

New wharves, more shipping on horizon for Redwood City

BY ELI SEGALL

REDWOOD CITY – After a lengthy delay, officials at Silicon Valley's only seaport are pushing ahead with plans to replace aging wharves and lure more shipping traffic.

The project, at the Port of Redwood City, would cost up to \$18 million and was supposed to be completed this summer, but construction has not yet begun. Port officials are now preparing permit applications, and an engineering firm was recently hired to conduct land and water surveys and to formulate project designs.

The Port Commission approved the \$2 million engineering contract to Oakland-based Ben C. Gerwick Inc. in May.

Although the renovation project has not gone out for bid, construction is slated to begin early next year and last 12 to 14 months, said Mike Giari, the port's executive director.

He said the project was delayed amid a lengthy environmental review and project finance planning. Port officials plan to issue bonds and use capital reserves.

The economic downturn also brought a slump in business to the port, so there "wasn't a lot of pressure on us to complete the project at a fast pace," Giari said.

The port's primary focus is importing construction materials for projects in the South Bay and broader Bay Area,

as well as exporting scrap metal to Asia.

Port business improved slightly during the year ending June 30 after two consecutive years of decline. The port had roughly 872,000 metric tons of imports and exports this past year, up 3.5 percent from 843,000 tons a year earlier.

Helping that uptick was rising exports. Some 445,000 tons of scrap metal were shipped from the port this past year, up 21 percent from 369,000 tons a year earlier.

Under the planned renovation project, a pair of wooden, World War II-era wharves will be demolished and replaced with concrete docks. Cargo unloading equipment will also be relocated to let two ships berth simultaneously at the new wharves. Only one ship can berth at the site.

Not every contractor could handle the renovation, as it would likely require floating cranes and pile drivers, as well as other heavy equipment.

There are roughly half a dozen companies in the Bay Area that specialize in marine construction projects, in-

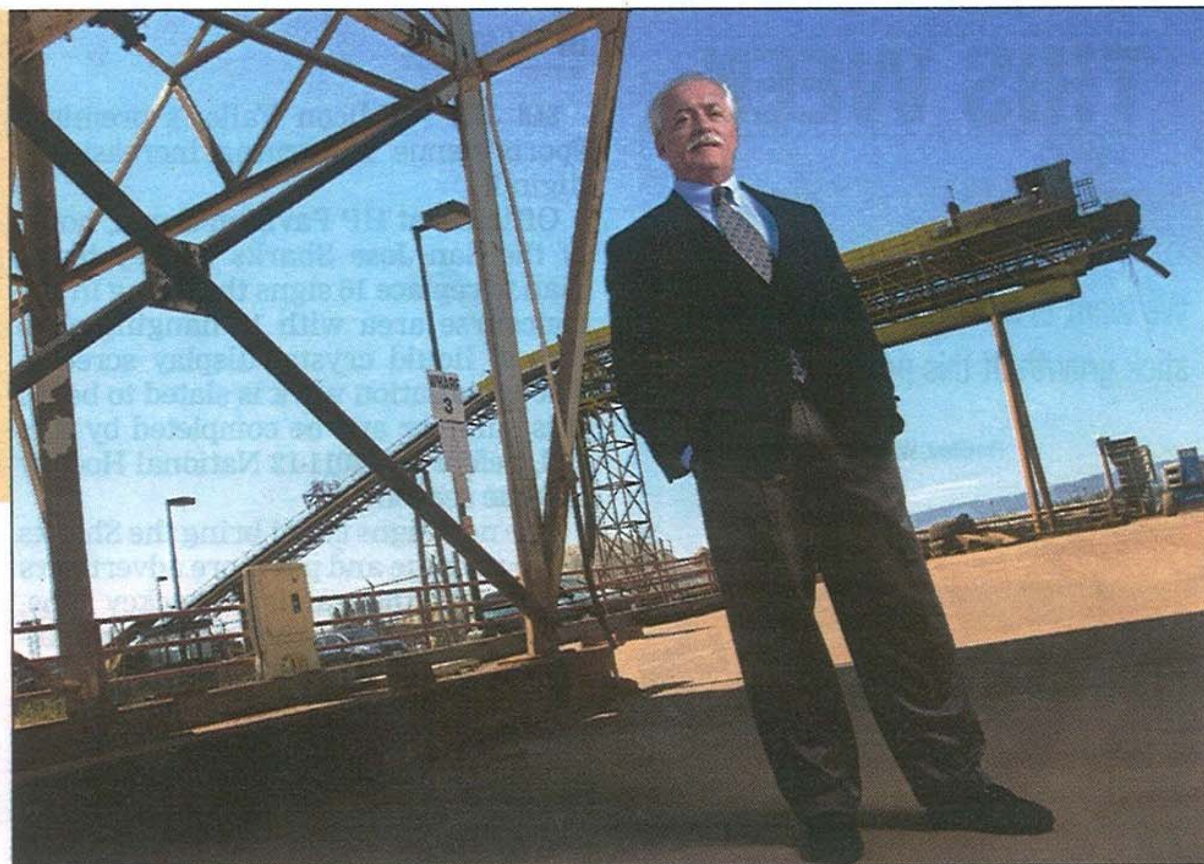
Port activity

After two years of decline, the port's import and export tonnage was up this year.*

2006: 1.83M
2007: 1.44M
2008: 1.49M
2009: 986,727
2010: 842,727
2011: 871,940

*For years ended June 30

Source: Port of Redwood City



FILE PHOTO

IMPORTS: Mike Giari, executive director of Port of Redwood City, said plans to upgrade the wharves are moving forward.

cluding The Dutra Group and Manson Construction Co., said Jack Gerwick, deputy project manager with Ben C. Gerwick Inc.

His company recently completed land and water surveys of the site, and it hopes to start designing the project by

early October.

He said the firm would design only 35 percent of the project, and the lead contractor will finish the plans.

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