



Special delivery

Team charts course for environmentally responsible shipping **By Bill Seil and photos by Mike Goettings**

This is another in a series of articles focusing on how Boeing employees across the enterprise are supporting the company's wide-ranging commitment to environmental stewardship.

The idea came from a team of employees known to friends and colleagues as the Green Hornets.

And it changed how shipping companies do business with Boeing. Environmental criteria now are part of the bidding process for shipping contracts.

In the past, "when we reviewed past bids for carriers and freight forwarders, we noticed that nowhere within our criteria did we request information on environmentally responsible business practices," said Rob Bohr, a Supply Chain Logistics manager for Shared Services in Mesa, Ariz., who led the project.

"There was nothing to indicate whether the bidder was involved in renewable energy, recycling or similar activities."

Bohr is a member of the enterprisewide Supply Chain Logistics employee environmental team, which was formed in late 2009. It quickly identified the shipping issue as one of its primary projects.

The idea of including environmental criteria was clearly a good one, Bohr said, noting that it supports the company's five-year environmental targets. The challenge came in finding a way to measure a bidder's environmental practices, allowing fair and accurate comparisons.

In researching the issue, team members soon found that they needed to expand their base of expertise. That led to help from volunteers from Global Trade Controls and Supplier Management.

The team started by building a spreadsheet that listed criteria it could use to evaluate bidders on the basis of their environmental capabilities. "We came up with about 15 different categories," Bohr said. "We then went on to 'data-mine' the categories to determine how they could be measured."

At the end of this process, the team found one seemingly insurmountable problem: Was there a practical way to ensure that a bidder was, in fact, following the environmental practices described in the bid?

Further study led to an effective and relatively simple solution. Bidders would be asked to prove certification under the SmartWay Transport Partnership, a collaboration between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the freight industry. It focuses on reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and improving fuel efficiency. Like all Boeing suppliers, bidders also are asked to prove they have an environmental management system appropriate for their business.

The expanded team took the idea to Contracts Management, which agreed to include the criteria in future contracts bid packages. Although contract awards still will be decided on the basis of cost and other business requirements, these environmental credentials can be a factor in instances where final bids are close.

Environmentally responsible practices are already applied to many Boeing shipments. The new criteria were just introduced, so it will take time to calculate the impact of the change. But it could be substantial, since Boeing is involved in nearly 2 million shipments each year.

Recently, a special shipping configuration designed by Mesa Supply Chain Logistics and the environmental team allowed the transport of four AH-64D Apache helicopters from Mesa to an international customer on one Russian AN-124 cargo aircraft. By sending them all on one aircraft instead of delivering each one on a separate flight, the environmental impact and transport costs were reduced by about 75 percent. ■

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PHOTOS: (Above) One of four AH-64D Apache helicopters headed to an international customer is staged for loading into an Antonov AN-124 cargo aircraft in Mesa, Ariz.

(Insets) The view from inside the freighter during loading of the AH-64D Apaches. Sending all four helicopters on one trip instead of shipping them on separate flights helped reduce transport costs and environmental impact.