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Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

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Business Connections

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To Promote, Protect and Inform the Business Community

RISKS OF PACKING AND SHIPPING HAZARDOUS GOODS

A new Ship Responsibly program designed to increase awareness of consumers and businesses about the risks related to packing and shipping dangerous goods has been introduced in Lewis County by Mail Plus Chehalis.

"While the overwhelming majority of our customers do not intentionally ship dangerous items, there have been recent incidents where 'hazardous, illegal, prohibited, dangerous and restricted' (HIPDR) goods have threatened the logistic systems of the carriers, including their aircraft and trucks," said Duane Beaver, Manager of Mail Plus Chehalis at 1673 South Market Blvd. Beaver is a member of Associated Mail and Parcel Centers (AMPC), which represents more than 3,300 mail and parcel shipping locations nationally, all of them independently-owned small businesses.

"With heightened awareness about the contents of packages among consumers and businesses as a fact of life today in the United States, our new program also addresses these security concerns," said Beaver. He cited research showing that of 29 million pre-packed parcels presented for shipping at AMPC store member locations, one in 200 contained HAZMAT or prohibited/restricted/illegal contents in a recent 12-month period.

AMPC is also calling for the establishment of a Known Shipper Registry to identify the sources of all packages dropped off for shipment, said Beaver.

The new Ship Responsibly program, now being rolled out across the country, is a major step in providing a solution to the dangerous goods shipping issue, said Beaver, "and we are pleased to be among the first to implement it."

"With the current system of package drop offs and the proliferation among the carriers of 'personal' shipping accounts, it's imperative that we educate our cus-

tomers about the potential problems caused by the shipment of hazardous items," said Beaver, who pointed out that dangerous items are not always easy to recognize.

"For example, certain types of cosmetics are considered hazardous when shipped by air because of their low flashpoints. Also, auto body paint, even in small quantities, which while seeming to be innocuous, is also classified as an HIPDR item when being shipped," he said.

A recent survey revealed "of 29 million prepacked parcels presented for shipping at AMPC store member locations in a recent 12-month period, one in every 200 potentially contained HAZMAT or prohibited/restricted/illegal contents."

"The survey found that among stores that opened and inspected parcels, 68% discovered HAZMAT or prohibited/illegal items being shipped up to 50% of the time," said Beaver, adding that "overall, 76% of our members' stores who open and inspect packages reported discovering hazardous materials or prohibited/illegal items."

"In the absence of clear guidelines from the carriers on shipping HIPDR goods, we can now rely on this new program of disclosure and accountability developed by AMPC that has two major goals: enabling me as a manager of a packing and shipping business to demonstrate consistent due diligence in accepting and tendering packages for shipment, and increasing my customers' awareness of their responsibility to know if the items they are shipping are considered hazardous," said Beaver.

Key to the Ship Responsibly program is package content disclosure by custom-

er shippers. To facilitate this process, the program recommends the establishment of a standard policy requiring disclosure of the contents of pre-packaged parcels presented for shipment, which has been done by Beaver.

Beaver said that AMPC developed the Ship Responsibly program based on extensive consultation with legal experts and industry authorities.

To underscore the problem, Beaver cited dangerous and tragic incidents involving packages shipped by individuals or businesses, without disclosing their contents.

"In July of 1997 a FedEx cargo plane crashed and caught fire at Newark (NJ) International Airport. The FAA finding: ignition of unknown hazardous material. The May 1996 ValuJet crash in the Florida Everglades was attributed to a fire caused by improperly packaged oxygen canisters in the forward cargo hold."

More recently, a tractor battery that was not identified by the company sending it leaked acid in a carrier's logistic system, including aircraft on which it was transported. In another instance, a carrier's driver and others in the vicinity narrowly escaped serious injury when a computer backup power supply exploded as the package in which it was shipped was unloaded from a delivery truck.

"The question of liability in shipping HIPDR goods is vague at best, and the new Ship Responsibly program is a major and much-needed step in protecting both the public and small businesses," he said.

AMPC is also exploring a national Known Shipper registration program. The Known Shipper Registry, that would identify the source of all drop off shipments at retail packing and shipping locations as a major element in minimizing the shipment of HIPDR items.

"Using existing technology the industry can establish a data base to quickly and efficiently verify that a customer is a

known shipper, and confirm the identity of people authorized to ship on a particular account. This is a crucial resource in further protecting the public from the inadvertent, or intentional, shipment of hazardous materials," said Beaver.

Mail Plus Chehalis now displays counter mats and signage with the theme "What's in Your Package? You Might Be Surprised," as well as an HIPDR disclosure notice that details items considered to be hazardous, illegal, prohibited, dangerous or restricted. He also provides his customers with an HIPDR Disclosure and Liability Release Form.

For more information on AMPC's Ship Responsibly program and proposed Known Shipper Registry, call Beaver at 360-748-1488 or contact AMPC at 800-309-2672 or go to www.AMPC.org.

ABOUT AMPC

Associated Mail and Parcel Centers is the largest national trade association for private retail shipping centers, representing more than 3,300 Member-locations across the country.

Founded in 1982, AMPC provides programs of advocacy, information, education/certification, and group representation for small business retailers specializing in mail and parcel shipping services. Its membership roster includes independent and franchise-affiliated (PakMail, Parcel Plus, Postal Connections, Postal Annex, Mailboxes, Etc., PostNet, The UPS Store), mail and parcel centers college and university book stores, auction consignment stores (eBay Trading Assistants), and self-storage centers. Member locations offer a combination of USPS, DHL, UPS, and FedEx shipping, packing services, and related retail and business products.

Membership in AMPC is open to manufacturers, distributors, and retail stores whose businesses provide products and services associated with the mail and parcel shipping industry.

 www.ampc.org

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BUSINESS AFTER HOURS OF THE YEAR



Express Personnel Services hosted their Business After Hours in May 2006 and they were voted the best event of the year. At the event everyone was treated to drinks, hors d'oeuvres, prizes, and received a passport that was marked off at different stations in the office. Each station had a representative with information about what service they offered through Express. Thanks Express Personnel for hosting the fun event and letting us know what your company is all about.