean grapes, as well as pineapples, plums, tropical fruits, yams, and other produce.

Freudenberg underscored the importance of an effective and progressive working relationship with the port and terminal operator. “The chemistry is mandated by USDA. We can’t change that. The biggest area for Ecolab to make an impact is through our partnerships. Communication with the terminal operator is critical, especially in a challenging supply chain environment. Cargo can arrive sooner than initially expected or it can be delayed,” he said.

To accommodate these dynamics, Ecolab ensures it has flexibility and capacity. “We’ve continually invested in the Philadelphia region

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in training, equipment, and other technology to facilitate the flow of import cargo," Freudenberg said. "We've increased the size of our Philadelphia pest control services team — it has doubled in 12-16 months."

"The way we best facilitate trade is to introduce new ideas so that we ensure all US government import regulations and standards — and all export regulations for other countries — are met efficiently," Freudenberg said. In addition to its highly trained, dedicated team of professionals that perform pest specialty services, Ecolab has a dedicated regulatory compliance team.

"Making sure the shipments are in compliance with all regulatory agencies, to facilitate cargo coming or going, is our critical link in the supply chain. Without fumigation, the cargo won't move. The solutions we provide are not necessarily the flashiest," Freudenberg said, explaining that a lot of them are simply mandated by government bodies, "but everything we do is related to those partnerships and strengthening the supply lines," he said.

Regional Manager John Achzet is proud of Ecolab's work, its can-do attitude, and how effective fumigation services open

up opportunities and expand markets. He described the seasonal procedures for fumigating at Pier 122 "almost everything and anything bound for Australia-New Zealand," countries that do not have the BMSB. "The cargo is mostly containerized with fumigation done inside each container," he said.

Expert professional fumigation services have been integral in building PhilaPort's trade with Oceania, which now comprises 13 percent of the port's import TEU and 37 percent of its export TEU.

The recent growth has been truly exciting, Freudenberg said. Whenever the port, rail lines, terminal operator, and state make investments, or when inland and ocean carriers introduce new capacity for cargo, there is new opportunity for Ecolab. He expects more growth, particularly on the export side, which will help balance the port's import-to-export ratio and box positioning and will support inland and ocean carriers alike.

The Philadelphia trade and logistics community is especially excited about the potential for a new ocean service to and from Southeast Asia. "Expansion into Southeast Asia will open up even more opportunities for products such as distillers' dried grains with

solubles [also known as DDGS], soybeans, timber, logs, and tobacco. An ocean service is the critical lynchpin to that program," Freudenberg said.

There is a great deal of change going on, Achzet noted, with PhilaPort and Holt Logistics driving bigger and better cargo flows. There is also change in industry markets right now, especially for South American cargo. "We've had longstanding relationships with South American partners, especially for grapes and citrus, and also for other commodities. We are proud and honored and humbled to have served Chilean cargo for the past 35 years plus. We strive to do better every day, and those partnerships continue to grow," Achzet said.

Collaboration and close-working relationships are essential to supporting the efficient movement of cargo. Professional pest control and fumigation services are especially important in the Port of Philadelphia, America's busiest gateway for perishables and other products requiring treatment that helps protect America's agriculture, international trade, and domestic industries. ■

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WESTERN FUMIGATION IS the trusted leader and authority in fumigation services and treatments in many industries — including food commodity imports and exports, lumber imports and exports, distribution, warehousing, and container treatments. With over four decades of experience treating quarantine and pre-shipment (QPS) cargo, we're the trusted partner you need to navigate the requirements for both imports and exports. Whether your cargo is containerized or in bulk, we can fumigate it in a quick and efficient way. We have a tenured, licensed, and experienced team that takes pride in its work. Our dedication to doing it right the first time on every project allows us to guarantee our work every time. Our operational standards exceed regulatory compliance requirements, taking it to a level where our customers have no worries. We're the only fumigation company that guards our fumigation jobs 24/7 during operations. The safety and security of our employees and customers is priority one. Fumigation is one of the most regulated services; we

take extensive measures to ensure we're compliant with the proper permits and management plans in place before we start any treatment. We know the rules and regulations and are partners on the leading edge of several novel technologies in the imports/exports industry.

