

28 November 2006

## **STEEL-HANDLING OPERATIONS EXPAND AT PORT OF CARDIFF**

Associated British Ports (ABP) recently signed a term agreement with customer W E Dowds (Shipping) Ltd ('Dowds') to establish a dedicated steel-handling facility at the Port of Cardiff's Queen Alexandra Dock. The facility will handle thousands of tonnes of imported steel coil and other steel products from across the globe.

The agreement will see ABP and Dowds, a steel-handling specialist and private port-services company, invest approximately £200,000 to establish the facility. The investment will finance the provision of a 25-tonne overhead-gantry crane, other steel-handling equipment and a wireless data-logging system that will be able to locate steel coils stored in the facility's 9,000 sq m dockside warehouse.

The facility will also feature a state-of-the-art 'port-management' system that has been developed by Dowds. The web-based system permits customers to track their product orders from the point of manufacture through to the final receiver and end user.

Dowds and ABP have worked in close partnership over the past 15 years to develop the region's steel-handling capacity. In 2005, over three-quarters of a million tonnes of steel passed through Dowds' facility at ABP's Port of Newport, Wales's premier steel-handling port. To facilitate these volumes and to improve the efficiency of Newport's steel-handling operations, ABP recently invested £1.4 million to extend the port's Number 7 Shed and relocated two Stothert and Pitt 40-tonne capacity cranes from ABP's Port of Swansea to Newport's South Dock.

Clive Davies, Managing Director, W E Dowds, said:

“This new agreement strengthens Dowds’ long-standing relationship with ABP South Wales. ABP’s Ports of Cardiff and Newport feature dedicated steel facilities that can handle both large ocean-going and smaller short-sea vessels – requirements that are crucial to the continuing success of Dowds’ operations. We look forward to continuing our close working relationship with ABP to expand our respective steel-handling capabilities across South Wales.”

John Fitzgerald, Port Director for ABP’s South Wales Ports, said:

“This new agreement is excellent news for ABP, for Dowds and most importantly, for Dowds’ customers. ABP’s South Wales Ports handled over one-and-a-quarter million tonnes of steel products last year and the figure looks set to increase following this deal. The expansion of Dowds’ steel-handling operation and extension from ABP’s Port of Newport to the Port of Cardiff demonstrate that our customers are increasingly looking to utilise regional ports. ABP South Wales offers five different port locations and it is encouraging to see customers, such as Dowds, expanding their business across a number of them.”

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Note to Editors

The Port of Cardiff is Port Environmental Review System (PERS) accredited. PERS certification is issued by European Commission-funded ECOPORTS, and provides independent verification by Lloyd’s of a company’s achievements in successful port-environment management.

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