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News Release

Sept. 7, 2007

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The Port of Virginia Announces Fastest Transit Time Between US East Coast and the Arabian Gulf

NORFOLK, VA – The Port of Virginia has begun offering its customers moving cargo to the Arabian Gulf the fastest transit time between the port and that part of the world through APL's newly-inaugurated Suez Express (SZX) service.

In May, APL announced the all-water service that connects the US East Coast with Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent via the Suez Canal. The weekly service, which began in July, has The Port of Virginia as its last port call before heading to the Arabian Gulf. The American-flagged vessel, President Polk, arrived at Norfolk International Terminals on Wednesday, Sept. 5.

“With Virginia being the a last-out call this service offers the fastest transit time to the Arabian Gulf when compared with other US East Coast ports,” said Tom Capozzi, the Virginia Port Authority's marketing director. “Since four of the deployed vessels are US Flag ships, this will be a very important service for the military and aid cargo.

“Last out means customers know they can put their cargo on a ship in Norfolk and when it departs it is steaming across the Atlantic. There are not any stops in the US after the vessel leaves Virginia, so it is a direct route to that part of the world.”

APL leaders said the service was developed to provide a complementary alternative to the Panama Canal and as a way of helping customers diversify their supply chains in Asia and their domestic gateways.

The service deploys eight vessels of between 4,000 and 4,500 TEU capacity; APL is providing five vessels and its New World Alliance partners Hyundai Merchant Marine and Mitsui OSK are providing the other three vessels. Four of the APL ships are US Flag vessels, meaning they are registered in the US and carry American crews.

The port rotation is as follows: Singapore, Colombo, New York, Charleston, Savannah, Virginia, Jebel Ali, Port Kelang, Singapore. The outbound transit time between Virginia and Jebel Ali is 18 days.

In 2006, the Middle East accounted for 7 percent of the port’s export container trade and 2 percent of the import container trade.

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The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, reporting to the state Secretary of Transportation. The VPA owns and operates four general cargo facilities on behalf of the state: Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The terminals are operated by Virginia International Terminals, Inc. (VIT) the non-stock, non-profit operating company. The VPA, through terminal earnings generated by VIT, is operationally self-sufficient. The VPA and correlating maritime industry is responsible for 165,000 jobs, \$762 million in business revenues and \$61 million in state and local taxes throughout the Commonwealth.