

A Temporary Solution For Lumber Storage

Warehouses at Port Manatee are temporarily taking on a new design to meet increased demand for dry storage space.

Temporary warehouses are short-term solutions Port Manatee Forestry Terminals Inc. (PMFT) proposed to the Manatee County Port Authority to solve its covered storage needs. PMFT paid for the temporary warehouses to handle the influx of forestry products coming in from South America whiel construction commences on Warehouse 11 -- Port Manatee's largest.

PMFT, a subsidiary of Gearbulk, already occupies 50 percent of the port's current storage space and another 84,000 square feet outside port gates at the privately-owned Port Manatee Commerce Center. Warehouse 11, the third warehouse constructed since 2000 dedicated solely to house products imported by Gearbulk, offers an additional 172,478 square feet of space, but not until it is completed in 2006.

"The lumber is coming to Port Manatee now and we need a place to put it," said PMFT's Capt. Rasmus Oakland. "Until the new permanent warehouse is complete, we have these temporary ones to serve our needs."

The new structures, constructed in less then three months, are enclosed by 40-foot long shipping containers and covered with vinyl fabric over galvanized steel trusses.

Although not a permanent solution, the innovative and simple construction adds 65,800 square feet of dry storage space.

"Warehouse 11 is the long-term solution, temporary warehouses are the short-term solution," Capt. Oakland said.

Big Top Shelters of Perry, Fla. provides temporary shelters -- the ones at Port Manatee -- worldwide.

The warehouses are created with two levels of stacked containers are fitted together in a U-shape. That creates 4,700 square feet within each U-shape compartment. There are 14 compartments lined side-by-side. Steel trusses are then welded on top of each compartment and covered with vinyl. The space is closed off with a vinyl door, which is easily lifted or lowered as needed.

The straight-forward approach is attracting attention from seaports and importers.

“The warehouses are very sturdy,” Capt. Oakland said. The structures have a 10-year limited warranty.

“Fork-lift operators and other working around these structures love them because they are cooler workspaces under the white vinyl covering and it is easier for them to maneuver, Capt. Oakland reports.

(This article was written by Chrissy Kruger-Gruendyke and appeared in the July-August 2005 issue of Deepwater, Port Manatee's bi-monthly newsletter)