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Courier service offers 'green' delivery

By Mike Boyer
mboyer@enquirer.com

FAIRFIELD - A new environmentally friendly courier service aims to capitalize on growing business awareness about going green.

Among other environmentally friendly practices, the Green Courier uses a hybrid Honda Insight to make deliveries in areas from Columbus to Northern Kentucky. The company was launched this fall by Richard Hileman, a retired auto industry manager, and his daughter-in-law Jacinta Hileman, who handles marketing.

With a handful of customers already, Hileman, 61, said: "I'm encouraged. We have several more people we're close to bringing on as customers. If we land several of those, we could be adding a second hybrid car pretty quickly."

After 30 years in the auto business, starting in 1977 at the former General Motors Corp. plant in Fairfield, Hileman wasn't looking for a second career when he retired more than a year ago.

But after a few months at home, he "got bored. I needed something to do."

His son, Martin Hileman, a partner in CFC Benefits, a Fairfield insurance firm, suggested he consider starting a courier business.

"I thought: 'You've got to be kidding me! There are so many companies in that business.'"

But Hileman said his son suggested focusing on the growing business interest in green vendors and suppliers. The more he thought about it, the elder Hileman said, the more the idea made sense.

Working in manufacturing, he said he had been exposed to plenty of waste over the years.

"I thought this is a way to make a difference," said Hileman, who believes his startup is the area's first green courier service.

Total investment in the business has been less than \$100,000. The biggest expenditure was \$21,000 for the car. "Actually this is a good time to start a business because you can negotiate pretty good prices for what you need," Jacinta Hileman said.

The hybrid electric car is more fuel efficient than a gasoline-powered car or van and produces less carbon emissions. For example, the Green Courier's hybrid, averaging 42 miles per gallon, would produce about 2.93 tons of carbon annually making daily delivery rounds from downtown Cincinnati to Springdale. A gas-powered delivery van, averaging 15 miles per gallon and making the same trip daily, would generate more than twice the carbon, 7.8 tons, Hileman said.

Using the Green Courier is a way businesses can document their lower carbon footprint.

For short deliveries within a single ZIP code, the Green Courier charges a flat rate starting at \$12. For longer deliveries, charges start at just more than \$1 a mile.

In addition to the hybrid, Green Courier uses recycled paper for its brochures and business cards and

an online system for order entry and billing, eliminating the need for paper.

The Burke & Schindler accounting firm in downtown Cincinnati has been using the Green Courier for a few months to deliver documents to clients.

"It's pretty easy," receptionist Kerry Jabour said. "You type in your information, and they show up."

Hileman talked to other environmentally friendly courier firms in Atlanta and Dallas before launching his business.

"They all said to be patient. It takes time to develop the market," he said.

"People say what we're doing makes sense, but it's hard to get people to change their business practices because they have established relationships."

Additional Facts

Green Courier

Address: 5100 Sandy Lane, Fairfield, Ohio

Phone: 513-889-0303

Web site: www.greencouriercincy.com

Employees: 2

Owner: Richard Hileman
