

- The automotive industry estimates that EDI will save approximately \$200.00 per car; one automobile manufacturer saved \$80 million in freight costs by using EDI.
- One large motor carrier estimates that it can generate 50,000 freight bills at a total cost of 41 cents each.
- One manufacturing firm saved \$30,000 a year in stamps alone by not mailing purchase orders.

The use of EDI is growing dramatically among shippers, carriers, and ports. Booz, Allen, Hamilton estimates the EDI applications will grow at an annual rate of 50 percent during the remainder of the decade, and the Yankee Group estimates that 1/3 of all business transactions will be conducted electronically by 1995.

DESIGN AND OPERATION OF THE NEW ICTF INTERMODAL TERMINAL
IN LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH

by

Gary T. Hanks

Southern Pacific Transportation Company

Background

The new Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) which serves the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach has a geographic advantage over other major rail yards in that it is only 4 miles from the ports or a 10-minute truck trip, in comparison to other rail facilities located 25 miles further from the ports. The ICTF features 5 working tracks with 3 center-row parking areas for trucks, and the facility is 1.3 miles long and covers 146 acres.

Funding the Project

The two ports formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) as a political entity for the specific purpose of financing and constructing the ICTF. To finance the construction, the JPA issued \$54 million in industrial revenue bonds, which are guaranteed by the Southern Pacific (SP). The facility was built on land leased by the JPA from the Port of Los Angeles, and the land is sub-leased to the SP. In addition to the bond funds, the SP spent \$25 million to reconstruct part of the existing Dolores rail yard to provide rail access to the ICTF. A total of 55 permits and agreements were required before construction could get underway.

Physical Features

Grading the site began in the Spring of 1985, and the subgrade was compacted to a depth of 3 feet. Full scale construction began in July 1985, and the facility opened to traffic in November of 1986. Basic features of the ICTF include:

- 5 loading tracks
- 2 runaround tracks
- 7 buildings including: administration building, operations tower,

- gatehouse structures and customs building
- basic drainage, electrical and mechanical systems
- all paving
- all other features necessary for basic operation
- 5 Mi-Jack 1,000 cranes.

Truck Access

The ICTF has 16 truck lanes at the gate. The middle 8 lanes are reversible. The ICTF uses a totally automated gate entry/exit operation. An arriving truck stops at the gate precheck station. Over the intercom system, the trucker communicates with the operations staff located on the 6th floor of the Control Tower.

The operations staff receives from the trucker essential information for input into the computer and simultaneously calls up on the CRT screen all advance shipment information which has been received through electronic data interchange from the steamship line. The ability to have prior shipment information on file significantly reduces the amount of trucker waiting time.

The trucker is instructed at this point to proceed to a specific lane at the all-weather gate structure for inspection of container and chassis. During the trucker's advance from the precheck station to the actual gate, all required paperwork is computer-printed and is waiting at the gate house. These computer generated documents contain all necessary information to accomplish the legal interchange of equipment from the truck to the SP.

Rail Access

A key feature in providing the rail connection to the ICTF via the Dolores Yard involved the construction of a double grade separation over Alameda Street.

The ICTF can load/unload up to 5 double-stack trains simultaneously. There are over 7 miles of track within the ICTF, with room to spot 84 double-stack cars. The facility has center-row parking areas consisting of 3,000 container stalls. Inventory of the stalls is maintained in the computer.

Trains can pull directly into the facility and cut off their power. After containers are loaded and trains depart, customers can trace shipments via Customer Account Report Systems. Customers can make direct contact with SP's computer system to track car movements on a real-time basis.

Operations

Container throughput at the ICTF is running 35% ahead of the traffic handled in the past to and from the ports. The facility has 170 employees and operates at about 1,400 container lifts per day. As many as 2,700 trucks have passed through the gates of the ICTF in a single day.