For our customers' and our employees' safety, we operate in a method of stringent compliance, freeing up our customers from having to worry about it themselves. The programs and standards at Western Fumigation enable us to offer the highest levels of professionalism and peace of mind to our customers at the Port of Philadelphia. With our top-notch quality,

safety, security, and compliance, we have the experience to address critical situations with minimal disruption to your important timelines. Our safe, reliable, and fast-acting treatments are ideal for the steady stream of imports and exports at your port.

Our goal is always to provide our customers with the safest, most effective fumigation services for their imports and exports. There's no insect species we can't handle. Our experience and expertise make us the simple choice for fumigation services. Call Western Fumigation at (800) 542-1542 or go to westernfumigation.com for more information. ■





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PHILADELPHIA TRADE & LOGISTICS

Moving volumes

Philadelphia gateway leverages logistics for growth

By Lori Musser



Exceptional logistics can help attract and retain cargo for a gateway.

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MANAGING THE FLOW of cargo in today's world is no small task. At the Philadelphia gateway, some customer-focused logistics service providers make their part of the process look easy.

Supply chains have become more complex as consumers and industry alike demand safe and rapid delivery of more items from more diverse and distant lands, all at an affordable price. Companies have evolved to meet the burgeoning needs of the mid-Atlantic states — arguably some of the world's richest consumer markets — with assets and services in place in the Philadelphia region.

Exceptional logistics can help attract and retain cargo for a gateway. PhilaPort's

containerized cargo grew 16 percent in 2021 to 739,000 TEU, its breakbulk cargo was up 19 percent to almost 1.3 million metric tons, and its total cargo volumes were up 10 percent to slightly more than 7 million tons. That type of growth implies service providers are doing their jobs effectively and efficiently.

PENN Warehousing and Distribution operates Philadelphia Forest Products Center — one of two major forest products facilities at PhilaPort. It handles high volumes of paper, lumber, and other products transported on breakbulk vessels into facilities at Piers 74A, 78A, 80, and 82.

Forest products are one of the port's

top opportunities for growth, said Sean Mahoney, director of marketing for PhilaPort. In addition to approximately a half million tons of breakbulk shipments at PENN, there is a similar volume of pulp handled at the port's Tioga Marine Terminal and approximately 20,000 containers of forest products moving through its container complex annually.

Imports of forest products rose rapidly in 2020 due in part to pandemic-inspired hoarding. Although volumes adjusted slightly in 2021, the future outlook is excellent.

PENN operates about 900,000 square feet of warehouse and outside storage space. Some aging facilities are being



Holt Logistics Corp.

PHILADELPHIA TRADE & LOGISTICS

replaced — an additional 200,000 square feet of warehousing will be open in the near future, aided by the state's recently announced funding commitment for PhilaPort capital projects. High-quality Scandinavian/European imports, among other products, require dry indoor storage.

Tom Mutz is vice president of global business development for PENN Warehousing and Distribution. Mutz does not anticipate any difficulty filling new space. "Nobody has space, even outside. The new building will be full before it's opened. There is great demand," he said.

The housing market, which supports forest product imports, including plywood from South America, is bullish. Meanwhile, the uptick in e-commerce requires packaging materials, giving rise to more KLB, paperboard, and similar materials. And pulp has seen demand diversify — it is now used in more products than ever, including textiles, masks, medicine, even some ice cream, according to Mutz. Ports, such as Philadelphia, that have the luxury of space to grow are fortunate.

Another PhilaPort forest products building, 74A, will be expanded by an additional 25,000 square feet or more as part of the port's expansion plan.



The Philadelphia Forest Product Center is served by multiple rail sidings, some inside buildings.

Mutz takes pride in Philadelphia Forest Product Center's efficiency and service, with gate-to-gate truck service in less than one hour. In fact, Mutz said, "Because we are an

appointment-only TWIC [Transportation Worker Identification Credential] facility, when drivers arrive with their appointment number, TWIC card, and safety vest, they are in and out within

PENN Warehousing & Distribution Inc. / JH Stevedoring

Cold chain experts with nationwide solutions

FOR OVER 50 years, customers have trusted RLS Logistics to manage their complex frozen and refrigerated cold chain solutions, naming us one of America's top third-party logistics (3PL) companies. We've been touted as the Cold Chain Experts for a reason.

As a family-owned 3PL company, we understand that your company's logistics needs are unique. With our team as your partner, we take the time to learn every relevant variable of your business holistically. Customer experience is a top priority.

