



SC Ports sees signs of moderate recovery at the start of fiscal year 2021

August 12, 2020



S.C. Ports had a record July for vehicles. The Port handled 25,128 vehicles at Columbus Street Terminal last month, up 47% year-over-year. (Photos/SCPA/English Purcell)

CHARLESTON, SC – AUG. 12, 2020 – S.C. Ports Authority is seeing signs of a moderate recovery beginning to emerge at the start of fiscal year 2021 amid the ongoing global pandemic.

S.C. Ports handled 176,974 twenty-foot equivalent container units (TEUs) at the [Wando Welch](#) and [North Charleston](#) container terminals in July.

S.C. Ports moved 99,431 pier containers, which measures boxes of any size, in July. Pier containers are up 12% from June, showing a positive trend for the first month of fiscal year 2021, but volumes remain down year-over-year.

Five scheduled blank sailings remain; blank sailings are when a vessel does not arrive during its schedule time or is rescheduled. The remaining blank sailings, which are coming from Northern Europe, will make a total of 72 since January.

Although exports and imports were down overall, S.C. Ports saw an uptick in Asian imports in July, pointing to a positive economic trend.



(Photo/SCPA/English Purcell)

“We are encouraged by some signs of an initial rebound in our container and automotive volumes, as well as an increase in imports and a decline in blanked sailings,” S.C. Ports President and CEO Jim Newsome said. “However, a more substantial recovery is dependent on the duration and intensity of the economic impacts from the pandemic, and ultimately, on a vaccine. We are hopeful for a stronger rebound throughout fiscal year 2021.”

The Port handled 71,053 pier tons in July, up 13% year-over-year. **Inland Port Greer** reported 10,832 rail moves last month, while **Inland Port Dillon** had 2,778 rail moves.

S.C. Ports reported the highest July on record for vehicles handled. S.C. Ports moved 25,128 vehicles at **Columbus Street Terminal** in July, a 47% increase year-over-year. This shows strength in the ro-ro sector for S.C. Ports, and signifies a return to normalcy at automotive plants throughout South Carolina and the Southeast.

“From 2009-2018, we doubled our container volume. In 2019, we set record volumes nearly every month. The first two months of 2020 also saw record volumes before the pandemic disrupted businesses globally,” Newsome said. “I am confident that we will weather this uncertainty and come out stronger. We are a world-class port located in the booming Southeast market. We remain dedicated to providing excellent service and timely infrastructure to our customers.”

S.C. Ports continues to grow and diversify its cargo base. The Port had one of its biggest economic development wins in its history last month when **Walmart announced plans** to invest \$220 million into a new distribution center in Dorchester County, boosting port volumes by 5%.

S.C. Ports also remains on schedule with its fully funded infrastructure projects. The **Charleston Harbor Deepening Project** is on track to achieve a 52-foot depth, making it the deepest harbor on the East Coast.

Upgrades are ongoing at Wando Welch Terminal in Mount Pleasant. Construction continues at the Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal in North Charleston; the **container terminal is on track** to open in March.

These combined efforts will enable S.C. Ports to handle four 14,000-TEU vessels simultaneously and up to a 19,000-TEU container ship. S.C. Ports has invested heavily to grow its footprint to ensure ample capacity and big-ship capabilities, and those efforts are coming to fruition this fiscal year.

About South Carolina Ports Authority

South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA), established by the state's General Assembly in 1942, owns and operates public seaport and intermodal facilities in Charleston, Dillon, Georgetown and Greer. As an economic development engine for the state, Port operations facilitate 225,000 statewide jobs and generate nearly \$63.4 billion in annual economic activity. SCPA is soon to be home to the deepest harbor on the U.S. East Coast at 52 feet, and the Port is an industry leader in delivering speed-to-market, seamless processes and flexibility to ensure reliable operations, big ship handling, efficient market reach and environmental responsibility. For more information on SCPA, please visit www.scspace.com.

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