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Container operation likely to begin at Port of N.H. in mid-July

By MICHAEL GOOT

Portsmouth Bureau Chief

mgoot@fosters.com

PORTSMOUTH — Dale Wood's ship has come in — literally.

The venture capitalist, who is starting a container operation at the Port of New Hampshire, has obtained a ship that will allow him to begin shipping goods from Portsmouth to Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada.

"It looks like it's going to be (starting) the second week of July," Wood said Monday. Wood preferred to wait on releasing more details about the vessel until he gets approval from the ship company.

The Pease Development Authority, which has oversight of the port, approved the project in March. Wood, whose Northeast Marine Development is based in Florida, said he can now actively solicit clients for the venture.

"Now we're trying to get all the leads we've had over the last six months," he said. "We're pursuing at least 20 leads right now and today is our first serious marketing (effort)."

Wood had initially envisioned it as a weekly service.

"I think right now, all indications are we are going to have to schedule a second vessel. Our demand is outstripping what our capacity is," he said.

Wood said he is excited to finally get the venture off the ground.

"It's been a long time since Portsmouth has had a container service," he said. "Now we can have a viable alternative to Boston. I'm hoping all the local manufacturers of goods are going to be using our service."

Wood is also working with the International Trade Resource Center, a state agency centered at Pease which helps businesses export products, to identify potential clients. He has said previously that he would like to tap into business going into such major ports as Boston and New York, noting those ports are becoming more congested. He believed the containers would hold finished products, but did not have specific clients.

His contract with the PDA requires him to bring 20 vessels per year. He will be paying about \$58,000 per acre to lease a 1 1/2-acre site near the side of the terminal closest to the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, commonly referred to as the Barge Dock.

Wood had originally targeted a June date to start the service. However, a number of hurdles had to be cleared, including making sure containers were cleared with customs before they enter the terminal.

"There's always going to be last-minute issues that come up. We don't see any delay based on security issues at this point," he said.

Port Director Geno Marconi has said the inspections include recording an item's serial number, along with the serial and license plate number of the truck that brought it to the port. There are also procedures for notifying the Coast Guard and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement about packages arriving at the terminal.”

Global spoke with Wood today and He said that he was talking with people interested in investing and raising capital for this project.

FedEx Trade Networks, www.ftn.fedex.com (FTN) has partnered with NMD to provide logistical support for the Port of New Hampshire. Under agreement with Northeastern Marine Development, FTN is the “one face” of the Port of New Hampshire to its customers. FTN handles logistics, 3PL, LCL and LTL cargo and pricing. Customer service is also handled by FTN representatives. NYK Lines, www.nyk.com, provides equipment and ocean freight services directly to the FTN/NMD partnership. (See Exhibit ‘C’).

PORT OPERATIONS

PONH is currently unable to handle a regular cargo operation other than salt and scrap. NMD will change this situation by investing in equipment and manpower to enable regular cargo service in and out of PONH. NMD plans to acquire a crane suitable for rapid loading and unloading of containers, a stacker capable of stacking containers 4 high, yard tugs appropriate for PONH operations and other rolling stock as necessary. NMD’s goal is to determine what equipment is necessary for the operation prior to its acquisition. In order to determine what equipment is needed, NMD must first undertake its marketing efforts.

NMD has assembled a team of professionals to handle day to day activities at PONH. Financial operations of NMD will be centered in Plantation, Florida while marketing efforts will be split between Florida and NMD’s call center in Massachusetts.

NMD’s utilization of land at PONH will be a function of demand. It is anticipated that NMD will make use of both piers and the use of the larger warehouse on site. In addition, high value cargo will be stored in the secure area near the bridge. NMD can work with the site in cooperation with the current scrap and salt operations, except that the space between the warehouses will need to be cleaned up to facilitate movement around the site.