

BUSINESS

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Markell heads to Chile on a trade mission

Gov. will sign port contract extension

By **AARON NATHANS**

The News Journal

Gov. Jack Markell will lead a trade mission to Chile starting Sunday, seeking to fortify relations with a major shipping line doing business with the Port of Wilmington.

During the meetings in Santiago, Markell will sign an agreement with Pacific Seaways, a Chilean fruit shipper, to extend its storage and distribution contract with the port through June 2014.

Pacific Seaways imports grapes, nectarines, peaches and plums from dozens of companies, including Dole, in Chile. That country harvests its fruit from December through April, complementing the summer harvest in this region.

From the port, the fruit is shipped to distribution centers and supermarkets around this country and Canada.

Pacific Seaways does not haul bananas to Wilmington. Bananas make up a large portion of the other fruit business at the port.

The fruit is stored at the port's 800,000 square-foot refrigerated warehouse, where Markell announced the trade mission on Wednesday.



Frank Vignali, director of operation for the Port of Wilmington, Gene Bailey, executive director of Diamond State Port Corp., Gov. Jack Markell, and Alan Levin, state economic development director, tour one of the refrigerated storage facilities for fruit at the port Wednesday. THE NEWS JOURNAL/JENNIFER CORBETT

 Hear Gov. Markell discuss his upcoming trip to Chile to meet with fruit exporter Pacific Seaways at delawareonline.com.

"Anything we can do to maintain, build up, expand upon that relationship is something that's important to us," Markell said.

During the trip, Markell will meet Chilean Minister of Agriculture Jose Antonio Galilea, and Guido Girardi-Lavin, president of the Chilean Senate.

Markell hinted at other economic development meetings in Chile, but said he did not want to

tip his hand to neighboring governors.

"A big part of my mission is to make sure Delaware's story gets out there," Markell said.

Markell will be joined by state economic development director Alan Levin, who is also chairman of the port; Gene Bailey, the port's executive director, and his deputy Tom Keefer; Benjamin Leavenworth, the honorary consul of Chile in Philadelphia; and Pat Farrell, vice president of Pacific Delaware, Inc., a local shipper that does business with Pacific Seaways. Markell will travel with two

state troopers, and the State Police will pay for their trip, his office said.

Markell's office said the cost of the trip will not be tallied until it is over. The trip is largely being paid with funds from the port, which gets money from the state Bond Bill, the state officials said.

Levin's trip will be paid by the state economic development office.

The governor will return home that Friday evening, his office said.

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