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Home furnishings firms benefiting from a Shift to JAXPORT
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In August 2012, the TraPac Container Terminal at Dames Point hosted the 5,300-TEU Ever Unique, ocean carrier Evergreen’s first regular call at JAXPORT. The new service, jointly operated by Evergreen and MOL, expedites the movement of cargo from major ports in Southeast Asia through the Suez Canal to Jacksonville and signals the growing shift of trade to JAXPORT.
Home furnishings firms among top importers benefiting from a Shift to JAXPORT

By Paul Scott Abbott

With Bedrosians Tile and Stone choosing Jacksonville for a huge distribution hub and major furniture importers bringing strong volumes through Jacksonville Port Authority facilities, homes throughout the Southeast are filling up with goods shipped via JAXPORT.

“The shift to JAXPORT is kicking into high gear,” said Raul Alfonso, JAXPORT’s Senior Director of Trade Development and Global Marketing. “JAXPORT is continuing to be the port of choice for a wide range of companies in search of operational and economic efficiencies in serving consumers throughout the region.”

For the Bedrosians firm, for example, the decision to operate more than 400,000 square feet of facilities in Jacksonville was largely based upon the rapidly expanding presence of the Port of Jacksonville as a prominent container port.

“Our new Jacksonville distribution center is an ideal location for our growing company,” said Larry Bedrosian, Chief Executive Officer of Anaheim, Calif.-based Bedrosians Tile.

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Bedrosians Tile and Stone ships tile from China through JAXPORT to their new 322,000-square-foot regional distribution center in Jacksonville. The company chose to establish operations in Jacksonville because of the city’s status as a leading transportation hub in Florida.
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“The center will serve our customers within a 500-mile radius as well as supply our East Coast showrooms and warehouses,” Bedrosian said, noting that these locations include those in Jacksonville, Miami and Pompano Beach, along with the company’s new store in Charlotte, N.C.

“The decision to establish a regional center in Jacksonville was based on several factors, including JAXPORT’s place as one of the fastest-growing international trade seaports in the Southeastern United States,” Bedrosian added. “Also, Jacksonville is a leading transportation hub in Florida.”

Bedrosians ships products from its tile factory in China via JAXPORT to its new 322,000-square-foot facility just off Interstate 95 in the Deerwood Center, at 8313 Baycenter Road, across the street from an 81,000-square-foot showroom and warehouse that the tile and stone company also continues to operate.

JAXPORT’s Asian services have been bringing in consumer goods for such companies as major furniture importers Badcock Home Furniture & More, Rooms To Go Inc. and Havertys Furniture Companies Inc.

Badcock’s Vice President of Supply Chain, Greg Brinkman, noted that his firm was among the first to bring product-filled containers into the TraPac Inc. terminal that opened in 2009 on 158 acres at JAXPORT’s Dames Point Marine Terminal.

While those initial shipments came in via trans-Panama Canal services of TraPac parent Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd., Badcock now is increasingly looking also to MOL’s new trans-Suez Canal service to bring goods in from Southeast Asia, according to Brinkman.

“For freight from Vietnam and Malaysia, the Suez service and its direct call at Jacksonville is very favorable, very advantageous,” Brinkman said, noting that a significant share of case goods such as tables, dining room furniture and bedroom furniture previously imported from China is now being made in Southeast Asia.

While some of the volume has shifted to the new Suez service [detailed on page 15], the majority of freight coming into Badcock’s Mulberry, Fla., distribution center continues to move through JAXPORT, according to Brinkman.

Rooms To Go’s Vice President of Merchandising and International Freight, Ali Hosein, said 60 percent of the goods coming into his firm’s distribution centers in Florida and Georgia – including a newly expanded warehouse in Lakeland in Central Florida – are imported via JAXPORT, with containers from China moving via trans-Panama Canal services and goods originating in Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia being transported on the trans-Suez service.

“The customer service at the Port of Jacksonville is excellent,”
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said Hosein, who estimated Rooms To Go’s annual volume through JAXPORT at 28,000 twenty-foot-equivalent units (TEUs). “Customs clearance is easy, and there’s no congestion.”

Of course, home furnishings importers are not the only companies benefiting from JAXPORT and its unique capabilities for serving U.S. Southeast markets.

The diverse array of renowned firms counting on Jacksonville as a key supply chain gateway includes Bridgestone Corp., the world’s largest tire and rubber company; leather products leader Coach Inc.; Michaels Stores Inc., North America’s largest specialty retailer of arts and crafts and related merchandise; leading medical supplies and equipment distributor PSS World Medical Inc.; Samsonite International S.A., the world’s largest travel luggage company; department store stalwart Sears Roebuck & Co.; Kraft Foods Inc.’s Maxwell House division, maker of the second-largest-selling coffee in the United States; Unilever, the world's third-largest consumer goods company; and Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the No. 1 U.S. importer.

A recent high-profile addition to the ever-expanding roster of importers counting on JAXPORT is Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, which now brings most of the merchandise headed for its popular Central Florida theme parks through JAXPORT’s TrafPac terminal.

“With Florida being the nation’s fastest-growing consumer market, with the vast majority of the world’s top ocean carriers
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serving JAXPORT and with JAXPORT’s already-enviable intermodal connections undergoing further enhancement,” said JAXPORT’s Executive Vice President Roy Schleicher, “it is little wonder that Jacksonville is solidifying its position as America’s Logistics Center.”

Badcock Home Furniture & More has employed the Asia-Jacksonville shipping services at the MOL/TraPac Container Terminal at Dames Point since the facility’s opening in 2009.

