

Minimax Forwarders has two new locations

Company moves into new office and warehouse to benefit customers

BY SIRKKA HUISH
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Minimax Forwarders has expanded its operations with not one, but two new locations to make life easier for its customers.

The import and export company relocated to a new and more convenient office at 53 Union Street, Hamilton on the same day it took lease of a new warehouse in St. George's.

Owner/ manager Casey Burgess followed the company's 'Make a move with us' motto as he moved into the office and the warehouse on January 1, 2008.

It's been a busy couple of months for the team, but staff members have now settled into their new homes ready to continue serving the community with the importing of goods.

Mr. Burgess, who set up the company nearly 24 years ago, said: "It all happened for us at the same time, but that's been a good thing.

"It's been a challenge for us opening the new office and the warehouse, but we're now on track and are looking to the future."

The Hamilton branch office of Minimax Forwarders has relocated from Court Street to just round the corner, right next to the BIU office, and offers the added convenience of remaining within the heart of the city with plenty of off-road parking.

And the closure of Hamilton Docks at the end of December, 2007 means that all ocean freight containers now have to be transported to warehouses and stripped for distribution.

Minimax's new warehouse on Kindley Field Road, right next to the L.F. Wade International Airport in St. George's provides 3,000 sq ft of secure space and provides the company with the opportunity to

Minimax Forwarders

■ Air Freight and Ocean Freight offices, Civil Air Terminal, 3 Cahow Way, St. George's.
Call: 293-1101

■ Hamilton office
53 Union Street.
Next to the BIU office.

■ Warehouse
Kindley Field Road, next to the L.F. Wade International Airport,
St. George's.

■ The offices are open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

■ Email owner Casey Burgess at casey-burgess@excite.com

■ Visit the website at www.minimaxforwarders.com

store customers' goods until collection or delivery.

Both the ocean freight and air freight branch offices at the Civil Air Terminal, Cahow Way, St. George's, remain open as usual.

Mr. Burgess said: "There is no longer any stripping of containers at the docks so we had to go to find a warehouse where we now take the containers to strip them. They come in off the boat, clear customs and come direct to us and we strip them ourselves locally."

The controversial decision to close the number 7 shed originally raised as few eyebrows as about 37 cargo containers arrive in Bermuda each week.

But Mr. Burgess said Minimax Forwarders had



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUISH

MAKE A MOVE WITH US: Owner of Minimax Forwarders Casey Burgess opened up a new office in Hamilton and a warehouse in St. George's on the same day.

teamed up with Air Cargo Expeditors of New York to provide a much faster service to customers, with the inclusion of new convenient import routes including Miami, Florida.

He said: "We were a little worried about how things would pan out at first, but with this new system the process is much quicker and more efficient for the customer."

"Our truck drivers had become accustomed to waiting for hours at the docks, and this new system eliminates that."

It takes a couple of hours to unload a container and the company unloads an

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■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUISH

NEW HOME: A sign sits outside Minimax Forwarders' warehouse in St. George's.



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUIISH

MUCH-NEEDED SPACE: Minimax Forwarders has had to lease a warehouse in St. George's to strip containers after the closure of Hamilton Docks at the end of last year.



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUIISH

CONVENIENT LOCATION: Minimax Forwarders' new office is in Union Street in the heart of Hamilton and has plenty of parking.

MINIMAX: 'You don't need to clear Customs, we will do all the hard work for you'

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average of two containers a week. The containers can contain absolutely anything, from furniture, retail and wholesale goods to bulky items like cars.

Mr. Burgess added: "We're looking to increase the number of containers. We're always looking for more work."

After all Mr. Burgess knows just how crucial exporting and importing goods is to island life. He said: "We're an island, everything has to come in by boat or air to get to us."

As well as ocean and air freight the company also offers customs clearance, commercial and residential moving and trucking. Mr. Burgess explained: "All

these services are all part of the same business."

"They are happy to clear goods through customs and pay the duty, before delivering to the customer's door with the appropriate custom documentation.

Order online

Mr. Burgess said all the customer had to do was or-

der what they wanted online, as the company would do the rest.

He said: "No-one wants to be bothered with going to the airport to clear customs, it can sometimes take half a day to do just that, so we do all the hard work for them.

"People can just order online and give out our address. We'll pick it up, clear

customs and truck it out to a home address. It couldn't be easier."

Mr. Burgess stressed that customers could choose to use all or just some of their services. For example, they will happily deliver goods even if they are in another forwarding company's container and vice versa.

"Whatever we deliver goes out the same day. What

we don't move, stays in the warehouse until it is collected. We deliver or the customer collects, it's up to them." Mr. Burgess explained.

The company also has a yard in Tee Street, Devonshire, which is used for storage and stripping containers when needed. ■

"We'll pick it up, clear customs and truck it out to a home address. It couldn't be easier."

CASEY BURGESS

Owner, Minimax Forwarders

'Thanks Dad, you spotted a great business opportunity'

Minimax owner says it was his late father who noticed a gap in the market

BY SIRKKA HUISH
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Owner Casey Burgess has his father to thank for getting him into the forwarding business.

