

Port of Savannah sets record container, rail and truck moves in February

But Brunswick ro-ro units declined

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Garden City Terminal at the Port of Savannah. (Photo: Georgia Ports Authority)

The Georgia Ports Authority said the Port of Savannah moved 479,850 twenty-foot equivalent units, the busiest February on record and a 6% increase from the same month a year ago.

Authority President and Chief Executive Griff Lynch in a release credited the surge to the port's role as a gateway to the Southeast. Frontloading by importers ahead of planned U.S. tariffs also helped boost U.S. container volumes across major import hubs.

On Feb. 28, the port achieved 2,246 rail lifts, a new record for a 24-hour period, at the Mason Mega Rail Terminal. The hub handles six trains daily or 42 per week, with dwell time of 19-24 hours.

The Garden City Terminal set a new weekly record with 78,950 truck gate transactions in the last week of February. Despite high volumes, the container field remained fluid, with average transaction times of just 35 minutes for single container moves and 54 minutes for dual container moves. The efficiency of dual container moves, accounting for 85% of the port's container business in February, significantly contributed to overall operational smoothness.

The momentum continued into March, with a single-day truck gate record of 16,430 transactions on March 11 at Garden City Terminal.

To further enhance efficiency, Gateway Terminals and the International Longshoremen's Association union local have agreed to add three new start times for vessel operations: 6 a.m., 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.

This expansion to eight total start times, coupled with 24-hour vessel service, is expected to significantly reduce vessel time at dock.

The ILA and United States Maritime Alliance in February signed a new six-year master contract covering 24,000 workers at 14 Eastern Seaboard and Gulf Coast ports.

Savannah is also implementing innovative solutions to increase vessel capacity. Starting in May, a new lay berth at Ocean Terminal will be utilized to stage vessels, dramatically reducing transition times between large ships. This strategy is projected to improve berth availability at Garden City Terminal by up to 75%, potentially allowing the port to handle two more ships per week, or an additional 100 vessels annually.

Looking ahead, a second lay berth at Ocean Terminal is scheduled to come online in mid-2026, further expanding Savannah's vessel capacity.

Port of Brunswick update

The Port of Brunswick faced a slight decline in roll-on/roll-off trade. In February, Brunswick moved 61,667 units of autos and heavy equipment, representing a 10% decrease, or 6,882 units, y/y. The Colonel's Island Terminal in Brunswick handled 42 vessel calls for the month, three fewer than in February 2024.