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N.R. Koeling, North Star win contract for Panama Canal Expansion

SEATTLE, Wash., U.S. 9/8/10 (PennWell) --

Dutch refrigeration specialist N.R. Koeling and U.S. industrial ice equipment manufacturer North Star Ice Equipment Corporation announced that they have won the contract to provide industrial concrete cooling equipment for the expansion of the Panama Canal through the construction of a new set of locks.

The contract was awarded by GUPC, the consortium in charge of designing and building the new set of locks as part of the Panama Canal Expansion Project. The project will create a new lane of traffic and double the canal's capacity.

N.R. Koeling will supply two large ice plants to provide flake ice for the concrete batching and mixing process, one on the Atlantic Ocean side of the Panama Canal and one on the Pacific side. N.R. Koeling's concrete cooling system will include a wet belt cooling system, an ice making and delivery plant, a sand cooling plant, a chilled water plant and an air blast cooling system.

The industrial ice making, handling and storage equipment in the plant is supplied by North Star Ice Equipment. This includes 12 of North Star's largest flake ice makers, four North Star modular ice rakes and eight day tanks, which will be used to meter the ice for each batch of concrete.

Flake ice is an essential ingredient in making the over 5 million cubic meters of concrete necessary for the construction project.

The Panama Canal Expansion involves the construction of a third set of canal locks, which will enable the canal to handle twice the commercial traffic it handles today. In addition, the expansion will allow the canal to accommodate larger "Post Panamax" container vessels, which are now being built. The project includes the construction of two new lock facilities - one on the Atlantic side and another on the Pacific side - each with three chambers and three water reutilization basins; the excavation of new access channels to the new locks and the widening of existing navigational channels; and, the deepening of the navigation channels and the elevation of Gatun Lake's maximum operating level.

"Having worked with leading members of the consortium before, we have the experience required to successfully complete this enormous project," said Walter van den Bos, managing director of N.R. Koeling. "We are honored to be able to deploy our unique knowledge of concrete cooling on a project that will have such a profound impact on the world's transportation system for generations to come."

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