We offer flexible and custom-tailored cold storage warehousing, transportation, and e-commerce fulfillment solutions, allowing us to be a top cold chain solutions partner. Our nationwide network of cold storage warehouses provides over 55 million cubic feet of temperature-controlled space across the US. We understand the importance of protecting our customers' brands and products while in the cold chain. RLS is proud to be BRC-GS certified.

Through RLS Logistics, customers will access one of the most robust cold chain transportation solutions. Programs include managed transportation solutions, freight brokerage nationwide, less-than-truckload shipping, retail vendor pool programs, and a cross-docking warehouse.

In addition to warehousing and transportation, RLS Logistics offers frozen food customers direct to consumer fulfillment services. With four frozen fulfillment centers nationwide, RLS can reach 31 percent of US consumers in one day ground shipping and 98 percent in two days. We understand that in today's

logistics industry, technology is essential to the success of our customers. RLS is proud to have one of the strongest data-driven platforms for our customers to gain full visibility into their cold chain.

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35-40 minutes. We pre-stage the products at the door in advance of their appointments.”

After leaving the terminal, drivers are only a half mile away from an interstate ramp. While most cargo moves inland by truck, the facility is also well served by multiple rail sidings, including some inside buildings, and two Class I railroads — CSX and Norfolk Southern — helping keep inland costs very competitive for rail-served destinations.

The Forest Products Center is well equipped. Specialized heavy-lift equipment allows the company to handle products up to 25,000 pounds and with a wide range of diameters and widths. And if paper or another product should arrive in less-than-pristine condition, PENN can repair and rewrap.

Nevertheless, PENN's greatest asset, according to Mutz, is its highly-skilled, trained, and knowledgeable staff, offering unparalleled customer service tailored to needs.

“We are a process-driven company. It adds to our efficiency and productivity. We are able to pass that on to our customers. Our union stevedoring and teamsters are very efficient,

and vessel operators tell us that we handle vessels more quickly than the competition. Faster vessel turnaround means shorter dwell time for the cargo,” Mutz said.

PENN is focused on creative solutions for customers and sees opportunities in shipping some forest products in non-operating reefers, a creative niche solution that would only be available to a refrigerated cargo leader such as PhilaPort.

Regional transportation improvements of any sort are good for future business. Mutz mentioned the need for a ramp system expansion near Walt Whitman Bridge that would improve access to the container port, support better traffic flows, and benefit the entire port community. The port and maritime community have successfully collaborated on many similar initiatives, he explained, including a Ship Philly First effort that brought stakeholders together to promote the diverse businesses of the port and region. That effort has since been taken up by the region's World Trade Association, Mutz said.


When the trade community joins forces, it

can bring about much-needed change, such as educating decision makers to change policies that previously kept certain cargoes from entering the port, he continued. Important efforts, going forward, will be to ensure there are enough truck drivers and equipment available nationally, and to ensure the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law directs some funding “to marine terminals, not just to roads and charging stations. Our national infrastructure is terrible, and we need to invest more,” Mutz said.

A lack of congestion, excellent and cooperative labor, and second-to-none access to the interstate highway system are the gateway's leading advantages for forest product movements, according to Mutz.


Larry Antonucci is president of 721 Logistics as well as its perishables operation, J&K Fresh East.

“We specialize in customs brokerage and import facilitation of fresh fruit and perishables in all ports of the East Coast, from New York to Florida — but our backbone is in Philadelphia, with the largest volumes,” Antonucci said. “We aren't asset based. We leverage



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our knowledge base, and our significant investment in IT, to help data move as fast as the fruit."

Processing forms, collecting data, moving data into formats required by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and transferring it to CBP and others is a vital link in the chain that facilitates the movement of cargo. "Produce is high-value, time-sensitive cargo. We do what is needed to get it there yesterday. We fly under the radar to a certain degree. Our role isn't to be in the news. We do our job and do it well," Antonucci said.

721 Logistics, through its J&K Fresh division, aims to be the best brokers and import facilitator for fresh fruit and perishables, by far, bar none, according to Antonucci. "We've tried to create a company that is good for the port, a good corporate citizen, a good environment for employees where they can grow personally and professionally," he said. "At the end of the day, this is a people business." 721 tries not to lose sight of the fact that customers and staff should always come first.

