WBAL RADIO
More Highway Salt Coming By Sea
Tuesday, February 09, 2010
John Patti

The first of 9 ships each carrying 40,000 tons of salt for highway and road use arrived at the Port of Baltimore Monday.

John Coulter, President of Rukert Terminals on South Clinton Street says the next ship is due February 13th with nine shipments arriving over the next two weeks.

Coulter says the salt will be distributed to agencies in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

The rock salt and solar salt comes from Mexico and Chile.

Coulter says this is a re-stocking operation and is unusual that 9 ships would come in such a short period of time.

(INTERVIEW CAN BE HEARD AT WBAL.COM)

NEWS VIRGINIAN

SALT OF THE EARTH

BY BOB STUART

Salt traveling thousands of miles by ship from the Mexican coast and Chile and by rail from mines in upstate New York have helped make snow-covered Virginia roads safer this winter.

And while area public works departments stockpile salt supplies each year in preparation for winters like this, the departments still have had to order more because of this year's record-breaking snowstorms.

Staunton Public Works Director Tom Sliwoski said he stored salt in recent years in anticipation of the hard winter that finally came.

"I probably bought a couple of hundred tons and put the surplus in sidewalks and paving,'' said Sliwoski, who said the city budgets about $100,000 per year for salt.

This year, despite Sliwoski's foresight, the city has had to order more salt, including a request for 400 tons last week, and 200 more this week.

Dave Randall, Waynesboro's superintendent of public works operations, said the city fills up its salt bin every year.

But because of the heavy snowfall, Waynesboro had to purchase 700 tons more of salt last week.

The Virginia Department of Transportation's Staunton office started this snow season with 27,500 tons of salt, and was down to 9,000 tons Monday.

VDOT Staunton spokeswoman Sandy Myers said the salt on hand is enough to handle another storm expected today and more salt was being shipped in late Monday.

Myers said it is possible salt will have to be moved around the district depending on the needs of the 11 counties and seven cities.

Much of the salt coming to the Mid-Atlantic states and to agencies such as VDOT is shipped to the Port of Baltimore from Chile and Mexico.

John Coulter, president of the private Rukert Terminals Corp. based at the Port of Baltimore, said his company supplies the state transportation departments in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

While Rukert Terminals accumulates 500,000 to 600,000 tons of salt heading into the winter season, Coulter said his company is now down to 150,000 tons.

"We have nine ships steaming our way,'' said Coulter, who expects 350,000 tons of salt to arrive over the next couple of weeks.

The salt comes from Chilean rock in Chile, and evaporated sea water from the Cedros Island in Mexico, near California's Baja Peninsula.

Salt takes 12 to 15 days to be shipped through the Panama Canal and up the Atlantic Coast to Baltimore, America's 12th largest port in tons of cargo.

Midwestern-based Cargill Deicing steadily has shipped salt to Weyers Cave this winter by rail from its upstate New York mines for distribution to Virginia municipalities.

"It's been a phenomenal winter with a lot of snow and inclement weather and the use of salt and deicing products has been quite strong,'' said Mark Klein, a spokesman for Cargill Deicing.

Klein said Cargill Deicing has been working nights and weekends to keep customers supplied.

The amount of salt needed per storm depends on multiple factors, Sliowski said.

"It depends on the type of accumulation and temperatures, there is no rule of thumb,'' he said. "We try to use our salt judiciously."

He said salt loses its effectiveness at temperatures of less than 21 degrees.

The current salt price of $82 per ton includes the transportation costs, Sliwoski said.

“A few years ago salt was cheaper,’’ he said

WTOP RADIO AND ABC NEWS 7 DC

Shipment of road salt arrives ahead of 2nd storm
February 9, 2010 - 8:34am

BALTIMORE (AP) - The first of nine ships bringing hundreds of thousands of tons of road salt has arrived at the Port of Baltimore as the region prepares for another big snowstorm.

The ship carrying 40,000 tons of salt arrived Monday and Rukert Terminals President John Coulter says the next ship is due Sunday.

Coulter says the rock salt and solar salt from Mexico and Chile will be distributed to agencies in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

The nine shipments are arriving over the next two weeks. Coulter says this is a restocking operation and is unusual that nine ships would come in such a short time.

Montgomery County spokeswoman Esther Bowring says the county is constantly restocking supplies. She says the county has 100 trucks going back and forth to the docks in Baltimore to pick up more salt and sand.

WBAL TV 11 NEWS

Shipment Of Road Salt Arrives Ahead Of Latest Storm

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WJZ CHANNEL 13

Maryland Prepares For Another Snow Storm Reporting
Maryland is digging out.

There's another snowstorm en route to Maryland, and it could bring a large amount of snow to the state.
The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday afternoon for Harford, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's counties all the way out to western Maryland.
It's cause for concern for others.

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Baltimore Business Journal
Snowstorms’ salt shipments spice up slow Baltimore's port business

by Scott Dance Staff
Media March 13, 2010

To the Port of Baltimore, last month’s snowstorms meant days of inactivity with nowhere to move the feet of flakes. But at Rukert Terminals, it meant a slow upturn in business got revved up.

Rukert handles most of the imported salt that comes through Baltimore, and with demand higher than ever, business boomed during the back-to-back storms Feb. 5 and Feb. 10. Rukert handles about 500,000 tons of salt in a normal year, but has already totaled about 1 million tons, said President John Coulter.

But salt cargo is the exception. The days-long snow cleanup meant business was stalled as terminals are working to creep back to pre-recession cargo levels. Terminal operators say things are looking up, but the blizzards didn't make things easier.

Salt moved at lightning speed around the storms, Coulter said. With about a dozen ships coming in, one of them didn't even unload into Rukert's stockpile of salt that is stored at the terminal before being sent to distributors who pass it along to the state's salt storage domes.

"It was hand to mouth because of the critical levels," Coulter said. The state's domes hold about 350,000 tons of salt but were down to about 50,000 tons at one point, he said.

Other cargoes were all but suspended, however. John Redding, CEO of Belt's Corp. in Canton, said his facility closed for two days. The firm, which handles and stores general cargoes like food and beverage products, is still calculating its losses from those days.

For comparison, airline industry analysts calculated up to $100 million in losses, and economists figure about 50,000 job losses in February were due to the snow nationwide. Maryland economic development officials estimated the storms cost the state $830 million in lost economic activity.

Rupert Denney, president of the Baltimore Port Alliance and also manager of C. Steinweg's port terminal in Locust Point, said things were also stalled in the aftermath of the storms because of the cleanup efforts elsewhere. Trucks had to wait until roads became passable, and they also had to wait until enough snow had been cleared at satellite warehouses so they could reload and transport goods to be exported.

But the terminal operators have said that before and since the storms, business is showing signs of rebuilding. Rukert has seen more chemical products like calcium chloride, carbon blocks, chrome and magnesium, which means that steelmakers and manufacturers are getting ready to ramp up production.

Other metals such as aluminum have built up large stockpiles. The same goes for lumber, but those reserves likely won't be tapped until the home building industry rebounds.

"The downturn is starting to pick back up a little bit, but it's got a long way to go," Redding said.

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