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Chicago freight company signs deal with Bermuda Forwarders

By Alex Wright

Construction companies and furniture sellers will be able to better manage the shipping of their goods into Bermuda, claims the man behind a new distribution service which operates out of Chicago.

Independent Freight International, which is based in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, offers everything from consolidations, full container loads, air freight and warehousing to project and order management, reverse logistics, supply chain, and advice and consultancy services and has just signed a deal with Bermuda Forwarders to distribute goods for companies on the Island.

The Chicago Less than Container Load (LCL) Service will appeal to those working in the construction industry using heavy industrial goods and retailers of furniture which stock bulky products, according to Independent Freight International's president Stewart Brown.

Mr. Brown, who has been dealing with freight for the Bermuda market for about 20 years, first at Kay O'Neill and then, following a takeover, at WLG in the US, mainly handling consolidations from the UK and US, primarily through New Jersey, set up Independent Freight International last year with a group of former WLG employees and is looking to get into the Bermuda marketplace again.

"There is no doubt that people have been doing things a certain way for some time, but now it is time to look at things a little bit differently," he said.

"Some of the businesses here are very sophisticated about it and others do not have the scale to be sophisticated about it and as the local businesses have to become more competitive with the businesses on the mainland, they have to get a little sharper about how they do things.

"We took this opportunity to see how people consolidated their goods in New Jersey, but they have originated from all over the US and Canada.

"We are looking at Chicago effectively as a midway point to the rest of the US."

The cost savings made on transport within the US include 54 percent savings on standard ground transport from Illinois to Chicago, 36 percent from Michigan, 23 percent from Arizona, and 21 percent from California, according to Independent Freight International.

Other benefits include a convenient location, easy management of goods, such as loading at Independent Freight International's facility, offloading in Hamilton's customs-bonded facility, and arrival in just over a week, it said.

The company also claims to offer a damage-free service, with no overpacking required, a direct point-to-point route, the same speed delivery as full container load, a guaranteed shipping schedule, and bonded facilities, with no customs delays, as well having a proven track record of consolidation experience of serving the Island.

"It is ideal for people who are moving something a little bit more bulky, and then it is another consolidation point as an alternative to New Jersey," said Mr. Brown.

"We have had a long relationship with Bermuda Forwarders on a neutral basis in that they handle and strip the containers in Hamilton.

"By using our service, people do not have to overpack it and build up a whole container load, and it is a cost effective, damage-free, reliable, regular and flexible service.

"It is just an additional string to the bow for Bermuda businesses to complement the New Jersey side of operations — the timing is right to do it and we are very keen to move forward with it.

"I have always enjoyed working with the Island and the people here are great to deal with — it is important that we have found a nice little niche for a number of companies here."

To find out more about the Chicago LCL Service Independent Freight International offers, e-mail s.brown@indyfrt.com or visit the website at www.indyfrt.com.