

YAPHANK

The Brookhaven Rail Terminal officially opens yesterday.

On track to help economy

New rail terminal expected to bring jobs, cut truck traffic

BY SOPHIA CHANG
sophia.chang@newsday.com

A new freight terminal in Yaphank is expected to fuel the local economy and could free Long Island's highways of thousands of trucks every year, the terminal's operators said at the grand opening yesterday.

The 28-acre Brookhaven Rail Terminal on Sills Road, at the Long Island Expressway, should receive and ship by train at least 500,000 tons of construction material and commodities per year.

With 80 adjacent acres available for expansion, officials anticipate the facility by 2016 will handle a million tons of goods per year — items that will not use truck shipping and contribute to pollution and congestion, according to U.S. Rail of New York, the terminal operator.

"Five years from now, you'll see a lot of development around here because of proximity" to the terminal, said U.S. Rail presi-

dent Ted Mills, who attended yesterday's ceremony.

The terminal is served by a 3.4-mile rail spur off the Long Island Rail Road. Three tracks for construction material are now operating, with another six merchandise tracks to be constructed by year's end.

Diesel-powered freight trains can use the terminal to deliver materials such as aggregate — crushed or whole rock used to make concrete and asphalt — which is then loaded onto trucks to deliver to customers, terminal representatives said. When the merchandise tracks are built, commodities such as biodiesel and flour can be moved as well.

Before the Brookhaven facility was built, freight trains took material to New Jersey, and trucks brought it to Long Island.

"This is all about jobs. This is all about taking trucks off the road," said Mark Lesko, Brookhaven's supervisor.

The development and con-

struction of the \$40 million facility was privately funded by a group of construction and rail companies, including Pratt Brothers Contracting of Bay Shore and U.S. Rail.

James Pratt, president of Pratt Brothers, said the project has provided 25 permanent jobs at the site, and he expects local truckers to be hired to move cargo to or from the terminal.

Johan McConnell, president of the South Yaphank Civic Association, said she sees the project as a triumph over vehicle congestion.

"I feel this helps the environment," McConnell said at the grand opening. "It takes trucks off the roads." Terminal operators have promised to plant trees around the perimeter to obscure operations, she said.

McConnell was unconcerned about local traffic coming out of the terminal, pointing out the station's proximity to the LIE.

Elected officials at the event

Freight figures

The Brookhaven Rail Terminal is expected to reduce local truck congestion because one rail freight car can carry the equivalent of four truckloads.

One rail car can transport a ton of cargo 480 miles on a gallon of fuel.

Upon completion, the terminal will have 13,000 feet of new rail.

The terminal is on 28 acres, with another 80 acres available for expansion.

SOURCE: BROOKHAVEN RAIL TERMINAL

said the terminal signals Long Island's economic comeback.

"We are open for business," said state Assemb. Dean Murray (R-East Patchogue).

"This is the day the worm turns when it comes to the economic climate on Long Island," Lesko said.

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