

Port bosses expecting new shippers to dock here soon

By Leanne Ritchie
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With operations running smoothly at the new Fairview Container Terminal, Maher Terminals is actively pursuing new shippers.

“We certainly are in discussion with additional shippers and we are committed to filling all the capacity that is here,” said Frans van Riemsdyk, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Maher Terminals.

“There’s 500,000 TEUs of capacity.”

The new terminal saw its first ship arrive in October.

Currently, ships that are part of the CKYH Line alliance — that includes COSCO, Hanjin, K-Line and Yang-Ming — are dropping off COSCO cargo at Fairview during a weekly stop in Prince Rupert.

It’s part of the companies’ Pacific Northwest butterfly service that includes stops in Hong Kong, Yantian, Yokohama, Prince Rupert, Vancouver, Seattle, Yokohama, Shanghai, Busan, and Kwangyang.

Van Riemsdyk said people could expect to see the other partners sharing space on the CKYH ships begin to offload their own cargo as well in the future.

Both Yang-Ming and Hanjin have begun marketing the Prince Rupert stop-off to shippers on their websites.

As for additional shipping lines making stops at the terminal, the company is not tipping its hand at this point in time, however discussions are on-going.

Van Riemsdyk said they are extremely pleased with the start-up and how smoothly operations have gone so far including praise for Mark Schepp, assistant vice president of terminal operations, who he said has been “hands-on” during the start-up of the operation.

“So far, for a new port operation, it is been going far better than expected,” said Howard Finkel, vice-president of COSCO Americas, Inc. “You know when you have a start-up operation, you always expect there will be problems, but they have been really, really, minor.”

COSCO’s board of directors from China and some of its shippers — including representatives from UPS, Mattel and Ashley Furniture — toured the facility last week.

The fourth ship to dock at the terminal, the COSCO Xiamen, is due to arrive today at 1 p.m.

As for Phase Two of the Fairview Container Terminal development, which will see an additional 150,000 TEU capacity added, the port and its partners, including Maher Terminals and CN Rail, are in the process of finalizing the engineering design and seeking environmental approvals, said van Reimsdyk.

The project is expected to cost \$600-million.

He said they expect to see Phase II operational by 2010 or 2011.

Since the terminal opened three weeks ago, ships have brought a total of 4,000 TEUs to the new port.

In the first three visits, vessels and trains have arrived and departed within their scheduled windows and set new records on transit times to Chicago.

The first train set a record of transit time from the West Coast to Chicago of 92 hours.