

# MTC service offers help to shippers

By Bill Horne

During their start-up periods, small businesses often face some fierce competition.

Statistics have shown, in fact, that whether a new business sinks or swims is usually determined within the first couple of years of operation.

To assist small businesses, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication has initiated a program called Physical Distribution Consulting Services.

The program's purpose is to help small businesses by reducing their distribution costs.

In the past, distribution problems encountered by Northern businesses were handled in southern Ontario, but results were poor.

The need for a second office was apparent and so in August 1985 a second office opened in Thunder Bay, thus splitting Northern Ontario into two territories.

Peter Dudka is Wilcox's counterpart in Thunder Bay. Dudka's territory stretches from the Manitoba border east to Longlac, while Wilcox's extends from Longlac to the Quebec border, north to James and Hudson's Bays and south to Parry Sound.

"Initially things were slow," said Wilcox, although he travelled extensively for the first year. "What I was doing was introducing myself and the program to chambers of commerce and to economic development groups in the North."

## Established

Now that the program has become well established and more and more businesses know of the services that are available the calls for help are steadily increasing.

"Right now I'm actually operating out of two offices," said Wilcox. "This one here in Timmins and one in the Sault."

He hinted that a third office may be slated in Sault Ste. Marie in the near future, but that nothing has been finalized yet.

It is easy to see why requests for their services continue to grow. By simply picking up the phone, any business in Northern Ontario can obtain practical advice on any of their goods distribution problems.

"Transportation is the third highest cost of doing business," said Wilcox. This factor is compounded by the fact that "many

small- and medium-sized businesses have one man who has to wear three or four hats. These guys are just spread too thinly."

Dudka agreed that sometimes the job of distributing goods is not given proper attention.

"You ask some businessmen what their transportation bill is for the year and they can't tell you. So we may encourage them to start up an accounting system that isolates transportation costs."

If a company's problem is not too complex, an attempt will be made to resolve the matter over the phone. If the problem is more complicated, a personal interview can be arranged at the client's place of business.

Wilcox said "many people who call for help lack the knowledge of various alternative modes of transportation available to them. They're probably used to dealing with the established larger carriers, but now there are smaller and specialized carriers."

Although the program is umbrella titled under physical distribution, the service they provide applies to a much wider spectrum than one might first imagine. Wilcox said the different aspects of the business that they look at includes bringing in the raw materials, warehousing, packaging and shipping.

Both Wilcox and Dudka have wide-ranging backgrounds in distribution and business expertise but obtaining the least expensive form of shipping for

their clients is their primary concern.

Wilcox said "a lot of the work that I'm dealing with is concerned with exports. Since deregulation in the States all kinds of opportunities of shipping into and out of the States exist."

He explained that large trucking companies and tariff bureaus kept the competition out of the northern States and therefore

added to the cost of shipping.

A common complaint by shippers in Northern Ontario is that the cost of freight rates is too high. That may be changing soon.

Wilcox said he believes that if legislation is passed as it has been proposed, Northern Ontario will see a lower rate scale. And that would be welcome news to businessmen in Northern Ontario.

## Need

"It all began when I attended a transportation forum that was held in Kapuskasing," said Howie Wilcox, northern transportation consultant with PDCS in Timmins. "That was back in the summer of '83 or '84. There was a cry from the region that they needed help, so we opened our first Northern Ontario office in Timmins back in August of '84."

Wilcox said he was sent north alone and his territory included all Northern Ontario.

"It was a one man show. I was all over the place."

A busy schedule kept Wilcox from visiting as much of his territory as he would have liked.

"In the first year I was only able to make two trips to northwestern Ontario. One was to Thunder Bay and the other was to Atikokan."

## Hosting... what a wonderful way to discover the world

Interculture Canada, a not-for-profit organization for intercultural exchange has officially launched its host family search campaign in Ontario.

Thanks to Interculture Canada, Ontario residents now have the opportunity to host a young foreign student who will live as a member of their family for almost a year. After being carefully selected in their own country, 168 young students will spend the 1987/88 school year in Canada. They come from 35 different countries and are between 15 and 18 years old.

Interculture Canada pays special attention to the twinning of the students with the host family. Because of the wide range of applicants, Interculture Canada is able to choose a youth having common traits with the family in terms of interests, activities or even personality. This way, families and students not only discover their similarities but also enjoy the richness of their differences.

Any family is eligible to host. Two parents with children, single-parent families, young parents, older couples...all are welcome.

The new son or daughter does not expect to be considered as a guest but as a member of the family. Host families are not asked to make special expenditures for their student but they do pay food costs and incidental expenses as they would for their own teenager.

Interculture Canada is a member of AFS International/Intercultural Programs which is the world's largest network of high school exchange programmes operating in 73 countries. Interculture Canada is a not-for-profit and non-governmental organization.

Families interested in getting more information about hosting a student may call 1-800-361-7248 or write to Interculture Canada, 59 rue St-Jacques, Bur. 700., Montreal, Que., H2Y 1K9.

## SCENES for sale at WHITE SAND LAKE

Spend some time in the country and experience the ageless beauty of the North Shore of Lake Superior captured for you by

**S. JOHNSON HEWSON**  
824-3155

**Professional Photography**  
Portraits, Weddings & Commercial



## 1987 SPRUCE BUDWORM CONTROL PROGRAM INFORMATION CENTRE

The Ministry of Natural Resources invites the public to review the Terrace Bay District proposal for dealing with the spruce budworm in 1987; from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.:

**January 27-28 1987**

at

**Ministry of Natural Resources**

**Highway 17**

**P.O. Box 280**

**Terrace Bay, Ontario**

**P0T 2W0**

**Telephone: 807-825-3205**

## PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

The proposal will also be available for viewing at the Ministry of Natural Resources offices in Terrace Bay and Manitowadge following the Information Centre, until February 27, 1987. Comments concerning the proposal should be submitted during this period to:

**District Manager**

**Ministry of Natural Resources**

**P.O. Box 280**

**Terrace Bay, Ontario**

**P0T 2W0**

**Telephone: 807-825-3205**

For further information please contact:

**Derrick Tirschmann**

**Ministry of Natural Resources**

**P.O. Box 309**

**Manitowadge, Ontario**

**P0T 2C0**

**Telephone: 807-826-3225**



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Hon. Vincent G. Kerrio  
Minister

Mary Mogford  
Deputy Minister