

Port shipments on record pace

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Fuelled by road construction across the region, shipments passing through the Port of Windsor are on a record pace and could break a mark set in 2006.

Port authority CEO David Cree said that the record of 5.778 million tonnes set seven years ago could be broken this year because of an increase in liquid asphalt shipped through the recently expanded Sterling Marine Fuels Terminal. As well, construction of the Herb Gray Parkway has generated record volumes of construction aggregates through the Lafarge Canada Terminal.

"We're having a terrific year and it could be even better next year," said Cree. "We're on a pace to exceed six million tonnes which would give us a record if we continue at this rate.

"Obviously the parkway is driving the increase in aggregates, other road construction is providing a boost in liquid asphalt and we're also seeing an increase in grain shipments," said Cree.

Cree said that an increase in grain shipments is always more complicated to explain than aggregates, which are tied to road construction.

He said it could include increased canola shipments to ADM Industries or an increase in soy bean exports to overseas markets but "either way, it's good news."

Liquid asphalt shipments are up 52 per cent this season, construction aggregate shipments have increased by 38 per cent and grain traffic is up 45 per cent. So far this year, shipments through the port are up nine per cent to 3.3 million tonnes.

In addition to record shipping levels, the port was recently ranked first among 18 ports surveyed by Canada Sailings magazine for having the lowest port fees and the lowest land rental rates.

Since hitting its peak in 2006, shipments through the port have ranged from 4.888 million tonnes in 2009 to 5.456 million tonnes last year, an increase of 7.6 per cent over the previous year.