

# Delaware Company Gets Subcontract for Iraq Reconstruction



## Cargo to ship out through Port of Wilmington

After war was declared over in Iraq earlier this year, representatives from the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) visited Washington D.C. to explore reconstruction opportunities in the Middle East.

DEDO and the World Trade Center Institute Delaware distributed information to businesses in Delaware regarding requirements and contacts for the USAID contractors, letting businesses know how to get involved.

AutoPort is one Delaware company that is now participating in the reconstruction effort. Early on, the U.S. Government initially selected global specialty engineering firms, like Halliburton and Bechtel, in a closed-bid process to manage the primary phase of reconstruction of infrastructures in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Moving beyond the initial phase, the effort would focus on commercial and residential construction. The U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID), the government entity overseeing this process, has opened up the bidding for subcontract work through seven primary USAID contractors.

Harry Feasel, Business Development Manager for AutoPort, attended meetings in Washington D.C. to ensure AutoPort's inclusion in the bidding process. AutoPort secured a contract to process vehicles, such as fitting out trucks with rollbars, for export from the Port of Wilmington to Middle East ports in Jordan and

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Kuwait. "Orders will be slow in the beginning because of pending security issues in Iraq," he said, "but over time it should become a very important contract for us."

AutoPort has processed vehicles bound for the Middle East for over 22 years and General Motors (GM) was one of its first customers. Recently, AutoPort renewed its contract with GM to process vehicles through the end of 2004. AutoPort processes domestic vehicles and exports at its 60-plus acre site near the Port of Wilmington – detailing, modifying and performing checks on more than 100,000 vehicles a year. Their expertise includes complex services such as undercoating, adding protective wrap guards on horizontal surfaces, installation of additional fuel tanks and sand tracks and quality checks, and simpler services like washing cars and installing winches and safety kits.

AutoPort delivers export vehicles from its facility to the Port of Wilmington's auto and RoRo berth via a paved, lighted access road. "It's terrific being able to use a dedicated roadway leading from our facility to the berth," said Feasel. "It minimizes the road hazards you might otherwise encounter on a public roadway," he said.

AutoPort also has three railheads at their facility, making transport via Norfolk Southern rail service very convenient. Along with rail access, its proximity to major interstate highways I-95, I-295, the New Jersey Turnpike and the Pennsylvania Turnpike enables AutoPort to reach major U.S. East Coast markets overnight. With the Port's roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) capabilities, which include auto berths on the Christina River and a one-year-old, dedicated deep-water auto berth on the Delaware River, AutoPort is in a

location to offer full service to its automotive manufacturing customers.

"Because we are right by the Port of Wilmington, it eliminates the need to send automobiles to an interim location before they are delivered to the point of export," said Feasel, "and we can offer our customers one-stop shopping. AutoPort is well situated to be a part of the reconstruction effort."

RoRo transportation specialist HUAL North America, the North American division of HUAL AS in Oslo, Norway, has ships that regularly call at the Port en route to the Middle East. AutoPort and HUAL, both ISO 9002 certified companies, have worked together over the past 28 years to ship vehicles to the Middle East and will continue this opportune relationship during the reconstruction effort, Feasel noted.

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