

Drivers wanted

For more than 25 years, Volkswagen has been a major player in the Port's auto business with their vessels currently calling at the Port of Wilmington, Delaware an average of four times per month. In fact, the Port is the second largest port of entry for Volkswagen of America, Inc. with a projected 100,540 vehicles entering through Wilmington this year.

In total, one fourth of all VW and Audi vehicles destined for the United States will make their first point of rest at Wilmington. "These numbers have significantly increased over the years," explained Volkswagen of America Port Manager David Valentovich. "Especially when you consider that the total number of vehicles imported to the U.S. in 1994 was only 42,000. Today, we are one

percent better than last year with the total number of VW and Audi imports nationwide exceeding 400,000 vehicles in 2002," Valentovich said.

The re-introduction of the classic VW Bug, the growing popularity of the VW Passat, the increased demand for the luxury Audi, and the upcoming release of several new VW and Audi models for the next several years reveal an even more promising future for VW of America as well as growing opportunities for the Port of Wilmington.

Valentovich noted there are several reasons why Wilmington has been an important point of entry for VW

for so many years. "With VW being the only auto processor for import automobiles actually operating on the property at the Port of Wilmington, there are definitely advantages to being the big fish in the little pond."

He explained, "There's less congestion at the Port of Wilmington and great road access to our major distribution points in lower New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C., and, for Audi vehicles, to dealers in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana."

He added that the Port's new Auto & RoRo berth and dedicated roadway will decrease the time needed to move vehicles from the vessel to the First Point of Rest by over 50 percent. "In addition to the improved efficiency," Valentovich added, "we anticipate improved protection of product quality through the elimination of cross traffic on the dedicated roadway as well as improved flexibility for vessel discharge."

In addition to the Port's newly dedicated Auto & RoRo berth and its great location, "it currently has the best land lease rates on the East Coast," Valentovich said. The Port of Wilmington currently leases 67 acres to Volkswagen of America for car and vehicle storage.

Other factors for the Port and Volkswagen of America's long-term relationship can be attributed to the excellent teamwork of all the parties



VW Drives Thousands of Autos Through the Port

involved in “making it happen,” Valentovich said. “Many of the people involved in processing the vehicles, moving them through the yard, to loading them onto our truck carrier, Allied Auto Services, have been here from the start,” he explained.

Volkswagen of America has a very smooth operation from start to finish. Valentovich credits the excellent working relationship with pilot and tug facilities including Wilmington Tug; the excellent service provided by Teamsters Local 326 of TransWorld Port & Distribution Services; the supervision of vehicle discharging operations by Murphy Marine Services; and the “literally going the extra mile of support we get from the Diamond State Port Corporation.”

New VW and Audi vehicles that are planned for release over the next several years and are expected to increase Volkswagen of America, Inc. imports to the U.S. include: the Audi A4 Cabrio, a convertible sedan, as well as a convertible model of the comeback VW Beetle, both slated for release this year; the 4 wheel drive SUV Audi Touareg, scheduled for release the end of 2003; the Audi Phaeton, an 8 or 10 cylinder luxury sedan planned for 2004; and a VW Micro Bus anticipated for release in 2006.

The Port of Wilmington, Delaware congratulates VW on their exciting new line of vehicles and their market growth in the United States.



Standing in VW's yard with the new arrivals, the Audi A4 Cabrio convertible sedans, VW Port Manager David Valentovich commented that Wilmington is one of the cleanest and most efficient auto hubs in North America.

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