The new Slip D, under construction at Louisiana's Port of Fourchon will allow larger vessels to access the port, already crucial for offshore oil operations and international trade.

ARCOSA LIGHTWEIGHT AGGREGATE USED TO CREATE VITAL PORT SPACE IN SOUTHERN LOUISIANA

Riverlite®, the lightest structural aggregate in the United States, continues to aid in the creation of additional port space along the southern tip of Louisiana. Presently, the Port of Fourchon, located in Lafourche Parish, is in the midst of creating 300 new acres for development, adding an additional 10-thousand linear feet of waterfront.

This vital port serves as a land base for almost all offshore oil platforms and drilling rigs positioned in the Gulf of Mexico and also acts as a foreign cargo shipping terminal. Lightweight aggregate from ARCOSA's Erwinville, Louisiana facility is being used to build new slips that are a thousand feet wide and nearly 4,000 feet long.

ARCOSA's Steve Rowe says the present expansion is being done to accommodate larger vessels. "The older slips, B and C, are only 700 feet wide," says Rowe. "The new Slip D facility will allow longer and wider ships to turn around but will take about six to eight years to completely build out," he says.

ECONOMICAL LAND CREATION

For the past two decades, lightweight aggregate has been used as backfill to create useable land at the sea port. Some 700 acres of land have been created in the past decade through similar projects. "It's really very simple," says Jeff Speck of Arcosa Lightweight. "Riverlite®, an expanded clay lightweight aggregate, is more dependable and more economical for land creation and it's the material of choice for projects like this."

Speck says lightweight aggregate provides numerous structural and economic advantages and notes the utilization of Riverlite® on this type of project can help lower both initial construction and long-term cost.

"The lightweight being used at the Port of Fourchon reduces the lateral load against sheet pilings and also greatly reduces the vertical loads on soils at the bottom of the sheet piling. The heavier the weight of the fill, the deeper the sheet piling has to be driven to prevent toe failure. Deeper sheet piling means more steel will be needed to complete the project," he says. "Using Riverlite® significantly decreases the depth to which the sheet piles must be driven and the chances of failure. Engineers trust our product and know that they can achieve the results that they need on critical projects such as the Port," says Speck.

In addition to creating jobs for people in the local area, ARCOSA's manufacturing site near Baton Rouge is convenient to the project site, creating transportation cost savings and, in the process, energy savings.

Besides a vital link to oil production, Port Fourchon also serves commercial fishermen, foreign cargo shipping enterprises, and offers a unique area for recreation and tourism.