



The Pallet Network hub

Independent Express Cargo in Blanchardstown is the main hub for The Pallet Network's Irish operation. Transport manager Peter Mills explains more.

available," explains Peter Mills, who has been transport manager for the past four years.

"Our association with The Pallet Network gives us a major established in 1984 and a founder of The Pallet Network (TPN) in 2004, Independent Express Cargo is recognised as one of the leading parcel and pallet delivery companies operating in Ireland.

Based in Northwest Business Park in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 and the central hub for The Pallet Network's Irish operation, Independent Express Cargo is committed to delivering its customers' freight intact and on time. The company's 100,000 sqft premises is a state-of-the-art freight handling depot which by day is an Independent Express depot, and by night is a busy hub for TPN. Independent Express also operates a 75,000 sqft logistics warehouse adjoining the transport hub.

"The company has been in business for nearly 30 years and prides itself on providing the best parcel and pallet distribution service that's advantage over many of our competitors. The recession has heightened competition, but we are more than holding our own."

Employing 60 staff, Independent Express Cargo is headed up by founder and chairman Owen Cooke and managing director Seamus McGowan. The company is ideally located for freight distribution around Ireland as it is within two miles of the M50, the Port Tunnel and Dublin Airport.

"Trailers coming off the ferry from the

UK in the morning can reach us within half-an-hour. Our location is one of our biggest selling points," Peter points out.

Independent Express operates a fleet of 12 vehicles (11 DAF and one Iveco) in Dublin city and county with experienced drivers who collect and deliver timely and efficiently. The company's fleet includes tractor units, trailers, trucks and drags, rigids with tail-lifts and box bodies. Minor repairs and servicing are carried out in-house by the company's full-time mechanic.

"We operate 12 vehicles, but as a member of The Pallet Network, we have over 400 vehicles throughout Ireland serving our needs. The Network has 24 Irish members and a further 95 in the UK. Every member is ISO accredited and is measured daily on KPI (Key Performance Indicators) for example on time delivery and pod completeness. There are annual inspections by a full time internal auditor, with penalties for failures and awards for excellence. The depots are externally audited by NSAI at least once every two years.

"Between 1,500 and 2,000 pallets are distributed nationwide from our Blanchardstown hub per night, which is a lot for a country of 4.5 million

people. They move 9,000 pallets per night in the UK where the population is 65 million. Our Irish hub has the capacity to deal with up to 3,500 pallets per night."

Independent Express Cargo moved from its original base in Santry to its current location – which is situated on an eight-acre site – in 1999. While the company's initial core business of freight forwarding, general logistics and European road freight continued to develop, national distribution of palletised cargo became a priority through its association with pallet networks in the UK. This inevitably led to the setting up of TPN in Ireland in 2004 in conjunction with 13 other independent distributors dotted throughout the island.

Following a €15m investment in hub facilities and a further €2m in development, TPN is now the dominant player in the pallet delivery market in Ireland. Independent Express enjoys the services of an Irish network of 24 depots and 95 UK depots, all tightly controlled and monitored to ensure the best delivery service in the market.

Industry-leading technology offering full track and trace and imaged PODs direct to customers' computers also sets Independent Express Cargo

and The **Pallet Network** apart from all others. Friendliness and reliability is the motto for both companies.

TPN was the first **pallet network** in Ireland or the UK to achieve ISO accreditation for every member. By combining into a single network, **TPN** members can offer the agility and personal service of smaller operators while offering the national and international reach of larger ones – giving customers the best of both worlds.

In addition, because members cover shorter distances within a familiar territory, they offer a fast, flexible service, while at the same time reducing costs and carbon footprint as well as maintaining drivers' hours safely within those specified by the Working Time Directive.

TPN's central IT system collates the shipment data from all its depots, sorting pallets into destination depot order and producing outbound load manifests. After the deliveries are completed, the local depots key in the delivery details and scan the POD image for electronic transfer and archiving. The scanned image is available to clients electronically via the web.

UK export freight is loaded on double-deck trailers, which depart the Irish hub at 3am for the UK **Pallet Network** hub in Minworth. The freight is unloaded there and routed for next-day delivery by the 95 UK depots.

The same IT system is used in the UK and Ireland to prepare manifests, control the pallet movements and provide the POD for customers in Ireland and the UK. Pallet weights vary in weight and size. **TPN** can transport anything from a carton to 1,200 kgs, which covers a wide variety of products including building materials, retail goods, engineering and computer parts.

In short, Independent Express

Cargo/ **TPN** provides an unrivalled service in its field of expertise and is confident that it will come through this recession with flying colours.



COMPANY DETAILS

For more information about Independent Express Cargo, telephone (01) 821 9999 or email: sales@indexp.com





Independent Express Cargo trucks in the company's busy Dublin web



Independent Express Cargo receiving the "Excellence Through People Award"