



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JUNE 2019**

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### **D+S Distribution Meets Demands & Challenges for Local Cartage**

**WOOSTER**-Short-haul, rapid response fulfillment, or local cartage, is in demand. There are two sides to the challenge, private fleet and a dedicated contract carrier. While some businesses choose to establish their own private fleet, industry experts like Bart DeMuynck, a research VP for transportation technology at Gartner, warns companies not specialized in transportation operations and lack expert personnel and resources to manage it, run the risk of higher costs.

D+S Distribution, through its affiliate Integrated Logistics Services (ILS), meets the need for many local businesses. The fleet drivers regularly travel within a 250-mile radius of the home base in Wooster, Ohio answering the call for same-day deliveries. ILS covers the freight over and above what the fleet can handle using partner carriers.

Customer service and cost play into the local cartage arena, according to **Esther Kulenich, Director of Transportation Operations at ILS and D+S**. "A 24-hour notice is a lot in local cartage. It's usually *I need it now* pace. Time is also crucial. Trucks need to be in and out of the dock in 30 minutes to keep pace with the day's schedule," added Kulenich.

Local cartage amounts to nearly 20 percent of the fleet's business which is on track with the national average according to Kulenich. Growth is mostly organic and comes through referrals from satisfied customers. A portion of the business is servicing existing warehouse customers.

The men and women who do this hauling must be flexible and embrace the work because things can turn on a dime according to **Valerie Jackson, Dispatch Supervisor at ILS**. "There's a schedule – and then there are changes," Jackson said with a smile. Jackson has been inside the transportation industry for almost 25 years. In-house she is referred to as the traffic cop.

Jackson sits behind three flat screens with multiple programs running simultaneously. She directs 16 drivers who will easily clock 10,000 miles per week. Drivers receive the day's first assignment at 5:00 p.m. the day before. From there, all bets are off. Some drivers have dedicated trips for specific customers but even that can change according to Jackson. "Nothing ever stays the same. It's crazy but never dull," said Jackson.

A bad day for local cartage and the team is when a truck breaks down, especially when it's out of state and not a sleeper. A good day according to Jackson is when everyone gets home safely and all of the customers have been serviced. A challenging day for the drivers is a vacation day for Jackson and **Gene Whipkey, Transportation Operations Manager** sits in the dispatch chair ribbed **Jim Gardner, a fleet driver with two years at D+S.**

Whipkey is a seasoned veteran inside the transportation industry with 20-plus years under his belt. He supervises the drivers and works directly with the 50 to 100 D+S local cartage customers. The easy bantering with the drivers is part of the fun according to Whipkey. "We have a great group of drivers. They are flexible and really work hard to service the customer. They are quick to help each other too. When a location is new to a driver he calls someone more familiar with the site for information. The results are a better experience for our customers," said Whipkey.

While there is strong competition for long-haul drivers, finding drivers for local cartage is a bit easier according to Whipkey. Drivers are home each night with a few overnight exceptions. The schedule offers a better work-life balance for the driver and his family. "Our drivers are the face of our company and D+S is the private fleet for our customers," said Whipkey.

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