

## **From Northwood to the Netherlands:**

### **How A Small NH Company Has Entered the European Market**

NORTHWOOD, NH—Nearly 20 years ago, Bob Markarian started his company, The Architectural Resources Center (ARC) of Northwood, to manufacture and sell custom and stock window and door hardware for historic buildings. ARC is a small company, with just seven full-time employees, but it's highly respected; ARC custom hardware can be found in the White House and U.S. Capitol, Treasury and Old Executive Office buildings in Washington, DC, as well as in the State Capitols of a dozen states, Carnegie Hall in New York City, the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina and the homes of a number of celebrities.

The next famous historic building to have ARC custom hardware installed may be in Europe. As of February 3, 2006, when the first shipment of the company's goods arrived in the Netherlands, ARC entered the European market—thanks, in part, to the help of New Hampshire's International Trade Resource Center (ITRC) and the NH European Logistics Center.

To Markarian, doing business in the Netherlands seemed a natural extension of his long-time affinity for the country. "I've visited the Netherlands many times; it's an easy country to get to know because everyone speaks English as a second language. I really admire the intelligence of the Dutch, and I love the architecture and history here." Markarian felt his products would naturally be in demand in Europe, where there are so many historic buildings and a commitment to historic preservation. Still, getting everything in place to do business an ocean away from Northwood, New Hampshire, was a daunting task.

Markarian had gotten to know ITRC's Director, Dawn Wivell, and Anka Jacobs, the agency's Executive Training Manager, when he participated in a Europe trade delegation.

Jacobs picks up the story. “When Dawn and I put together the consortium of companies that provide the NH European Logistics Center services, we knew it was important for the program to be able to work for companies of any size. Small and medium-size businesses, in particular, don’t generally have the resources to be able to do this on their own—it’s simply too time-consuming—and requires such specialized knowledge and relationships. We wanted to make sure the system would be easy to use, highly efficient and cost-effective so small New Hampshire companies like ARC can get out there and compete in the European market. A benefit of doing business in the Netherlands is that there is no value-added tax up front—and 160 million consumers live within 300 miles of the Netherlands. With goods in a warehouse in the Netherlands, a company can have orders to its European clients in 24 to 72 hours.”

The system is easy: a container is dropped off at Markarian’s New Hampshire warehouse where it is loaded, then delivered to DAMCO Sea & Air in Montreal for transatlantic shipment to the Netherlands. There, Road Air picks up the shipment, handles local customs and delivers it to the warehouse where the contents are unpacked for reshipment to the company’s European clients. The other partners with ITRC in the NH European Logistics Center, Sadler Insurance of Nashua and Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green of Manchester, provide insurance and legal assistance, while the State’s commercial consul in the Netherlands also is available to assist companies.

The Architectural Resource Center saves money and time by shipping large quantities of their products via container; and orders sent to European clients can be processed, shipped and delivered within a day or two from the Netherlands.

Companies don’t need to make big changes in how they do business; they simply add a new piece of software to manage the sales, shipments and any returns of their inventory. Jacobs points out, “This system is set up to handle virtually any type of business except hazardous materials—and we even have a separate warehouse for medical products. Europe could be a tremendous market for some of our NH medical products companies.”

Markarian, who now spends up to two months at a time in the Netherlands, has high praise for the ITRC staff and their partners in the NH European Logistics Center. From his apartment in Amsterdam, with its view of the nearby warehouse, he says, “I don’t think we could have entered the European market without their team’s help. It’s not just getting a system in place; it’s all the emotional support they provided. I know we’ll continue to work with them as we expand our markets even further.”

*For information on ITRC and the NH European Logistics Center, contact Dawn Wivell or Anka Jacobs at 603-334-6074 or go to [www.exportnh.com](http://www.exportnh.com). For information on the Architecture Resource Center. Visit [www.aresource.com](http://www.aresource.com) or call 1-800-370-8808.*