

# Revolutionizing Port-to-Rail Transportation

Florida East Coast Railway and Port Everglades go through major expansion efforts



One of two refurbished FEC locomotives in Susan G Komen Breast Cancer awareness color scheme

The Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) is a 351-mile freight rail system running through Florida. The line provides end-to-end intermodal solutions to customers. With needs growing in the region and expansion coming in the future, FEC's existing facility has been overtaxed. The new Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) adjacent to Port Everglades was required.

"With the expansion of the Panama Canal and the expansion at Port Everglades with additional berths, as well as [the port's] plan to have a 50 feet deep water dredging project in expectation of larger TEU vessels, we found an opportunity to accelerate what the port had in mind long term by putting rail adjacent to the port so that they could grow their business," says Bob Ledoux, Senior Vice President of FEC. "We took the lead and entered into a long-term lease with Broward County for the land and worked with the State of Florida for some of the funding to start this project in 2013, versus 2018 or 2019."

## Florida East Coast Railway, LLC; The Milord Company

SENIOR VICE  
PRESIDENT, FEC  
Bob Ledoux

PRESIDENT, THE MILORD  
COMPANY  
Phil Milord

LOCATION  
Port Everglades, Florida

The FEC ICTF, located adjacent to Port Everglades in Broward County, will transfer containers from ship to rail and the reverse. The current facility covers about 13 acres, while the new \$73 million project will result in a 43-acre space. The project design phase began in January 2013, and the facility is on schedule to open in mid-July 2014.

According to Ledoux, the local community and public officials have welcomed the FEC ICTF.

"Operationally, at our existing facility with large trains, we block a six-lane road for about 20 minutes each day because there is no room at the facility to build a train," he says. "The land that the county leased us







provides us the ability to build 9,000 foot trains without blocking any roads. From a local community standpoint, it was a great opportunity for us to do what we do and not interfere with local traffic. We received no negative comments about the plan. The local leaders and politicians all around Broward County and Port Everglades were very supportive of the project from the start."

#### OVERCOMING TOUGH HURDLES

The Milord Company is the developer overseeing the FEC ICTF project. A family-owned company, it provides management services to oversee large construction efforts and is well suited to handle the FEC ICTF design/build project. It is on a tight development schedule, with additional challenges connected to the site.

"The site is on port-leased property, and the port is a secure facility," says Phil Milord, President of the Milord Company. "We needed to come up with a plan to keep the port secure while we did our construction, which means always having it sealed off with fencing. There is a whole lot of

extra coordination between the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection] and us. Any time we need to move a fence or access a hard-to-get-to area, we have to go through 10 foot-high security fencing with barbed wire and get approvals. That was a major coordination issue."

The location of the new FEC ICTF is also in the flight path of the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. This has called for additional coordination, and the project team had to notify the Federal Aviation Administration when the company installed up-lights for the site. The large area has also involved the use of a tremendous amount of concrete. To handle the heavy loads and machinery on the site, the Milord Company had to install extra structural support.

"We were the first facility in the port and really southeast Florida to use roller-compacted concrete [RCC]," Milord says. "Almost the entire yard has RCC. This, along with the cranes where we have rubber-tired gantry cranes, is a challenge. They are very heavy machines. They are lifting the units from the trucks to the rail and

As a nod to Henry Flagler's legacy, FEC transitioned four locomotives to feature the striking red and yellow "heritage" paint scheme



[from the] rail to [the] trucks. Anywhere we were going to be running these cranes had to be supported with auger-cast piles."

#### PROJECT MILESTONES

The team working on the FEC ICTF has recently installed 11 new automatic gate systems, as well as two rail portal gates. The automatic gate systems are complicated pieces of equipment, but the new technology will enable FEC to improve efficiency.

"At each one of these gates, they read and identify every single container or railcar," Milord says. "These are meant to automatically identify them, so as it travels through, FEC can identify who it is, what it is, where it is going, what's in it, where it is going to go and who's going to pick it up."

Additionally, Presto Geosystems implemented their Geoweb cellular confinement system to stabilize sand infill and prevent long term differential settlement in the gantry craneways under the RCC. Presto's engineers worked closely with the design team for FEC as well as provided site support for installation. The Geoweb cellular confinement system is a proven 30 year solution for improving load distribution and reducing vertical stress reaching the sub grade.

As the Milord Company and FEC work toward the mid-July completion deadline, the team will test all of the domestic, rail and international gates. Once this testing process is complete, a month-long period of commissioning will take place, followed by staff training.





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The new FEC ICTF will increase FEC's available capacity to 400,000 containers or trailers brought in and out of the facility annually, compared to the 60,000 through the existing facility. The new site provides significant growth potential and will present an opportunity for new kinds of cargo. FEC is also looking forward to perhaps expanding this technology and infrastructure to other locations.

"Once our people are trained and up and running with the technology here, we are very excited for the opportunity to deploy this technology in our other rail yards in Miami and Jacksonville," Ledoux says. "We look at this as a stepping stone."

FEC works in partnership with Port Everglades, and Ledoux says both parties understand the positive impact the project will likely have.

"We actually co-market and co-sell with the port, their service and ours," he says. "We believe that as they grow, we have an opportunity to grow, and as we grow, it will help them grow, as well. There is real synergy between the two organizations." ■

#### PRESTO GEOSYSTEMS®

Presto Geosystems® is a proud partner in the FEC Port Everglades ICTF (Intermodal Container Transfer Facility) project. Presto's GEOWEB® system offered a solution for stabilizing sand infill and preventing long-term differential settlement in the gantry crane ways located under the RCC. Presto's engineers and railroad consultant worked closely with the design team for FEC as well as provided site support for installation start up. The GEOWEB® system is a 30-year proven solution for soft soil challenges in the railroad, from creating high-stiffness trackbed foundations to stabilizing right-of-way embankments and emergency repairs.

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