

JAXPORT

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Local Business Taps into Jacksonville's Port

Every year, Ed Kostenski exports hundreds of pieces of heavy earthmoving and road-building equipment to more than 40 countries. But even Kostenski, president of Jacksonville-based Nationwide Equipment, had never done this before: charter a ship to export 9,000 cubic meters of heavy machinery all at once. This machinery, headed to Liberia, would be the largest such shipment ever exported from Jacksonville to a West African port.

To make it happen, Kostenski searched the East Coast for the used cranes, compactors, bulldozers, excavators and other equipment requested by a major contractor and two smaller companies. He then brought the equipment -- 111 pieces in all -- to Jacksonville and hired 10 subcontractors to help refurbish it. Kostenski hired local trucking companies to deliver the equipment to JAXPORT's Blount Island Marine Terminal, where he had chartered a 400-foot ship, the Scan Nordic, for the voyage. Kostenski and his crew loaded the ship in less than nine hours. The same day at 7:00 p.m., the vessel set sail for the port of Monrovia in Liberia and other West African ports, sealing Kostenski's \$6.5 million sale.

"Jacksonville's deep-water port gives local companies, including mine, a tremendous opportunity to tap into lucra-



Ed Kostenski stands in front of the Scan Nordic at Blount Island, a ship he chartered and filled to complete a \$6.5 million sale of heavy construction equipment to West Africa.

tive export markets," said Kostenski.

Kostenski started Nationwide Equipment in 1983 working from his kitchen table in Arlington. Today, he has 44 employees and a 23-acre recondition facility on New Kings Road. Nationwide specializes in the rental and sales of reconditioned earthmoving and road-building machinery. Kostenski says he is now working on additional major exporting deals -- all through Jacksonville's port.