



'Port of Dallas' Gets 1st Asian Shipment

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(CBS 11 News) DALLAS The story begins thousands of miles away with a new class of giant containership. South Korea's "Hanjin Line" determines it can ship faster by rail through Dallas than by waiting or storing goods at three congested West Coast seaports.

The sides strike a deal. Hanjin even names one of its super vessels "Dallas." The vessel ended its maiden voyage last week in Long Beach. The containership "Hanjin Dallas" is so big it takes nearly 20 trains — a mile long — to unload all the cargo.

Instead of storing goods in the harbor of Long Beach, it now offloads them directly to trains for shipping to the Port of Dallas where they are unloaded and put onto semi-trailers for shipments across America.

The mile-long, double-deck container train arrived shortly before 11 a.m. Tuesday and the first trainload of goods from a giant container ship arrived at the Union Pacific Rail Yard in Wilmer, an area gaining fame as the "Port of Dallas."

Asia's new generations of super container ships are too big to go through the Panama Canal so Dallas is positioning itself to be the point where goods from these vessels are distributed by truck throughout the United States.

Hundreds containers a day are en route to Texas. Tuesday's shipment included furniture, textiles and electronics from Korea.

"We are using these railroad intersections for a vast new economic development that's

going to be providing lots of jobs for Dallas, lots of trade," said Maurine Dickey, Dallas County Commissioner.

Dallas City Councilman Bill Blaydes watched his ship come in. His office and Commissioner Dickey's were instrumental in overcoming bureaucratic roadblocks.

With Dallas located on the North America Free Trade Agreement superhighway, he sees enormous growth opportunities and jobs.

"These are good-paying jobs, they're warehousing jobs, they're light manufacturing they're assembly, they're repackaging, jobs that pay well," Blaydes said.

That kind of promise has been heard before but there's already an economic ripple here. Stan McClure is vice-president of a commercial real estate firm and he already has an out-of-town client impressed with this area's rails, highways and labor force.

"This is a golden opportunity to get in on the ground floor, to get your goods and services not only to the ports but inland as well," McClure said.

Expanded trade is promised. Three deep water ports in Mexico have agreements to ship future goods through the Port of Dallas...even going through customs here.

Supporters are hoping for even bigger plans, like another rail intermodal terminal, this time in Dallas proper and even a cargo airport.