



Case Study

Conversion of a Port Facility from Import to Export at Longview, Washington

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The determination of new ways to cut costs in these times of economic uncertainty is essential in running a successful business. Arco Petroleum Products Company a Division of AQuantic Richfield company recognized an opportunity for a substantial cost saving in transporting calcined petroleum coke to market by simply building an economical port facility at a location that would enable them to drastically cut their normal rail haulage distance.

The calcined petroleum coke produced at the Arco Cherry Point Refinery near Bellingham, Washington is presently hauled by rail to the port at Sacramento, California where it is transhipped to ocean going vessels. In order to reduce the rail travel distance exhaustive studies were made of alternative coke export terminal sites where the necessary capital investment could be recovered by rail haulage cost savings in a relatively short time.

Arco's persistent efforts paid off. The site selected for a bulk cargo export facility is at the Port of Longview which is situated at the confluence of the Columbia and Cowlitz rivers in the state of Washington, 66 miles (106.2 km) from the Pacific Ocean. Its location reduced the rail haulage distance approximately 600 miles (965.4 km).

The site was formerly occupied by an alumina import facility. It was built about nineteen years ago for Reynolds Metals Company to transfer alumina from ship to railroad cars. Two large steel storage tanks were used to contain the alumina between load-in and load-out. The facility also includes a pier structure, tendering system, railroad spur, conveyors, air slide feed and reclaim system. A photograph of the original installation is shown in Fig.1. It had been idle for about ten years when Arco decided upon its use.