

Trucking brokers at Seoma Transportation serve county and national business clients

By Christina Harper
Special to the SCBJ

Before Keith Papenthien started Seoma Transportation in 2000, he was delivering company products from one place to another in his truck-and-trailer rig.

Then, he found a niche he believed in and started his own business - providing other people's trucks to haul those loads, while he didn't have to spend his day behind a steering wheel.

has goods to deliver but doesn't want to maintain a fleet of their own, they will call Seoma for a truck and driver to pick up and deliver goods to their destination.

Companies like Pacific Paper in Tacoma could go to a larger outfit than Seoma. But Papenthien and Michaud have such good working relationships with their customers that businesses keep coming back for their delivery needs.

too, recently delivering trees to Microsoft founder Bill Gate's home.

When it comes to working locally, Seoma Transportation has a hand in goods that consumers purchase in stores in Snohomish County every day, delivering to such local stores as QFC, Fred Meyer and Safeway.

Costco's Kirkland brand water comes from a city well in Concrete and is bottled in Mount Vernon. Seoma ships the bottles from Mount Vernon to outlets in Washington.

Papenthien, Michaud, and partner Kathleen Kent, Seoma's accountant, have grown their business throughout the years at a steady pace. As well as being focused on business around the country, Seoma Transportation takes pride in working locally, helping those in Snohomish County and the Puget Sound area with their outbound freight and warehouse needs at their facility in Monroe. They are working toward certification of the warehouse as a bonded facility approved for freight storage by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection authorities.

"We will be the first in the county to do that," Papenthien said.


Seoma also has a school where companies can send their employees to learn about the transportation of goods, an effort to help improve the low level of understanding of the intricacies of the freight hauling business.

"There is a lack of education in our business," Papenthien said.

Seoma Transportation has seven full-time employees and from 2006 to 2007 saw a 173 percent growth in their business. Despite high fuel prices, the company is on track to make this year more successful than the last one, Papenthien said.

Good service, good rates, strong relationships with customers and new services such as schooling and warehousing, means there is more to offer new clients and the ones Michaud and Papenthien have been working with for years.

"We want you to come back," Papenthien said. "That's just good business."

For more information, visit www.seomatrucking.com. 



Snohomish County Business Journal/CHRISTINA HARPER

Seoma Transportation, founded in Everett by Lee Michaud (left) and Keith Papenthien in 2000, provides freight shipping services for businesses throughout the nation, including Snohomish County, by lining up trucks and drivers for a variety of deliveries.

It was after finding partner Lee Michaud, a trucking broker, that Papenthien worked out the details of his plan. The two men merged their expertise and the company grew quickly. Today, they have 10,000 trucks at their disposal, delivering freight throughout the nation, from Tacoma to Tucson, Florida to Wyoming. All of their work is handled via the Internet and telephones at any time of the day or night.

"We can log on via a phone," Papenthien said. "Literally, we could be living on a mountain top and doing this."

Jobs are dispatched throughout the United States, including destinations in Mexico and Canada, from the south Everett office at 8620 Holly Drive.

If a company such as Coca-Cola

"They are not in the business of transportation," Papenthien said. "They are in the business of paper towels. They have no fleet."

Seoma Transportation delivers all kinds of goods and products: fish from Alaska to stores throughout the United States, trees from California to Victoria, British Columbia, and oversized and awkward-shaped items such as a recent delivery of a 100-foot long antenna going to Long Beach, Calif.

When wind turbines have to get to Atlanta, Ga, from another state, Seoma delivers. Siemens, one of the company's customers, recently had them deliver an oil tank from California to British Columbia.

The company can make house calls,

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