

More Than a 'Dump-and-Run' Operation:

Smart Gravel Hauling Cinches Port Expansion Contract

A Port of Anchorage expansion project involving 260,000 tons of gravel isn't the kind of job a moderately sized firm like Summit Paving & Construction, Inc. usually goes after. But when company owner Gerald Des Jarlais eyeballed the site, a lightbulb went on in his head and the wheels began to turn. Right away he knew he could underbid the big boys if only his plan for hauling that much gravel would come together.

It did and the Anchorage-based contractor, in joint venture with the firm Cowdery Excavating & Construction (COEXCO), won a \$3-million bid to turn nine acres of tidal mud flats into a paved parking area the Municipality is now leasing to Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc.

The joint venture underbid the next highest bidder, Wilder Construction, Inc. by \$70,000 overall and beat it by about \$250,000 on the gravel hauling and placement portion of the job.

Summit and COEXCO, which supplied all the equipment and machinery, got the project by proving that an innovative method of gravel delivery would work. During their site inspection, Des Jarlais and Bill McHenry, COEXCO vice president, noticed that an Alaska Railroad spur ended at the south edge of the project site, which was then the northernmost developed area of the port.

"Sighting down the track, I saw that if extended, the spur would bisect the project site almost right down the middle," Des Jarlais said. "Why not build that extension complete with a trestle where the bottom-dump railcars could deposit their loads directly into a hopper? From there, a conveyor system could carry the gravel to a central point from which it could be spread over the nine-acre project site."

Des Jarlais, who had worked for Anchorage Sand & Gravel, knew the state's largest aggregate supplier gets



Jerry Des Jarlais, principal with Summit Paving (left), and Bill McHenry, vice president of Cowdery Excavating & Construction Co., review project details in front of the twin 48-in. conveyors used in the Port of Anchorage parking area.

two and sometimes three 80-car trains of gravel per day from Matanuska Valley pits over the spring-fall season. "Bill McHenry, COEXCO vice president, and I talked above waylaying one of the AS&G daily trains and diverting it to our jobsite over a spur extension," he said.

The plan promised to reap a substantial savings over normal aggregate transportation methods if it worked. In bidding the job, Summit figured the cost of gravel at Eklutna pits, 30 mi. from Anchorage, at about \$1.30 to \$1.50 per ton. This is the closest truck haul point for such a large amount of gravel. Trucking and placement costs would push the gravel to \$6 per ton in place.

"We were able to put the 260,000 tons

of gravel in place for about \$1 per ton less than the \$6 range other bidders were figuring into the job using trucks," Des Jarlais said. He calculated it would have taken 250 belly-dump truckloads per day to equal the 7,000 tons coming in one 80-car train. "Figuring a two-hour round trip from Eklutna pits, there would be five trips a day, so you would need 50 trucks hauling gravel every day to equal what we unload from one train in four to five hours with a crew of seven."

A deal was concluded with AS&G and the contractors crossed their fingers and went to the Alaska Railroad to see about constructing a spur addition with a trestle. "We got the railroad's okay," McHenry said, "but you wouldn't be

Anchorage Port Bonds Pass

By Cary Virtue

The Port of Anchorage, Alaska will receive an extensive facelift, including a 40-ton Mitsubishi crane, thanks to a \$30 million general revenue bond package approved by the Anchorage Assembly in mid-October.

"The improvements are going to take us a good way toward the accomplishment of our masterplan which has been on the drawing boards for years," said Tyler Jones, port director. "Specifically it's facelift improvements and land development. We're excited by it."

The bond measure provides for a \$6 million expenditure for installation of a 40-ton Mitsubishi crane at terminal 2, and modifications to boost the lifting capacity of two 27.5 ton Paceco cranes to 30-ton capacity.

In addition to upgrading the lifting power, the booms will be able to reach over the ships and across the hatches, Jones said. When it is raised, the 40-ton steel crane will have a height of 178 feet above the dock.

Jones said the port will purchase the crane from Sea-Land Service, Inc. after its delivery to Anchorage. Sea-Land has a preferential lease agreement with the port for terminal Two.

"It will be brought over in one piece and rolled onto the dock," Jones said. "The latest word is that the crane will be delivered in July of '86."

Other improvements in the bond package included:

- \$1 million to modify the Sea-Land dock to conform to Sea-Land's new ships (see *The Pacific Maritime Magazine*, November 1985.) Modifications include tie downs, electrical work, and installation of new wood timbers on the face of the 700-foot-long dock. Other improvements include special docking fenders for bulbous-bowed ships.

