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## Intermodal terminal construction could start in September

Rail-truck facility could employ 126 people once it opens in 2012

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What are now farms and fields at the Milnor Road crossing, near exit 3 on Interstate 81 in Franklin County, Pa., will become Norfolk Southern's Franklin County Regional Intermodal Facility. The rail facility will be a major access point in the Crescent Corridor, according to Norfolk Southern. (Credit: File photo / )

GREENCASTLE, Pa. — Construction could start in September for an Antrim Township, Pa., rail-truck facility estimated to cost \$95 million to \$105 million.

The intermodal terminal could employ 126 people once opened, possibly in early 2012, a Norfolk Southern representative said Tuesday morning.

The facility will be part of Norfolk Southern's improvements to the Southeast to Northeast corridor, which Industrial Development Director Roger Bennett said is "very underserved today."

Bennett addressed a sizable crowd Tuesday during the Greencastle-Antrim Chamber of Commerce's monthly breakfast.

Franklin County (Pa.) Area Development Corp. President L. Michael Ross thanked Bennett and Norfolk Southern for the commitment to the county.

"We work with a lot of companies for site location, and Norfolk Southern has done this right. ... The potential impact on Franklin County and the region is enormous," Ross said.

Norfolk Southern will start early advertising for construction companies in the next two weeks, Bennett said. It will finalize the purchase of land at exit 3 off Interstate 81 in mid-June and go out for bids around the same time, he said.

The company, which operates 21,000 route miles in 22 states, will simultaneously be building similar intermodal facilities in Memphis, Tenn., and Birmingham, Ala., Bennett said. It also will expand its Pennsylvania terminals in Harrisburg and Philadelphia as part of the first phase of the Crescent Corridor initiative, he said.

Norfolk Southern made \$1.3 billion of capital investments on its system last year.

"We're the most capital-intensive industry," Bennett said.

The recession hurt the company most from Thanksgiving 2008 to March 2009, according to Bennett. While



Roger Bennett (Credit: / )

most of 2009 was financially difficult, Norfolk Southern reported a \$1 billion net income at the end, he said.

“We’ve seen downturns before, but we had never seen any downturn that hit every segment of our business,” he said.

Almost 30 percent of the company’s revenue comes from hauling coal and similar fuel materials, and 19 percent of revenue comes from the intermodal facilities. The other segment of Norfolk Southern’s business includes general merchandise, including metals and wood.

One of the breakfast’s attendees asked what commodities would be transferred from tractor-trailers to rail cars at the Antrim Township terminal. Bennett said the items would be “essentially anything you can buy at Lowe’s, Home Depot and Target.”

“At our intermodal facilities, we do not handle highly hazardous materials,” he said.

International and domestic freight will be shipped in containers that are double-stacked almost 22 feet high on rail cars to serve a 2,500-mile supply chain. Norfolk Southern will be straightening curves and adding signals along its routes.

“A lot of our intermodal trains can be as long as 8,000 feet,” Bennett said.

The railroad aims to deliver containers in 33 hours to its trucking partners. Although Norfolk Southern trains travel at 50 mph, they frequently slow down or stop for passing locomotives, Bennett said.

“We’re constantly trying to ratchet down that service metric,” he said of delivery times.

He said Norfolk Southern officials chose Antrim Township, despite its close proximity to the Harrisburg terminal, because they were looking for ways to accommodate the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., markets. The exit 3 terminal will be four miles long, although the main pad and parking area will be on 170 acres.

Two crossings will change when the intermodal facility opens. Two cul-de-sacs will cause Milnor Road to end near the tracks, rather than allowing passenger vehicles to cross there. A bridge will allow traffic to go over the Hykes Road crossing.

“Part of our traffic mitigation plan will be to add traffic lights at the interchange ramps,” Bennett said.

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