Today Mr. Burgess knows the workings of Minimax Forwarders inside out having been at the helm for nearly 24 years.

But back in 1983 (a much younger) Mr. Burgess set up a business he knew very little about — simply because his late father noticed a gap in the market.

Mr. Burgess said: "My father approached me about getting into the forwarding business. He worked at the airport in the air freight department and he saw an opportunity for a business.

"That's how it all began, it was down to my father. I didn't know how things would turn out, but of course I wanted it to be a success."

But he added: "It really doesn't seem like 24 years ago, the time has gone so quick, it just feels like a few years.

"Perhaps because I enjoy

it, I like meeting new people, dealing with customers and all the challenges that it brings."

Business started off slowly for Minimax Forwarders with just one van and one customer; Sound Stage Records in Washington Mall.

But Mr. Burgess was determined to make the company a success and that is just what he did. He said: "I used to go out and hustle to get work and it picked up pretty quick."

The company now has three trucks and a van, not to mention lots of big-name clients such as the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital. The forwarders bring in the much-needed medications and supplies for the hospital.

They also do a lot of work for the government, the island's major hotels such as Cambridge Beaches and schools including Saltus, Warwick Academy and Bermuda High School for Girls.

Mr. Burgess said: "The amount of customers we have proves the level of

trust the community has in us. But we never forget the small local businesses, we're very happy to continue to work with them as they got us started."

Minimax Forwarders now employs five full-time staff, plus numerous on-call staff who are brought in to help strip containers when needed.

Mr. Burgess normally works out of the Union Street office in Hamilton, but he also spends time at the warehouse in St. George's.

Crucial role

The first person Mr. Burgess employed as the business was getting off the ground was Dean Lighthourn, who is manager of the St. George's ocean freight office. He is crucial to the smooth day-to-day running of the company with Mr. Burgess saying: "He's so important to Minimax."

While Anthony Binns, who has been at the company for about 11 years, is in charge at the neighbouring



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUISH

LONG-TERM EMPLOYEE: Dean Lighthourn is manager of the ocean freight office in St. George's. He was the first person employed at Minimax Forwarders nearly 24 years ago.

air freight office at St. George's.

And with the company's recent expansion of operations with a new Hamilton office and a new St. George's warehouse, Mr. Burgess and his team remain dedicated to the cause.

They aim to "serve all clients with an excellent, fast-paced service" and provide all the best possible solutions for people's transportation needs.

And Mr. Burgess insists it doesn't stop there as he has bigger and better plans for the company, although he is keeping them under wraps for the time being. He is however keen to keep Minimax Forwarders "in the family" and therefore hopes the business will be eventually passed it down to his 21-year-old son Keane Smith.

But in the meantime, he insists: "I'm really looking forward to the future, I remain very positive about the business." ■



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUISH

READY TO SERVE YOU: Minimax Forwarders employee Anthony Binns can be found at the air freight office in St. George's.

'It has made things so much easier'

Minimax Forwarders teams up with Air Cargo Expeditors of New York

BY SIRKKA HUIISH
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Minimax Forwarders prides itself on its hands-on approach after teaming up with an overseas company to provide customers with a better service.

At the beginning of the year the Bermuda forward-

ing company announced it was joining forces with Air Cargo Expeditors of New York.

Minimax Forwarders are now the local agent for all the American company's air and ocean freight in what they have called a "logical and cost effective move."

The partnership means customers should not be getting their ocean freight any later than four days after it arrives in Bermuda.

On a day to day basis staff at Minimax Forwarders work alongside San Bezzant, the Bermuda representative for Air Cargo Expeditors. It is his job to handle all the Bermuda paperwork and consignments for his overseas employer.

The company, which has three warehouses in New York, has been delivering to Bermuda for more than 30 years but has only recently taken on Mr. Bezzant as the "middle man."

Direct liaison

Mr. Bezzant said: "They used to handle all the paperwork from New York but that was the problem, there was no direct liaison between New York and Bermuda."

"There was no easy access to the paperwork so phone calls had to keep being made to New York."

"Things were always being chased back and forth and with the time difference there were delays."

Mr. Bezzant compares then and now to the old carrier pigeon days versus today's computerized world. Both companies are a lot



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUIISH

WORKING AS A TEAM: Casey Burgess of Minimax Forwarders and San Bezzant of Air Cargo Expeditors work closely together.

happier with the new arrangement, and they strongly believe it is the customers who benefit most.

Mr. Bezzant said: "It makes things so much easier, if something goes wrong I can help right away. It's much more hands-on."

"We now have full control of the shipments and can

ease up any delays. We prevent any difficulties before they arise and make sure everything is concise for customers."

The companies also offer a consolidation service to help ease the burden of the complicated process of buying overseas from different companies. For example, if a customer orders one

thing from one store and another thing from another store, they can request that they are delivered together.

Mr. Bezzant said: "We consolidate the shipments and bring people's orders together. People take advantage of this by ordering different things at the same time. It's a much better service." ■



■ PHOTO BY SIRKKA HUIISH

STORAGE SPACE: Casey Burgess and San Bezzant at Minimax Forwarders' warehouse