

D-FW becoming a major partner

Area on pace to be 3rd-largest U.S. cargo market for China

By KATHERINE YUNG
Staff Writer

Once nonexistent, the ties between Dallas-Fort Worth and China are growing closer all the time.

Cargo flights between the two trade partners are multiplying. Trans-Pacific relationships are also getting a boost, in part through trade missions.

Dallas-Fort Worth's total trade with China jumped 51 percent in 2004 to \$10 billion. Imports of Chinese goods — particularly machinery, furniture and toys — made up the bulk of the exchange.

China Cargo Airlines, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport's first carrier to serve mainland China, started service a little more than a year ago with three weekly flights.

Another Chinese cargo carrier may start service this year, said Bill Frainey, an assistant vice president

at the airport.

"There's a very untapped market here," he said, noting that North Texas is expected to become the third-largest U.S. cargo market for China by 2010.

At China Cargo, freight volume grew so quickly that the carrier added another flight to D/FW in September, said Fuqiang "Alex" Shen, the airline's local manager.

China Cargo chose Dallas over Miami, Atlanta and Houston.

"We made the right choice," Mr. Shen said.

United Parcel Service is also experiencing huge increases in its China business.

Already, imports from China rank as UPS' largest international market in Texas, said Bobby Carter, its international sales manager for the Southwest region.

UPS' small-package exports from North Texas to China from

small and medium-size companies have soared 42 percent since 2000. Meanwhile, imports skyrocketed 974 percent.

"The markets are there, the walls are coming down, but the infrastructure's not there," Mr. Carter said of the poor roads and other challenges.

The constant stream of goods isn't the only North Texas-China connection.

Last year, delegations from the Greater Dallas Chamber made three trips. Another mission will leave this spring.

And in 2003, the Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade re-opened an office in Richardson that had closed because of a shortage of personnel.

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China Cargo Airlines operates four flights a week between China and D/FW International Airport. The carrier started the route a little over a year ago. An airport official said another Chinese cargo carrier may start service this year.