

COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING COALITION

CASE STUDY



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Clogged corridor causes courier to add vehicles

Portland-based shipper Senvoy has a strategy for dealing with ever increasing road congestion.

Add more drivers and vehicles.

That's right. In order to stay in business in the face of increased traffic in the past eight or so years, Senvoy has been forced to add drivers and vehicles. And in that time frame, the company introduced protocol for drivers to avoid freeways and, instead, use neighborhood streets.

"It's not the strategy we'd choose, given an option. There are detrimental impacts not just on our costs and those that trickle down but also on the environment and neighborhoods," said Senvoy president Jerry Brazie.

"For now, we have no other choice. We simply are doing our best to meet customer demand," Brazie said.

The company handles most of the blood donated to hospital blood banks in the metro area, as well as requests from elder care facilities for urgently needed pharmaceutical drugs. Another segment of business is deliveries of specimens to laboratories. A number of those deliveries are especially urgent if a patient is on the operating table.

So it is key that Senvoy drivers find routes that allow them to keep moving, even during the thickest of rush hour traffic.

Brazie recognizes the strategy of adding drivers may not provide a competitive edge in the long run. That is why Senvoy is involved with efforts to improve transportation infrastructure.

With as much as a quarter of Senvoy's business traversing the bridge, proposals for a new crossing top the list of improvements that have Brazie's attention.

Eight years ago, a Senvoy driver could pick up and deliver, in about an hour and a half, four packages between the outer reaches of Clark County and the southern part of the Portland metro area.

"Today that driver in that territory can pick up and deliver one package in about an hour and a half," Brazie said.

"Many of our drivers are in territories where congestion limits the number of deliveries and pickups that they can make in a day to about two-thirds the number they did just seven or eight years ago."

Duplication of drivers on some routes means more than 1 million additional miles are racked up companywide.

"The window of time is narrowing in which traffic moves anywhere near an efficient rate across the I-5 bridge. A new crossing is of utmost importance," Brazie said.