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In The Media

Grain Storage Domes Open in Port of Hamilton

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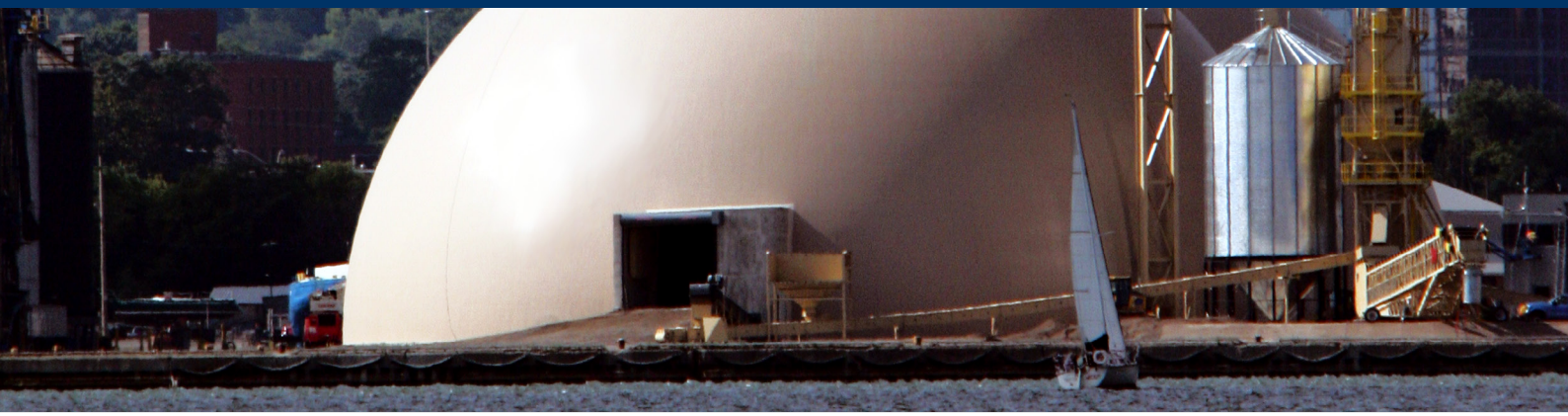

These two domes were constructed on the western end of Lake Ontario at the Port of Hamilton.

Twin storage domes capable of housing more than 60,000 tonnes of agricultural products are set to boost grain volumes in the Port of Hamilton. The new Parrish and Heimbecker (P&H) terminal on Pier 10 will be its primary centre for moving grains and other agricultural commodities. The facilities will primarily be used for export purposes, but will also handle shipments from the U.S. and Western Canada destined for local processors.

In addition to handling the traditional coarse grains that move through the port, the 90 foot high by 190 foot diameter domes have the flexibility to handle protein meals, sugar, salt and granular fertilizer. An integral part of the terminal design is the specialized under floor conveyor system connecting the two domes, which, in conjunction with other on-site conveyor systems, will dramatically increase loading and discharge speed for trucks, rail cars and ships, making the 380,000 square foot terminal one of the most efficient on the Great Lakes.

P&H, with over 100 years of agribusiness experience, has committed over $30 million to the fully secured terminal, which has direct access to marine, road and rail including full Seaway draft, truck scale staging and a 25 unit rail car capacity. The terminal also has considerable available space to accommodate future expansion.

The domes, which were constructed by Dome Technology of Idaho Falls, ID, incorporate a floor level high-speed conveyor system that, compared to any other Canadian export elevator in the Great Lakes, will improve loading and discharge times for all modes of transportation by as much as 20-25 per cent, according to lows P&H. In addition, the flat storage allows P&H to handle proteins that do not work that well through a silo and, since the facility is designed to be less harsh on product handling, it has attracted new customers.

“This facility is probably the most efficient on the east coast,” said Bruce Wood, president and CEO of the Hamilton Port Authority. “With direct dockage and the slip, four ships can be accommodated at once.”

The domes are constructed by inflating fabric airforms and subsequently spraying the inside fabric with polyurethane foam to develop the initial rigidity, then applying rebar and continuous spray concrete to form the completed structure. Compared to large conventional free span structures the domes’ construction costs are lower. Other benefits include high energy efficiency, rapid construction and better space utilization as bearing walls and columns are not required. During the past 30 years hundreds of similar domes have been built around the world.

“This facility is a game changer that will really put Hamilton on the map and serve farmers well.”

Bruce Wood
Hamilton Port Authority

Designed to store grains, sugar, salt or granular fertilizer, these domes have capacity of up to 60,000 tonnes.

Bruce Hodgson, Director Market Development, St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation said, “Parrish and Heimbecker has recognized the efficiencies of the marine mode with the opening of their state-of-the-art facility in the Port of Hamilton. By including our system in their supply chain they are well positioned to work closely with their suppliers and to increase their market share by providing their customers with a consistent and reliable service while adding value. We look forward to working with them in the future.”

Mr. Bill Parrish Jr., President and CEO, P&H paid tribute to Rob Bryson, Director, Eastern Canadian Grain Operations for bringing the facility in on time and budget in a two to three year time frame. Mr. Parrish told the audience, “We’ve been around a long time, we’ve seen a lot and learned a lot. I think our stability is a key point in our success. Our key management team has been together for over ten years and most of us closer to twenty. We’re old but we’re not rusty and this is a vibrant time for the agribusiness. Over the past five years P&H have purchased or constructed five flour mills and now have seven mills. The seven mills consume one million metric tons of wheat per year equalling thirty three of the newly constructed dome’s capacity.”

The conveyor system above and beneath the domes are an integral part of the site’s efficiency.

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