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Management Update
Source: Logistics Management

- The virtual supply chain is a utopian view*, says Dr. Mahender Singh. The researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Transportation and Logistics came to that conclusion after an exhaustive review of predictions for the future of supply chain management. Singh noted that a prevalent view in recent supply chain literature is that supply chain partners will create virtual organizations, and the customer will take total control of the creation and delivery of services. But Singh cautions that friction between a supply chain's "working parts" will inhibit this development at least through 2020. "It is difficult to imagine a supply chain that will share risks and rewards objectively among its constituents," he said.
- Mergers and acquisitions continue to roil the supply chain software industry*. Last month Sterling Commerce, a maker of collaborative applications, said it signed a deal to purchase software vendor Yantra Corp. for about \$170 million in cash. Yantra offers warehouse management and fulfillment systems. The acquisition follows on the heels of last month's acceptance by PeopleSoft of a purchase offer from software giant Oracle.
- Privatization in China makes a great leap forward* as UPS takes direct control of its international express operations. UPS will pay Sinotrans, its longtime partner, \$100 million to assume control of operations in 23 Chinese cities this year. The deal kicks off this month in five locations: Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin, and Qingdao. The agreement will allow UPS to set up its own shop before China opens some markets to foreign companies, as required by the World Trade Agreement.
- Independent truckers have come out swinging* against electronic on-board recorders. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) strongly opposed electronic monitoring of truck drivers in its filing with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The agency is considering mandating the use of so-called "black boxes" to enforce hours-of-service (HOS) rules that limit driving time for truckers. OOIDA contends that electronic monitoring would violate the Fourth Amendment because it would constitute an illegal search and infringe on individuals' right to privacy. OOIDA also said demands from carriers, brokers, and shippers place the greatest pressure on drivers to violate HOS rules.
- Could you use the services of a logistics-savvy intern?* If so, contact the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (formerly the Council of Logistics Management). The Oak Brook, Ill., group is once again sponsoring a summer intern program for students of logistics and will post internship opportunities on its website, www.cscmp.org. For more information on how to participate in the program, contact Patricia O'Rourke-McGinnis at 630-645-3479 by the end of this month.
- Is your company on the leading edge of logistics innovation?* Then enter our Logistics Best Practices contest. The editors of *Logistics Management* will choose the most exemplary stories from among readers' submissions, then profile the winning entries in the pages of the magazine. The Gold Award winner will receive an iPod music player and will be featured on the cover of our June issue. Submissions are due by February 14. For rules and an entry form, go to www.lmsurveys.com/bestpractices.
- Mexican and Canadian truck drivers should be fingerprinted if Americans are required to do so.* That's the position staked out by National Tank Truck Carriers, a trade group that represents some 200 bulk motor carriers. The group made those remarks in comments on a Transportation Security Administration proposal to use fingerprints when conducting background checks on drivers seeking hazmat endorsements for commercial drivers licenses. NTTC is also urging the federal government to postpone fingerprinting or else use a name-based background check.

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- *Expedited freight volumes should pick up this year*, predicts the Colography Group. The Atlanta-based market research firm says expedited revenue should reach \$87.6 billion, a 4.2-percent increase from 2004. Colography forecasts the U.S. expedited cargo market, which it defines as domestic air, air exports, ground parcel, and less-than-truckload shipments, will move 6.76 billion shipments this year. The market should benefit from a recovering U.S. economy, accelerating trade with China, and continued replenishment of low inventories, says President Ted Scherck.
- *Honors for the nation's busiest freight gateway go to the Port of Los Angeles.* According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, L.A. handled an estimated \$106 billion in imports and \$17 billion in exports in 2003. That was \$10 billion more than perennial winner JFK International Airport in New York, which fell to second place. In third place was the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, the largest gateway for U.S.-Canada trade, with \$102 billion in international shipments.
- *Looking for the lowdown on a motor carrier?* Then you might want to check out a new website, www.truckersontheweb.com. Transportation Technical Services (TTS) has set up the online directory of some 2,600 U.S. and 400 Canadian trucking companies. Companies qualified for inclusion by filing an annual report with the U.S. Department of Transportation as well as responding to the publisher's own survey. Access to the site is free and no registration is required.
- *Shippers who need to get the scoop on the latest regulatory developments* should consider attending a gathering of transportation claims and legal professionals this spring. The Transportation Consumer Protection Council (TCPC) and the Transportation Loss Prevention and Security Association (TLP&SA) will hold a joint conference March 20–23 in San Diego. TCPC represents shippers' regulatory interests, while TLP&SA primarily serves the trucking industry. For more information, go to www.transportlaw.com or e-mail to tcpc@transportlaw.com.
- *The government of Taiwan is willing to help pay for widening the Panama Canal.* President Chen Shui-bian made that offer to Panama's government last month. A capacity boost for the Canal, promised by Panamanian President Martin Torrijos, would help Taiwanese and other Asian exporters move their goods to market faster. Panama's infrastructure plans have taken on greater importance as more shippers bypass congested West Coast ports and move inbound cargo from Asia via the Panama Canal to East Coast ports. For more on that trend, see "Tight Squeeze" on Page 45.
- *Stumped by a logistics term?* The *APICS Dictionary* probably has the answer. APICS—The Association for Operations Management has released the 11th edition of its print dictionary and an illustrated version on CD-ROM. Each contains more than 3,500 industry terms used in logistics, supply chain management, and manufacturing. To obtain a copy, call APICS at (800) 444-2742 or click on the Online Bookstore at www.apics.org.

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