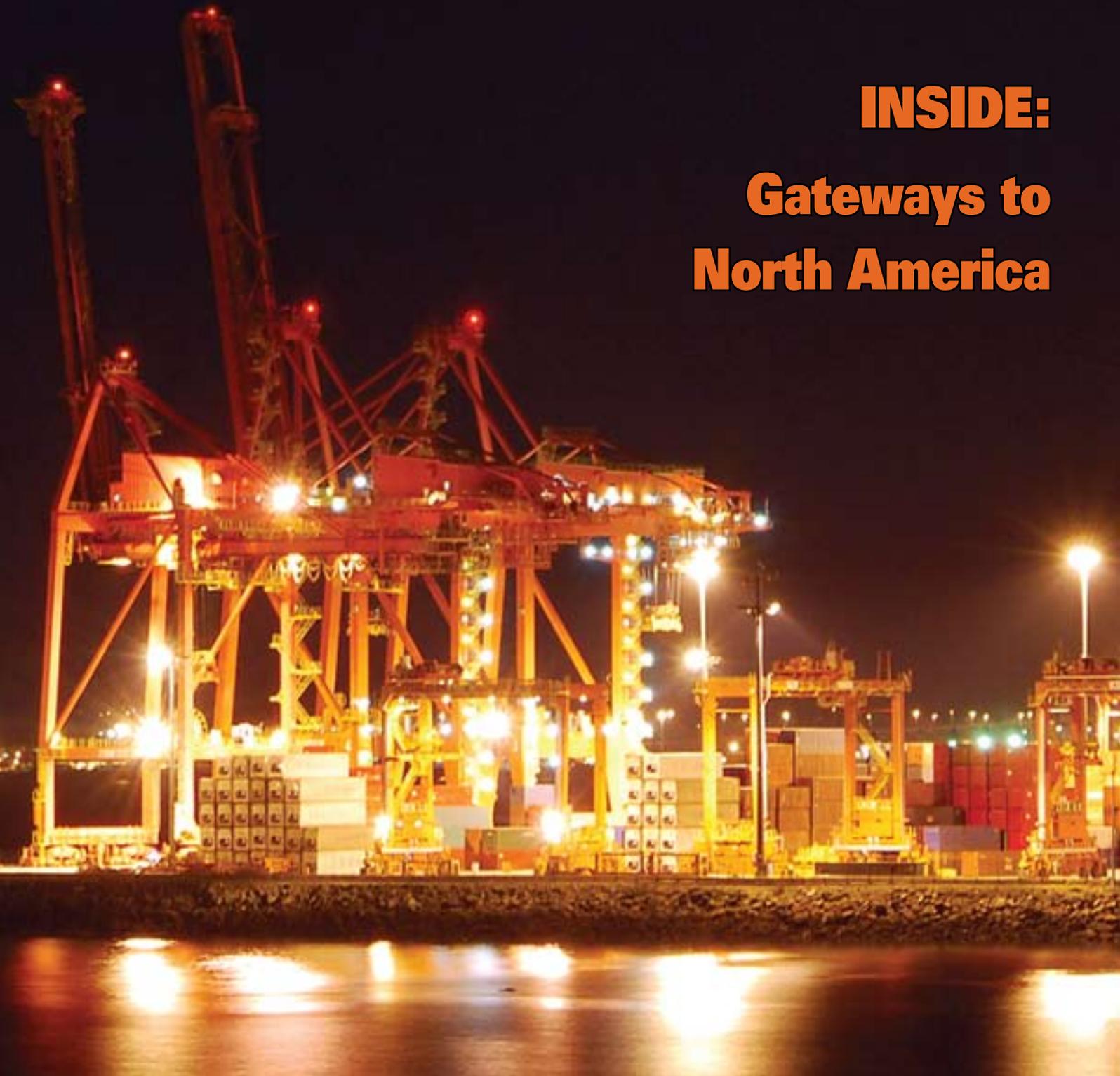


3PL Canada

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INSIDE:

