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Motorcycle shipping company plans \$4.5 million expansion

Rich Rovito

A Milwaukee motorcycle shipping company is undertaking a \$4.5 million expansion to meet the growing demand to haul motorcycles throughout the country and to deliver bikes purchased on the Internet.

Daily Direct L.L.C. plans to add 30 semitrailers to its existing fleet of eight by the end of 2004. Ten more semitrailers are expected to be on the road by early 2005, said Ken Durik, Daily Direct's part-owner and national sales director.

An order for the 40 semitrailers has been placed with Stoughton-based Stoughton Trailers L.L.C., which is expected to deliver one per week over a 40 week-period beginning in April, Durik said.

Daily Direct plans to open satellite facilities in Denver, Kansas City, Mo., and Nashville, Tenn., in 2004. The company also plans to add terminals in several other cities in 2005, including Albuquerque, N.M.; Dallas; Las Vegas; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Scranton, Pa.; Tallahassee, Fla.; Twin Falls, Idaho; and Wilmington, N.C.

"People are expecting to get things faster and faster," said Steve Kohlmann, Daily Direct's marketing director. "We will make deliveries out of those hubs to gain efficiency."

An additional 50 semitrailers could be added to support the second phase

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of expansion, according to the company.

Once the second phase is completed, Daily Direct plans to be able to deliver a motorcycle to any site in the country in seven to 10 days, compared with 10 to 14 days, said Tim Evans, Daily Direct's general manager.

An ongoing boom in the sale of motorcycles via the Internet as well as the increasing popularity of custom-made cycles has helped boost Daily Direct's business. Daily Direct shipped about 4,000 motorcycles in 2003. Annual shipments are expected to jump to about 27,500 once the 40 new semitrailers are in service, company officials said.

Increasing sales

The expansion is expected to nearly quadruple Daily Direct's annual revenue, to \$6 million in 2004 from \$1.6 million in 2003, said Jeff Lloyd, owner of Lloyd Transportation/Quality Carriers, Pleasant Prairie, who Durik took on as an investor in 2001 along with Bulk Resources Inc. of Plant City, Fla. Durik, Lloyd and Bulk Resources each has an equal ownership stake in the company.

Bulk Resources, a manufacturer of transportation equipment, is funding the purchase of the new custom-made, two-tier semitrailers, which cost about \$80,000 apiece, Lloyd said. Bulk Resources, in turn, will lease the semitrailers to Daily Direct.

"They have the capital to take care of this internally," Durik said.

Daily Direct will use bank debt to pay for the cost of establishing the new terminals.

The company currently has 14 employees, including eight full-time truck drivers who earn an average of \$65,000 to \$68,000 per year, Durik said. Employment is expected to double as a result of the expansion.

Instead of hiring additional truck drivers, the company plans to enter into exclusive agreements with truckers who own their own rigs, Durik said. This will save the company the cost of investing in rigs of its own, he said.

Daily Direct hauls truckloads of motorcycles to rallies across the country.

"They've hauled me to Sturgis, they've hauled me to Daytona," said Bill Baesemann, owner of KingsWay Homes & Realty in Elm Grove.

Daily Direct's customers have included Peter Fonda, Queen Latifah, Kyle Petty and Milwaukee Brewers' broadcaster Bob Uecker.

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