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Shipper can send virtually anything

ATLANTA



RENEE HANNANS HENRY / Staff

Ted Hooper, owner of Navis Pack & Ship of Atlanta, says the firm specializes in customer packaging and difficult-to-ship items.

By **SHANDRA HILL SMITH**
For the Journal-Constitution

A stuffed bison head and a piece of 3,000-year-old pottery aren't the sort of items most people need to ship.

But when media mogul Ted Turner wanted to send the bison head to the coach of the Atlanta Thrashers, and the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University wanted to send fragile pottery to a collector in Detroit, both chose Ted Hooper and his team as the shipper.

Hooper, a Brookhaven resident, is the owner of Navis Pack & Ship of Atlanta. At his Chattahoochee Avenue location, Hooper specializes in custom packaging and shipping for difficult-to-ship items.

"We ship from the mundane to the extraordinary," said Hooper.

The extraordinary includes the bison head shipment from Turner in Atlanta to Thrashers head coach Bob Hartley in his native Quebec. "The bison head was life-size; it was big," said Hooper.

This spring, Hooper's company contracted with a New York firm to pick up toolboxes from Fort Benning to ship to maintenance personnel in Kuwait City.

Other items include elephant tusks, ceremonial African masks and chandeliers made of old wine barrels; the latter, Hooper says, called for a special crate. There was also, "armor we sent off to someone in Europe," Hooper said. "There was a horse-drawn buggy from the 1800s that was sold at one of the local auctions here that we had to ship to Virginia."

Hooper is a Montreal native whose wife, Lisa, and sometimes one of his adult sons help with the business. "We've done some interesting stuff," he said.

The company also handles more mundane items. "We do

a lot of small moves," he said, citing bedroom and dining room sets. "Typically, somebody is sending something to a second or third home, or their daughter or son has graduated from college and now wants to furnish their new apartment and that sort of thing."

Navis defines "difficult to ship" as goods that are fragile, large, awkward or valuable. Shipments, sent via corrugated box or crate, typically are too big for a mail or parcel center such as UPS and Federal Express but too small for a traditional mover.

In 2005, Navis shipped a bust of Georgia-Pacific Chairman Emeritus Pete Correll to Wisconsin on behalf of CherryLion Sculpture Studios in Atlanta. Martin Dawe, the owner of CherryLion who sculpted the bust in clay and cast it in bronze, says he learned of Navis via another Atlanta gallery.

"It can be very difficult and very expensive shipping art," said Dawe. "A lot of the regular shipping companies, as soon as you say art, they won't touch it."

Hooper's location was the first of three to open in metro Atlanta. Other locations for Navis — which, in Greek, means to navigate — include Kennesaw and Alpharetta. Hooper took over his location, joining the Navis franchise that launched in the 1980s, three years ago.

"What we do is very much a service business," he said. "For the customer, what you're primarily doing is providing a solution. They have something in place A and they want to get it to place B safely and economically. The most satisfying part of it is that service part, when you've helped somebody."

► **ON THE WEB:** For more information about this topic: www.navisatlanta.com