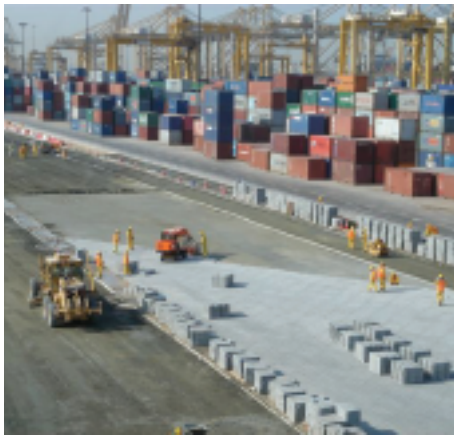

Paving the way for Dubai

A major redevelopment project at Dubai's Jebel Ali Free Zone Port, United Arab Emirates has just been completed. The area provided a major extension to the container storage and handling capabilities of the facility, run by the Dubai Ports Authority. Kerry Evans from PaveZone and Mirage Paving Project Management who was involved in the project, recently spent 12 months as a segmental paving consultant at Hong Kong Disneyland, and notes that pavers are being specified more and more for port redevelopments, especially with asphalt rising in price along with all oil-based products. Although the initial outlay for pavers may be high, they have proven to be very cost effective over a life of at least 25 years, when compared to surfaces such as asphalt. "The lifecycle of concrete unit pavers is likely to be extended even further with the advancements in sand joint stabilising systems such as Resiblock "22" offered by UK-based sealing manufacture Resiblock," observes Evans. Making their debut in the United Arab Emirates, the latest generation of Optimas mechanical paving machines, the Optimas H88 installer, was used to lay the pavers, and says Evans, lived up to the claims by its German manufacturer that the new machines could lay pavers even quicker than previous models. The machines provide drivers with better visibility and improved controls, all of which add up to a faster rate of laying for the job, in this case the installation of 220,000 square meters of unilock paving. Mechanical installation has always been efficient in terms of minimising worker fatigue and delivering a better and more consistent job than hand laying, but in this case the reduced staff requirement for mechanical installation proved to be a huge bonus. Evans, a veteran of more than half a dozen port redevelopment assignments, said it was the first time he had worked on such a project where the day-to-day operation of the port continued right alongside the area under development. With container cranes operating just a meter or two away, it would not have been appropriate for hundreds of men to be laying pavers by hand. New Zealand based Evans was in Dubai consulting for Al-Futtaim Carillion LLC, the key contractor for the redevelopment. The firm had bought two Optimas machines from local agent and Optimas partner, Futuretech Engineering. Evans spent two weeks at the port in December training 20 men in the use of the machines, showing them the best way to maximise productivity with mechanical installation, and efficient job-site preparation. Evans told *World Port Development* that in his opinion laying 800 square meters of pavers with a machine in an eight-hour day is a reasonable work rate. But by the end of the two weeks' training, the Al-Futtaim Carillion team was laying 1000 square meters per day and achieving program targets for the tight schedule. "The clear benefits of mechanical installation were apparent to all involved after just 10,000 square meters of the 220,000 square meters of paving had been laid," he said. Evans concluded that the use of mechanical installation systems for installing large areas of pavers on major projects such as ports is encouraging, with the volume increasing by the year, with speed, the quality of the job, and the savings in labour costs becoming increasingly important considerations for project managers.

New Optimas paving machine model in action

Meet the Al-Futtaim Carillon team