

# news release

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## **CITY MOVING SYSTEMS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS IN BUSINESS** *United Van Lines agent reflects on the history of moving in Seattle area*

ST. LOUIS – City Moving Systems, Inc. emerged on the moving scene in Seattle in 1906 with a horse and buggy as its mode of transportation. Back then, a relocation across town was an overnight ordeal with movers sleeping on bedrolls under the wagon. Today, as the company celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it has 55 moving vans and can boast thousands of local, intrastate and cross-country moves for families, celebrities and sensitive government entities.

Co-owners of City Moving Systems, Donna Hyatt, president, and Ron Bickerstaff, vice president, acknowledge that a lot has changed in the moving business in the century that the company has been around. But at least one thing remains unchanged – the company's commitment to moving businesses and families efficiently, safely, quickly and professionally.

"I think what stands out about our company is the fact that we have always maintained and even expanded our reputation for providing superior service," said Hyatt. "Every one of our customers expects and receives high-quality service from us, whether they are moving a small family or a major business."

City Moving Systems began as City Messenger Service, delivering telegrams, legal papers and messages across town. Interestingly, one of the original owners, Jim Casey, went on to found the company that became United Parcel Service (UPS). City Messenger Service changed hands and names several times over the years, and eventually became a founding agent for United Van Lines in 1947. In 1976, the company became City Moving Systems.

Claude Elerding started with the company in 1948 as a salesman and remained with City Moving until he retired in 1990. He is the unofficial "historian" of the company, and remembers some of the more memorable moves.

"In 1958, we were hired to move dozens of federal agencies out of the old Ford plant to make way for Boeing, which needed to move into the plant quickly to manufacture missiles," said Elerding. "We had 100 employees working around the clock for several days, moving 530 van loads of furniture and files."

### *City Moving Systems – add one*

Elerding says the company also moved the Federal Reserve Bank and all its currency, which included \$400 million in cash and \$400,000 in coins. “That move had more security people involved than we had movers,” he added.

Other interesting moves over the years have included handling celebrity tours for Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and Diana Ross and the Supremes. “We did a lot of those tours, moving all of the musical instruments and equipment from one city to the next while they were on the West Coast,” said Elerding. “We had a reputation for being top notch – our name was out there, and it still is.”

Hyatt says that much of the company’s solid reputation stems from not only the long history of City Moving Systems, but also from the longevity of employees like Elerding and many others. “We have many people who’ve been here 20 years or more, including Ron and me. There is a tremendous pride of ownership among everyone working here.”

Both Bickerstaff and Hyatt joined the company 20 years ago -- Hyatt as an accounting manager, and Bickerstaff in sales. They bought the company in 2001 from former owner, Mike MacDowell.

“As (MacDowell) began to plan his exit from the business, he decided he wanted to keep the company in the hands of people who had been here a long time,” said Hyatt. “It was in the planning stages for us to buy it for about 10 years, so it was a gradual process.”

Today, City Moving Systems is a leader in the moving industry and one of the Northwest’s largest United Van Lines’ agents. The company serves as its customers’ single point-of-contact for coordinating the entire process of a move, from planning to delivery. The company offers residential, commercial and corporate relocations, as well as moves for special commodities locally, interstate or internationally. City Moving Systems also has an agency in Tacoma, Wash.

### *About United Van Lines*

United Van Lines, with headquarters in suburban St. Louis, maintains a network of 1,000 affiliated agencies throughout the world. As the nation’s largest mover, United holds more than 30 percent of the market, which is nearly double the market share of the second largest carrier. More information about United and its services is available at [www.unitedvanlines.com](http://www.unitedvanlines.com). More information about City Moving Systems is available at [www.citymovingsystems.com](http://www.citymovingsystems.com).

Editors Note: Hyatt, Bickerstaff and Elerding are available for interviews.