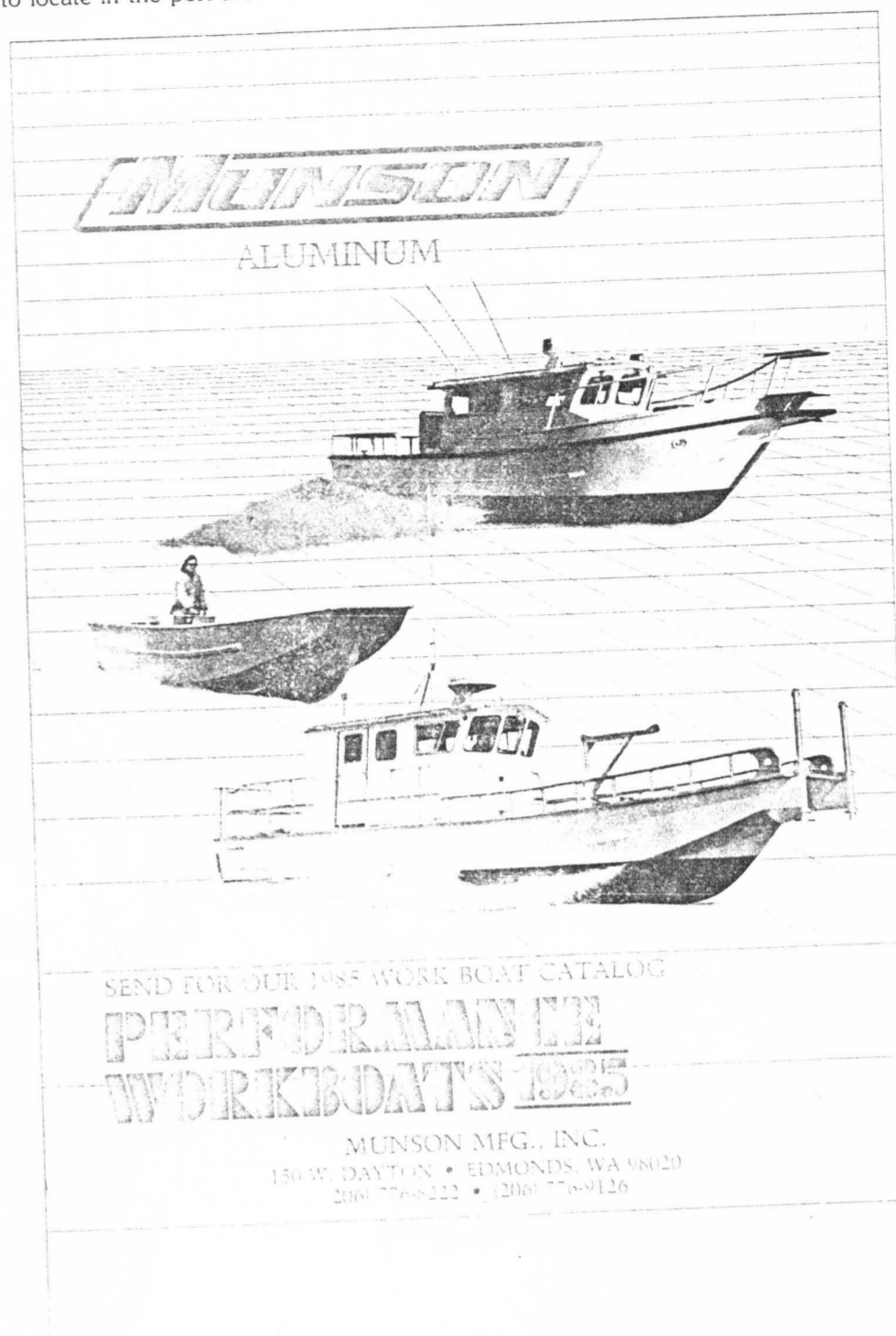
- \$9.7 million for the land development adjacent in the port area. Jones said the city hopes to lease 14.22 additional acres from Elmendorf Air

Force Base for a paved, cargo staging area that will boost the port's total acreage to 124.22 acres.

- \$3.5 million to make waterfront improvements such as installation of utilities and road improvements to encourage marine-related businesses to locate in the port area.

- \$3.2 million for a rail/trailer transfer yard, to be built on existing port property.

- \$7 million for a railroad extension to terminal 1. Improvements include resurfacing the top level of the dock, pouring new concrete and installation of crane rails. ■



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The Pacific Maritime Magazine

1-26-86 Times Waterfront plan

WE HAVE confused our friends over in City Hall about our views of the proposed Ship Creek Landing development and we hasten to set the record straight in case other readers are similarly perplexed.

To repeat, we think the suggestion that Alaska Railroad property at the Ship Creek tidal basin at Anchorage's waterfront "is an exciting concept that merits careful scrutiny." That seems to reflect a pretty strong and positive reaction to the idea.

But after having said that we launched into a discussion of downtown problems — including \$10 fines for those who sin against the ticking parking meter. There are other downtown problems, too, including the flight of long-time businesses to the sprawling suburbs or simply closing their doors for a lack of retail activity up and down the main thoroughfares.

ALL OF THAT, however, is a different problem. Perhaps such remarks should have been delayed for another time while we sang the praises of the Ship Creek project.

So let's talk about that idea again and concentrate on a single subject — potential development of the waterfront.

Simply put:

- It's a good idea.
- Mayor Tony Knowles and his people — chief among them Port Director Tyler Jones and Planning Director Bill Luria — are to be congratulated for some innovative thinking that

holds promise of turning an eyesore into a reclamation project that would produce an attractive, thriving and economically viable addition to the city.

- Assuming it can be financed and is feasible from an engineering standpoint, it would provide Anchorage with a long-dreamed-of small boat harbor, a dock for handling cruise ships, a major new attraction for our growing tourist industry and an opportunity to breathe new life into the downtown area, both residential and commercial.

REALISTICALLY, we suspect this waterfront development is years away.

The railroad must get involved because it owns the land. The city presumably would have to buy out the present industrial lease on the 61 acres that the project would cover. A private investment partner would have to be brought in. Decisions would have to be made on whether it would be proper for the city to hold an equity position in such a commercial real estate venture.

And there will be a lot of other hurdles to jump.

Concepts of such a size take years to weave their way through the red tape. The important thing is that a visionary plan has been laid on the table and, as we said earlier, deserves real consideration.

Now, we trust, City Hall knows we support the project.

But to get back to that downtown parking

AN OLD WARHORSE MAKES ITS FINAL JOURNEY



An H-21 troop transport helicopter makes its last flight over Anchorage Thursday. The vintage chopper, built in 1954, flew from Birchwood to the Port of Anchorage, where it was dismantled for shipment to the Planes of Fame museum in Chino, Calif. The H-21 was used in the '50s and '60s for mountain rescues in Alaska. When used as a troop carrier, it could transport 19 soldiers and their gear.

Daily News photos by Jim Lavrakas