**Gateways to
North America**



FEATURE — Getting Vested: Changing the Rules

Building a Warehousing Business from Scratch

By Kim Walker

How IWLA resources helped Service Freight Systems expand into the 3PL industry

SERVICE FREIGHT SYSTEMS INC., based in Burlington, Ont., has been in the transportation logistics business since 1995, when Randy Stanbury started a home-based company with one employee: his father, Bob. Quick growth led to a need for more people and, within a couple of years, more space. The company moved to a single unit at its current location in 1997 and has taken over adjacent units in the years since. The majority of Service Freight's transportation services are provided in North America, over-the-road transportation across the border, domestically and within the U.S. It also offers rail, air and overseas services. The company now employs 25 people in its logistics business, along with seven in its warehouse.

In 2004, Stanbury decided to explore the possibility of expanding his business in order to provide warehousing and inventory-management services. Although this was a logical move for his company, it was one he knew very little about. While confident in his management team and infrastructure, Stanbury knew that he and his staff had much to learn to ready the company for taking on work in this new area.

Stanbury joined the International Warehouse Logistics Association (IWLA) in 2004, then began the process of learning that prepared him to start his warehousing operation three years later. According to Stanbury, the IWLA provided all that he needed to become a player in the industry.

Starting with the annual conference in 2004, held that year in Orlando, Stanbury has attended numerous IWLA conferences and courses, including, in 2005 alone, three focused respec-

tively on marketing and sales, information technology and logistics-management essentials. In 2006, he participated in the association's Costs, Rates and RFP Responses course, which provided, he says, a means to "understand and capture all costs to intelligently price projects as they arise." Stanbury credits the IWLA with teaching him critical setup and process information that he required to get started. Armed with such information, Stanbury was able to establish standard operating procedures that the company's warehouse employees have used since the outset.

Because of his approach to building the warehouse side of his business, which, in the beginning, focused on his own learning and preparation, in most cases it was Stanbury himself who participated in IWLA events and courses. In time, he used the information he gained at these events to train and develop the knowledge of his staff.

In addition to the information he gathered at these first events, Stan-



Randy Stanbury

bury gained important contacts that he found enormously helpful as he ramped up his business. Networking with fellow event attendees through the years has certainly been useful, but there's more to it than that. Not only did he learn on site from "top-level people in the industry"; Stanbury has also been able to maintain connections with some of these subject-matter experts, people he likely wouldn't otherwise have met or had access to. Acquiring mentors from among the course educators has been a real bonus for Stanbury; he has developed long-term relationships with several of them and benefited from their willingness to answer questions long after the end of the courses they taught. He feels like the fortunate recipient of inside information, the sort that can't be found in books.

Once he was ready to launch his warehousing business, Stanbury did so without so much as a single client or a pallet. It took many months to fill the space in his 40,000-square-foot facility, from which the company now serves clients mainly in the dry-food, pet-food, packaging,



footwear and consumer-goods industries, providing a complete range of customized, value-added services. It was a "difficult climb," acknowledges Stanbury, probably at least some of which can be attributed to timing related to the recession.

Service Freight continues to find IWLA tools useful. Stanbury refers to the Canadian Standard Contract Terms and Conditions for Merchandise Storers or Warehouses document on a regular basis, makes frequent use of the website's Logistics Services Locator, and gleans information from emailed bulletins. Networking remains a significant interest.

While the IWLA may not play such a vital role in the development of all 3PLs as it has for Service Freight Systems, it's clear that the association offers valuable resources

that can aid a company wherever it happens to be in its business life cycle. Whether you're just getting started or are well-established and need to upgrade employees' skills, the IWLA provides information and tools designed to meet your requirements.

As Stanbury notes, for Service Freight to bring a full solution of logistics services to its clients, it needed to expand into warehousing. In doing so, he says, the company has "truly reached our goal of becoming 'an essential link in your supply chain' for each and every one of our valued customers."

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VESTED from page 17 resources, tools and insights offered by the authors.

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