

SA becomes boom market for INTTRA

The ocean carrier portal INTTRA reported high transactional growth between 2004 and 2005, with South Africa being a particularly fast-growing market.

According to Andy Barrons, INTTRA's vice president of marketing, the portal's worldwide growth in this period was 100%, involving 75,000 containers per week in the peak season.

Barrons added that in South Africa, a relatively new market for INTTRA, the portal's container transactions grew by over 300% between January and December 2005. This made South Africa INTTRA's second-fastest growing market, and the fourth-largest of over 30 countries covered by its Indian Ocean region. In 2006, INTTRA's South African transactions are expected to grow at an even faster rate.

Barrons stated: 'Out of INTTRA's range of tools, users in South Africa are mostly using its electronic booking and shipping instruction tools, delivered through either an EDI connection or via INTTRA's Desktop solution, [the latter] via a PC and an Internet connection or email.

'The support for INTTRA's success [in South Africa] is coming mainly from the wine, steel and petrochemical industries.

'Shippers and forwarders are choosing INTTRA as the way to reduce their processing costs, and improve the overall operating efficiency of their supply chain.'

SANS Fibres, a South African nylon and polyester yarn manufacturer, which ships 4,000TEU worldwide, is using INTTRA to help speed up its bill of lading (B/L) process.

Colin Schultz, the company's distribution manager, explained: 'SANS Fibres has directly benefited from INTTRA's single format for B/L. This allows the company and its shipping partners to use the same electronic format when dealing with any of INTTRA's 20 ocean carrier members.

'As a high-volume exporter, our export professionals were required to know the idiosyncrasies of each carrier's B/L format.'

The company expects to use INTTRA's booking system, too.

CI's next conference provides more

Readers are reminded that CI's next global conference will be held in London on 26th and 27th April, 2006. In line with previous conferences, a wide range of qualified speakers has been asked to review the latest trends in liner shipping.

Subjects include:

- are ocean carriers heading in the right direction?
- supply and demand – how can this balance be expected to effect freight rates up to the end of 2007?
- future port congestion expectations
- has transshipment had its day?
- can ocean carriers do more for shippers during terminal contract negotiations?
- e-commerce – what more lies ahead?
- what further security costs lie

ahead for shippers?

- industry consolidation – how much more is there to come?
- with the new legislation, is there any future for liner conferences?

A refinement to the programme this year will be the addition of a separate workshop in the afternoon of the second day to address the way that oceanfreight agreements are negotiated between ocean carriers and shippers. Do these need to be so adversarial and time-consuming, and how can better win-win situations be concluded? CI expects this session to be particularly constructive.

For further details regarding CI's 8th Global Liner Shipping Conference, please contact Caroline Holt via tel: 00 44 207 017 4420 or email: caroline.holt@informa.com

Panama Canal to increase bookings to meet demand

Ongoing improvements being made by the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) will make it possible for ocean carriers to add several much-needed Asia/US East Coast (USEC) strings this year.

A combination of a lack of vessels and canal capacity had previously hindered ocean carriers' plans, bringing utilisation factors on eastbound voyages from Asia to 100% and above.

Jorge Quijano, director of operations, told CI: 'A new tie-up station at Pedro Miguel Locks went on line on January 1, which, as well as other operational improvements, will help us add two panamax vessel transits on a daily basis.

'Daily reservation slots have now increased from 21 to 23. The ability to secure a reservation is important to the ocean carriers, since it guarantees passage through the canal on the day they choose.'

'With the virtual completion of the locks' locomotive track rehabilitation work, we expect to increase capacity from 300 million to 340 million Panama Canal/Universal Measurement System (PC/UMS) tons by the end of 2009. A second tie-up station is also being built in the Culebra Cut, to accommodate two panamax vessels. Overall, we are working on projects that will increase our throughput by 10% over the next three years.'

According to ACP executives, seven new Asia/USEC strings via the canal are expected to start in the next 18 months. Maersk and Zim have already declared their intention to launch new services. In total, the new services could add up to a further 2.9 million TEU in annual capacity.

The trade continues to grow, with PIERS Maritime Research figures revealing a volume of 1.94 million TEU for the nine months from January to September 2005, up 18% year-on-year. On this basis, the USEC accounts for 22.5% of the total eastbound transpacific trade. ACP figures confirmed that annual growth in containership usage for 2005 was up 13.1%.