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by top-name shippers such as Disney and Honda, as well as by strategic moves by major ocean carriers to bolster services, Jacksonville continues to grow as America’s Logistics Center.

Mickey Mouse joined Florida Gov. Rick Scott, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown and executives of the Jacksonville Port Authority, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines and MOL terminal operating arm TraPac at a June 19 ceremony at which officials of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts announced that Disney is importing most of the merchandise headed to its Central Florida theme park facilities through JAXPORT’s TraPac Container Terminal at Dames Point.

“This is what all of us in Florida want,” said JAXPORT Chief Executive Officer Paul Anderson. “We want the products our Florida citizens and visitors buy brought in through our ports, not brought by truck or train from somewhere out of state.

“Step by step, one container at a time, we are working to bring the jobs and dollars that come along with the movement of those goods back home where they belong,”

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The Shift is On

Anderson said. “Shippers, importers and exporters around the globe – and now one of the world’s most beloved brands – are recognizing that we offer an alternative here in Jacksonville that makes good business sense.”

Jacksonville’s ideal location at the crossroads of global commerce, rail lines and highway links – enhanced by the upcoming development with CSX Corp. of an intermodal container transfer facility serving Dames Point – is increasingly drawing favor among importers and exporters alike.

Importers taking advantage of Jacksonville’s strengths in serving U.S. Southeast consumer markets include such familiar names as Rooms to Go, Michaels Stores, Havertys Furniture, Coach, Bridgestone, PSS World Medical, Sears, Samsonite, Maxwell House and Unilever. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the No. 1 U.S. importer, is among the many major retailers and third-party logistics firms operating distribution centers in the Jacksonville area.

On the export side, American Honda Motor Co. Inc. recently selected JAXPORT and automotive servicing company AMPORTS to handle exports of its 2012 Honda CR-V crossover vehicles manufactured in East Liberty, Ohio. Jacksonville automotive processors

“As a city – and America’s Logistics Center – we all benefit from JAXPORT’s success.”
Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown
The Shift is On

AMPORTS and Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics Vehicle Services already handle significant volumes of other Honda models, as well as vehicles of several other manufacturers, at their facilities at JAXPORT’s Blount Island Marine Terminal. Southeast Toyota at JAXPORT’s Talleyrand Marine Terminal continues to handle Toyota and Lexus models.

“Honda’s decision to increase exports through JAXPORT is an important move,” said Roy Schleicher, JAXPORT Executive Vice President. “Thanks to the superior work being done by our tenants, partners and employees, we continue to solidify our position as the nation’s second-busiest vehicle-handling port, and the nation’s No. 1 port for vehicle exports.”

Mayor Brown, who serves as Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Metro Exports and Ports Task Force, said, “When major corporations talk about logistics, there are many things to consider.

“They have to be 100 percent confident that the moves they make are going to help the bottom line and speed up the supply chain,” Brown continued. “JAXPORT and its tenants provide that level of confidence for businesses to thrive. As a city – and America’s Logistics Center – we all benefit from JAXPORT’s success.”

The world’s foremost ocean carriers also are increasingly recognizing the value and efficiency of JAXPORT and its leading-edge logistics infrastructure in reaching consumers in Florida – the nation’s fastest-growing consumer market – and throughout the Southeast.

“We want the products our Florida citizens and visitors buy brought in through our ports, not brought by truck or train from somewhere out of state.”

JAXPORT Chief Executive Officer Paul Anderson
The Shift is On

Japan-based MOL, which, along with its TraPac subsidiary, has $330 million invested in the 158-acre container terminal at Dames Point, has launched a new service to expedite cargo moving from major Asian ports to key destinations on the U.S. East Coast via the Suez Canal. Jacksonville is among U.S. calls of the South China/Vietnam-U.S. East Coast service, which MOL initiated in June in partnership with Evergreen Line.

In May, China Shipping Container Lines and United Arab Shipping Co. began offering Jacksonville service for the first time – bringing to 14 the number of the world’s top 20 ocean carriers currently serving Jacksonville’s port. The APM Terminals facility at JAXPORT’s Blount Island Marine Terminal is the last call on the westbound leg of CMA-CGM’s Pacific Express 3 service, which handles the China Shipping and UASC cargos.

Also, in late June, Mediterranean Shipping Co. commenced a new direct weekly service between Jacksonville’s Talleyrand Marine Terminal and the Central American ports of Santo Tomás de Castilla, Guatemala, and Puerto Cortés, Honduras, additionally providing expanded global reach through MSC’s transshipment hub in Freeport, Bahamas. Both Guatemala and Honduras are part of the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement with the United States, offering opportunities for increased exports of agricultural machinery, chemicals, building materials and consumer goods and imports of bananas, vegetables, coffee, shrimp, textiles, garments and minerals.

Raul Alfonso, JAXPORT Senior Director of Trade Development and Global Marketing, pointed out that Jacksonville offers significant competitive advantages over out-of-state ports in serving the Florida market, including reducing inland transit times and costs by being closer to the consumer and by facilitating inventory reductions.

“The shift is on indeed,” Alfonso said, “as Jacksonville is rapidly becoming the logistics solution of choice for the state of Florida and beyond.”

Disney joins a growing list of companies – including Rooms to Go, Michaels Stores, Havertys Furniture, Coach, Bridgestone, PSS World Medical, Sears, Samsonite, Maxwell House and Unilever – that have shifted business to take advantage of JAXPORT’s efficient services.

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