721 Logistics is a family-run broker-forwarder. That is unusual in this decade of mega-corporations, and Antonucci stresses the advantage this provides: "We like to say

we are large enough to serve you and small enough to care."

Future growth for the company is forthcoming, he said. With the channel deepening of the Delaware River almost complete, significant investment in container-handling infrastructure, new ocean services beginning to call, and great potential for more global carriers with service to and from Southeast Asia, PhilaPort container volumes are poised to skyrocket. "We can go after durable goods that currently go to Los Angeles, New York, or Savannah. This will put Philadelphia on the map," he said.

The global supply chain crisis of the last few years sent shippers scrambling for a back door into the United States to avoid backlogs and bottlenecks. "Philadelphia became an alternative. We stepped up to the plate and knocked it out of the park and handled unprecedented volume. All the stakeholders stepped up — truckers, terminal operators, customs brokers, warehousing, CBP, government agencies, and others. It was a total port effort," Antonucci said.

That very effective collaboration, in the eyes of many of the companies who make up the Philadelphia gateway, showed the world

that this is a port community worth a second look, a logistics hub to be considered. The pandemic and e-commerce and other trade-growth triggers have taught cargo owners that they shouldn't put all their eggs in one basket, Antonucci said.

Sean Mahoney, PhilaPort's director of marketing, summed up the region's rich potential: "We have tremendous capacity. We are not even scratching the surface of what we can do."

Cargo owners are considering Philadelphia for its expanding roster of carriers, for its attentive terminal operators and warehousing and brokers and forwarders, for its lack of congestion, and for its proximity to inland distribution centers. A gateway with easy access to major US highways, located within a two-day drive of the majority of the Canadian and US population, and with three Class I railroads is a remarkable alternative. ■

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Be part of the family

HOLT LOGISTICS CORP. is a family-owned, single-source service provider of commercial, accounting, marketing, and technology services to marine terminal operators, warehouses, and logistics companies. The Holt Family tradition in the transportation industry began in Philadelphia, born from the drive and ambition of Leo Holt, who began modestly with the purchase of a single truck in 1926. Together with his two sons, Tom and Leo, they made their foray into the world of truck transportation. Today, Tom Holt's sons and grandsons build on his legacy of innovation and old-fashioned hard work in the transportation world. Our mission is simple and complex at the same time: One Call, One Provider.

In 2022, Holt Logistics Corp., through its independently managed affiliate companies, offers end-to-end port, warehouse, truck brokerage, and logistics solutions for importers and exporters. The portfolio of facilities includes the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, the Gloucester Marine Terminal, Broadway Pier 5 Marine Terminal, the Paulsboro Marine Terminal, and Pier 122

(all operated by independently managed affiliates of Holt Logistics Corp.). Located in the Port of Philadelphia, these terminals have direct access to distribution routes that span across North America and into Canada and offer direct unloading of freight from all vessel types to warehouse, rail, or truck.

In a variety of cargo segments, these facilities are renowned for their highly productive and safe operations. Our vertically integrated supply chains solutions are designed to streamline and simplify our customers' supply chains. Likewise, all these operations are supported by state-of-the-art technological and system development.

We specialize in connecting distributors' operating systems to measurable business data. Designed by our dedicated staff of programmers, the terminal operations and warehouse management systems were designed to deliver direct insight into our customers' supply chain logistics. As we look to the future, we are focused every day on continued commercial development and facility customization. We collaborate with customers to acquire and develop properties and facilities that provide future opportunity for the growth and development of the port areas and the capacity to serve generations of family-sustaining jobs for the next 100 years. ■



Packer Avenue Marine Terminal



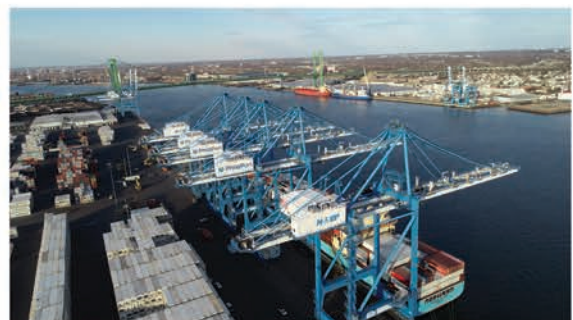
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