

Vancouver, British Columbia, sees cargo surge

By Courtney Tower

The Port of Vancouver, British Columbia handled record container shipments as most cargo sectors showed strong growth in 2003.

Total container volume increased 6 percent for the year to 1.54 million TEUs. Import volumes rose 1 percent to 748,251 TEUs, while export volumes rose 10 percent to 790,807 TEUs.

The British Columbia port saw a resurgence in bulk shipments including coal, grain, wood pulp and potash, said Gordon Houston, president and chief executive of the Vancouver Port Authority. The port also saw a "remarkable" increase in containerized trade with China, Japan and South Korea.

The rapid expansion of North American trade with Asia, and especially China, "has created an enormous growth opportunity for British Columbia ports," Houston said. He estimated container volume would double to 6 million TEUs for British Columbia ports by 2020.

Grain shipments, which have suffered from drought over the past two years, surged 22 percent to 6.7 million metric tons, including an increase of 3.4 million tons in wheat exports.

Coal, Vancouver's largest commodity, rose 5 percent to 24.2 million tons.

Shipments of forest products increased 3 percent to 7.6 million tons. Despite a softwood trade dispute with the U.S., lumber shipments were off only 1 percent, to 1.9 million tons. ⚓

