

Anchorage Port Project Moving Ahead in Winter

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Work on the \$700 million multi-phase Port of Anchorage expansion project is continuing at an energetic pace as winter sets in, with truckloads of gravel being transported from Elmendorf Air Force Base.

The port's Marine Terminal Redevelopment Construction Project will expand dock space, barge berths and industrial acreage at the port.

Quality Asphalt Paving, Inc., now called QAP, received the \$95 million project. Colaska-QAP, a subsidiary of Colaska, won the bid let by the Maritime Administration for the port expansion.

The project began in 2003. QAP's portion of the work started in 2008 and is scheduled to continue into 2009.

"QAP is continuing to work on filling in behind the dock face," said Steve Ribuffo, deputy port director. "We think we are in really good shape on this project for next year."

The new dock is an open cell sheet pile dock face called Open cell 3/8 Bulkhead designed by PND Engineers.

"This design is being used at 170 locations all over the world, and there are at least 100 of them here in the Cook Inlet, said Dennis Nottingham, one of the principals at PND. "These have a 30-year track record of use."

Construction on the project has advanced with QAP trucks running from the gravel pit on Elmendorf to the port from sunup to sundown, seven days a week, according to port officials. Filling in wetlands to the new dock face has added 52 acres to the port's footprint.

Once finished, the dock will increase from its current size to nearly a mile long. The present port was built in the 1950s. As QAP finishes this

year's work it is readying for its next phase of construction, according to Ribuffo.

The dock will also be moved out farther into the Knik Arm.

"Changing this will put the dock in deeper water, and that will save us \$4 million yearly in dredging costs," said Leo Carroll, project director for the Port of Anchorage.

"We don't want to say that we are ahead of schedule because anything can happen but we are pleased with the progress," said Ribuffo.

Listed as a National Strategic Port, the much-needed infrastructure improvement will also facilitate material and construction of a gas pipeline with intermodal transportation, according to port officials.

"This is a strategic national port," said William "Bill" Sheffield, the Port Director and a former governor. "The port serves the state's military, a force that is growing. The port needs more space to accommodate that."

In 2010 the port will receive new cranes that will reach across the length of 16 containers on ships. The new cranes will arrive after the docks are in place.

Earlier this year Sheffield discussed how the Port of Anchorage would aid in the building of a gas pipeline from the North Slope to the U.S. Midwest.

"If there is a gas line, there will be a Panamax-sized ship with 2,700 pieces of pipe on it that will need 10 acres of ground to lay it down, and road and rail access," he said. "It will take the railroad six trips to get it all to Fairbanks every three weeks. Those ships will be coming in for two years."

Sheffield calls the Port of Anchorage project the largest that any municipality in the U.S. has ever taken on.

"We are trying to get this thing built to last for generations to come," said Sheffield