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Laying the Tracks: An overview of intermodal facilities

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Greencastle, Pa. — The landscape is changing between Hykes and Milnor roads in Antrim Township, south of Greencastle, with earth-moving well under way for the Norfolk Southern Franklin County Regional Intermodal Facility.

The \$95 million rail hub, announced in 2009, will initially be able to handle 85,000 trailers annually and create about 120 jobs. It is part of the Crescent Corridor, a project to establish a rail line from the Gulf Coast to the Northeast.

Intermodal facilities

Intermodal facilities are used for long-distance shipping. Freight is driven to the starting location on a tractor-trailer and the entire trailer is placed on a train. Once the cargo has reached its destination, it is loaded onto another truck for transportation to stores and other facilities.

Trailers making their way through the Greencastle facility will be double stacked and placed on high speed trains traveling north to Harrisburg, east to New Jersey and, potentially, south to Louisiana.

The hub will have two loading tracks and will see four trains each day.

The Intermodal facility will use the latest in gate and terminal automation technology, shortening the waiting time for trucks, reducing exhaust emissions and improving truck driver productivity.

It will have an 8,000 foot loading track, new support tracks totaling 12,000 feet, parking for more than 600 trailers and other cargo containers, double tracks along the main line and support facilities, according to information from Norfolk Southern.

Construction is expected to be completed by late 2012 or early 2013.

Crescent Corridor

The Crescent Corridor is one of the largest additions to the freight industry since the creation of the interstates.

The corridor is 2,500 miles long, expected to take 1.4 million truckloads of cargo off the interstates, save 170 million gallons of fuel each year, reduce carbon emission by 2 million tons and generate 73,000 jobs by 2030.

History

“Because of its strategic location to key markets in the Mid-Atlantic region, the new Franklin County terminal is vital to the success of our Crescent Corridor,” said Wick Moorman, Norfolk Southern’s chief executive officer, when the facility was announced in August 2009.

Antrim Township was selected for the facility because of its access to Interstate 81 and ground was broken in October 2010.

It is being funded by a private-public partnership, with Pennsylvania supplying \$45 million.

Next: Environmental impact

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