

## Memphis eyes Halifax as potential partner

The City of Memphis has been scouting Halifax as a potential seaport for imports and exports. Memphis officials were in Halifax recently to talk business, and what makes the two cities potential partners is CN Rail.

The national carrier and only railway serving Halifax has a one-line connection to Memphis through Chicago. The running time between the two cities is about 93 hours.

Halifax was never on Memphis's radar as a potential port option until the CN connection was solidified with

the acquisition of Illinois Central Railway, which has been integrated into the CN network, said B. Lee Mallory, honorary Canadian consul in Memphis and executive vice-president of Mallory Alexander International Logistics.

Memphis has the potential to be a good connection for the Port of Halifax, which markets heavily its connection to the American heartland. Memphis, which is the fourth largest inland port in the U.S., has built an economy on logistics, serving as a transportation hub for the southern region. As well as its port, Memphis has the largest cargo airport in the world, is served by five major railroads and is at the intersection of two major highways. Approximately 66 per cent of the American population is within a day's drive by truck from Memphis.

Dexter Muller, a senior vice-president with the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce, said about 83 per cent of the imported products arriving in Memphis come via the ports of Oakland and L.A./Long Beach, and importers and exporters don't want to be dependent on just those ports.

Mr. Muller, like those in the shipping industry, anticipates that increased manufacturing growth and production in countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia and India will mean more goods moving through the Suez Canal to North America. He

likes the fact that Halifax is the closest East Coast container port to the Suez Canal, that it has lots of cargo capacity and is uncongested, and that CN has the direct rail link.

Mr. Muller said products coming into New York or Savannah may not necessarily find their way to Memphis, but that if they come into Halifax they stand a better chance of getting to the Tennessee city in the mid-south.

While in Halifax, the small Memphis delegation met with Halifax and Melford port officials, Halifax airport representatives, CN and the business community at large.


Stephen Dempsey, chief executive officer of the Greater Halifax Partnership and the new chair of the Halifax Gateway Council, would like to sign a memorandum of understanding with Memphis, which would be the basis of a working partnership.

Memphis signed an MOU last year with the Port of Prince Rupert, which also has a direct CN rail link to the Tennessee port city.

Both Halifax and Memphis hope to develop joint marketing opportunities that would work to their mutual benefit.

Halifax Port Authority officials say CN's strengthening of the Chicago/Memphis corridor presents new opportunities worth exploring.

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