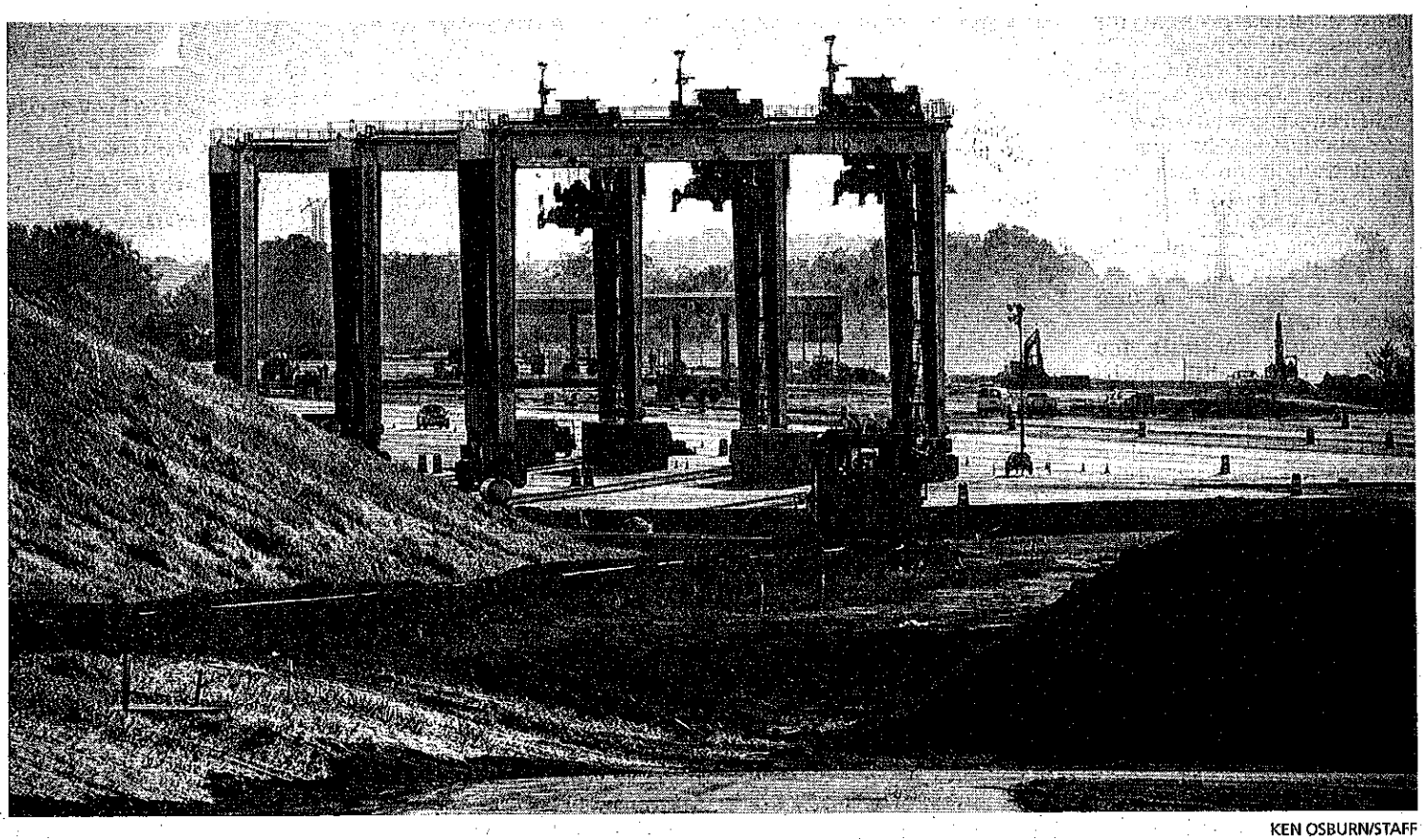


KEN OSBURN/STAFF

A new entrance is under construction for the Inland Port off the J. Verne Smith Parkway.

Port blows past forecast

Greer site is 47 percent ahead of expectations of the state's Ports Authority

By Michael Burns
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The South Carolina Ports Authority Inland Port in Greer handled 3,972 rail moves in November as the facility that opened a little over a year ago and its parent, the Port of Charleston, experienced growth in business that's exceeded plans.

With 21,686 lifts completed in the fiscal year to date, the inland port is 47 percent ahead of South Carolina Ports Authority expectations.

The Port of Charleston handled 144,218 20-foot equivalent units, standard units for describing cargo ships' carrying capacity known as TEUs, in November to mark an 8 percent increase over the same month last year.

That puts fiscal year-to-date TEU volumes 11 percent ahead of Ports Authority plans.

As measured in pier containers, meanwhile, the Ports Authority handled 82,466 boxes last month, an increase of 10 percent over November 2013.

Non-containerized cargo volumes saw gains, too, as 61,114 pier tons were handled last month, bringing fiscal year-to-date tonnage totals ahead of plan by nearly 5 percent.

Georgetown's port handled 48,917 tons in November, nearly 29 percent higher than plans.

Overall, fiscal year-to-date volumes are up 13 percent year over year.

"As measured year over year, our monthly pier container volume has seen nine consecutive months of double-digit growth," said Ports Authority president Jim Newsome.

"This broad-based growth reflects strength of both imports and exports, although we will likely see volumes settle over the next few months."

Greer's inland port opened in October 2013 to extend the Port of Charleston's reach 212 miles into the Upstate, providing shippers with access to more than 95 million consumers within a one-day drive.

The inland port boosts efficiency for international freight movements between Charleston and companies located across the Southeast, Ports Authority officials say, and it's expected to create additional economic investment in an area where BMW, Michelin and other international manufacturers already operate.

Norfolk Southern serves the inland port through its main rail line along the Interstate 85 corridor between Charlotte, N.C., and Atlanta.

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