



KANSAS CITY IS LOGISTICALLY CONNECTED

KANSAS CITY THE LOGISTICS SITE OF CHOICE

Kansas City's centralized location – almost dead-center in the middle of the U.S. – has rewarded it with a booming transportation and logistics industry. No matter the product or its size, shippers can get it to market in a jiffy, using multiple transportation modes.

“If you have a single distribution center, then you can get pretty much anywhere in the country in two to three days from Kansas City, whether you ship full truckloads or small parcels. If you go just even a little bit east of here, that’s not the case,” said Tim Lanter, Regional Vice President for GEODIS, a contract logistics provider.

Kansas City is also a major air freight hub, and is served by five of the seven Class I railroads. The various intermodal parks and all the rail traffic – second-most in the nation and first in tonnage – make it **an ideal location.**

The parcel business is a large part of what GEODIS offers as a third-party logistics (3PL) provider, and the company actively works to promote that segment.

“When it comes to parcel shipments, nine times out of ten, Kansas City’s name pops up in logistics studies,” Tim said. ***“That’s why you see Amazon establishing such a strong presence in this area.”***



“Parcel is our biggest growth area, and that means e-commerce shipments directly to the consumer. However, that is also very labor intensive, as someone has to pull the item, package and label it, and ship it.”

Competing for that labor force can be an issue, said Jason Lanter, Senior Director of Operations, especially in the third quarter of the year as businesses are ramping up for the Christmas season.

“It used to be retailers competed for seasonal workers – now it’s the logistics business,” Jason said.

GEODIS (www.geodis.us) offers a variety of services including warehousing, order fulfillment, route optimizing, transportation management and full contract logistics for truckload, LTL, ocean, intermodal, parcel and specialty shipments. They have 1.5 million square feet of warehousing in the Kansas City area, including one underground facility in the limestone caves for which this area is famous. In the U.S., GEODIS has around 140 facilities totaling 40 million square feet.

Jason said GEODIS also offers value-added services to its 3PL and order fulfillment business.

“We’ll mix pallets or rebox and relabel product if a customer desires. We can disassemble and reassemble product, and provide point-of-service display building for customers. We also provide health inspection services for products, ensuring that they meet various compliance criteria.”

TECHNOLOGY CAUSING MAJOR SHIFTS

Although labor can be an issue at times, robotics are certainly having an impact on the logistics industry, and that will only increase with time, according to Steve Flamez, Vice President of Operations.

“More and more mechanization, robotics and automation are working their way into the warehousing, order fulfillment and logistics industry,” Steve said. “Some of our facilities have ‘put walls’ where lights show the worker where to put items in boxes very quickly. That system has certainly helped to reduce needed workforce and has sped up the fulfillment process.”

Mobile apps are also changing the way logistics are performed, and Steve said that is already a key component of GEODIS’ operational process.

“Mobile apps help establish protocol, best practices and safety. It can increase visibility into what is occurring in the warehouse and automatically push reports when needed,” Steve said. “We’re already paperless on the floor of the warehouse, as everything we do is scanner-based. This produces dashboards that help us see in real time what is happening, as well as better understand worker performance and process adherence.”

All that data helps the company make smart choices.

“The advances in equipment allows for more business analytics,” Steve said. “The data will drive more decisions, all for the betterment of our customers.”