Client Spotlight: CentrePort™ Canada – Canada's Centre for Global Trade

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published 05/30/2016

What is CentrePort Canada Inc. (CentrePort)?

CentrePort Canada is a 20,000 acre inland port and **Foreign Trade Zone** located in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the Rural Municipality of Rosser. CentrePort is the largest inland port in North America – and the only one in Canada offering access to tri-modal transportation (rail, truck and air cargo operations). CentrePort Canada Inc. is the corporation tasked with developing and marketing the inland port.

What differentiates CentrePort from other inland ports in North America?

In addition to Winnipeg being located in the **geographic epi-centre of North America** and in the central time zone, there are several distinctive benefits that create a competitive advantage for CentrePort and its clients. Winnipeg is the only city on the prairies that is home to three Class I rail carriers (Canadian Pacific, Canadian National and BNSF). The Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport is a 24-hour operation with the most dedicated cargo freight flights in Canada.

CentrePort offers access to well-established **tri-modal** transportation that is being further developed to include the new 700-acre **CentrePort Canada Rail Park**, a 300-acre west side airport campus development (led by the Winnipeg Airports Authority), and hundreds of acres of truck-served industrial land. Businesses setting up new operations in these tri-modal industrial parks have the ability to access all three modes of transportation within minutes of one another.

Another differentiator is CentrePort's **live, work, play and learn** approach to development. There is a residential neighbourhood being developed expected to include 8,000 residents, along with employment opportunities and protected greenspace. CentrePort is working closely with post-secondary institutes including Red River College and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology; and the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

When asked "Why would a company choose to locate or expand their business at

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CentrePort?" Diane Gray, President and CEO at CentrePort, points to the types of comments CentrePort is receiving from companies who have chosen to grow their businesses at North America's largest inland port.

"Our overall strategy is to become a global marketer of grains and agricultural products" says Brian Hazzard, senior VP for **BroadGrain Commodities**, a Toronto-based agribusiness that is investing up to $25 million to build a grain-handling facility and bean processing plant on approximately 30 acres in the CentrePort Canada Rail Park. "The fit for this project is as a link to that on-going vision. We see Manitoba as the anchor for this hub. And CentrePort is the perfect location."

Why is CentrePort good for Winnipeg and for Manitoba?

CentrePort is about taking a strategic, sustainable approach to industrial development and leveraging our considerable transportation assets into new private sector investment. Attracting private investment from outside our borders is an essential part of growing our city and province – it brings new spending to our community, creates jobs for our citizens, produces spin-off economic opportunities for local business, and generates new tax revenues that are needed to support the government services that people rely on, such as health care and education.

To date, 46 companies have built or are in the process of building new operations on more than 270 acres at CentrePort – creating hundreds of new jobs, investing more than $230 million into our economy, and significantly increasing municipal tax revenues. We expect this rate of growth to accelerate as more industrial lands within CentrePort come to market. In fact, a new economic impact study by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics estimates that a full build out of CentrePort South (City of Winnipeg lands within CentrePort) will add almost $1 billion in GDP and create more than 11,700 person years of employment (construction-impacts only).

CentrePort is a *big deal* for our province.

What is the most common misconception about CentrePort?

The rise to prominence of **inland ports** in North America is something that is still fairly new, so we find that while people understand CentrePort is a big undertaking, they aren't entirely clear on the role of an inland port. It is important that we explain CentrePort is about attracting new companies and manufacturers to a large, industrial area that offers tri-modal transportation and other benefits that allow businesses to operate more efficiently. We have always been a strong trade and transportation province, so CentrePort is really about building on these advantages for the benefit of the broader community.

People also often ask "When will CentrePort be finished?" As North America's largest inland port, CentrePort will be developed in stages over many decades, which is quite typical for

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inland ports and certainly the best approach for a footprint the size of CentrePort's. This is why Manitobans will continue to see new infrastructure and new businesses come to CentrePort in phases – for example, we have 1,200 acres coming to market in 2016-2017 that will provide companies with the opportunity to set up new operations in distinct rail-served, truck-served or air-served industrial parks.

What do you love the most about what you do?

It is very exciting – and challenging – to be involved in creating something as significant as CentrePort from scratch. It is an opportunity to plan for industrial development in a way that is strategic and sustainable, and of benefit to the broader community – our city, the capital region and our province. It is why we have adopted a "live, work, play, learn" approach to development. We are mindful of all of the factors that go into building a more complete community as we work towards our ultimate goal of developing a CentrePort that Manitobans can be proud of.

If you could fast forward 10 years into the future, under an ideal scenario, what would CentrePort look like?

CentrePort would have hundreds of new businesses operating in various industrial parks, including our new CentrePort Canada Rail Park. The new residential community would have families living in it, including people who work at CentrePort-area operations. There would be new infrastructure supporting business operations, more active transport opportunities for citizens living and working at CentrePort, and the continued protection of valuable green spaces such as Little Mountain Park. There would also be new post-secondary education programs to ensure that Manitobans are trained for the jobs that are being created at CentrePort.

We are working on all of these priorities and are very excited about the months and years ahead.

TDS congratulates CentrePort on their success. We are honoured to call them a client of our firm.

For more information on CentrePort, contact Diane Gray, President and CEO at 204.784.1303 or **DGray@centreportcanada.ca**

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