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Fuel Efficient, Low Emissions Hybrid Locomotive put to Use at Norfolk International Terminal

NORFOLK, VA – The Virginia Port Authority this month began using a new, fuel-efficient, low-emissions producing hybrid locomotive at its on-terminal rail operation at Norfolk International Terminal [NIT].

“It went into service without issue and has been on a regular schedule ever since,” said Heather L.W. Mantz, the VPA’s director of environmental affairs. “It is living up to expectations: it has plenty of hauling power, it is very quiet at idle because that is when it is operating on battery power and it uses significantly less fuel than the locomotive it replaced did.”

The unit, called the *Green Goat*, will save an estimated of \$143,000 in annual fuel costs and reduce the amount of diesel emissions coming from the terminal’s rail cargo operation. The unit is the first of three new yard locomotives that will replace the 1970s-vintage lease units being used at NIT. The remaining locomotives are scheduled for delivery in late winter or early spring 2009.

In July as part of its ongoing commitment to environmental excellence and improving overall efficiency, the VPA announced the purchase of the new locomotives for on-terminal use. The total purchase price was \$3.6 million.

At the announcement ceremony the VPA was awarded a \$750,000 grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency that was earmarked for the purchase; the VPA will pay \$2 million and its operating company, Virginia International Terminals, will pay the \$850,000 balance. For the first three years the units will be leased from the manufacturer, Railpower Hybrid Technologies Corp. When the lease has expired the VPA will purchase the units.

“With the money we save in fuel, efficiency, maintenance and overall operating cost these machines will pay for their own way over just a few years,” Mantz said. “The second part to the equation is the reduction in emissions.

“In Hampton Roads, one the primary environmental concerns is air quality and these machines offer between 80 and 90 percent reduction in nitrogen oxide [NOx] and particulate matter emissions – both direct contributors to reduced air quality.”

Typically, on-terminal locomotives – sometimes called a road or yard switcher -- are the workhorses in the train-building process: they push heavy loads short distances at low speeds; make frequent stops; operate in forward and reverse and sit idle for long periods as they wait for railcars to be sorted.

The purchase package includes two *RP Series* road switchers and the *Green Goat* yard switcher. The road switchers employ three high-efficiency diesel engines and battery power that can be used in multiple configurations. The units save an estimated 30 percent to 40 percent on fuel. The *Green Goat* is a battery-dominant hybrid that uses diesel engines to maintain optimal battery power; fuel savings is estimated at 40 percent to 60 percent.

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The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, reporting to the state Secretary of Transportation. The VPA owns and operates four general cargo facilities on behalf of the state: Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The terminals are operated by Virginia International Terminals, Inc. (VIT) the non-stock, non-profit operating company. The VPA, through terminal earnings generated by VIT, is operationally self-sufficient. The VPA and correlating maritime industry is responsible for 343,000 jobs, \$41 billion in total revenues throughout the Commonwealth.