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SMARTBOX to Bring Storage Solutions to New Orleans *Displaced Local Entrepreneur Returns with New Venture*

NEW ORLEANS, December 1, 2005 – After leaving her home, business and dreams behind when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Lisa McKenzie came to a quick realization: In the wake of one of the country’s worst natural disasters, there would be a huge need for storage.

Three months later, McKenzie is fulfilling that need.

McKenzie is bringing simple and smart storage solutions to New Orleans residents and businesses by opening a franchise of SMARTBOX, a leader in the portable self-storage industry.

“Many people are going through the same thing we are – we’re still searching for a sense of closure after our personal and professional lives have been turned upside down,” said McKenzie, the co-owner of Rhino Business Services, a convention-focused business based at the Morial Convention Center. “Everything is a hassle right now. We’re hoping to help people take steps forward by providing them an opportunity to temporarily store their belongings while they reclaim their lives.”

SMARTBOX offers residential and commercial customers affordable and convenient storage and moving solutions. Users can make use of Smartboxes – storage containers that are 8 feet long, 7 feet tall and 5 feet wide (280 cubic feet) and designed to hold the contents of one to 1½ rooms (3,000-pound capacity) – to de-clutter their homes or businesses; store household items or seasonal inventory; or move across town or the country.

Or, in the case of Hurricane Katrina victims, SMARTBOX allows users to store furniture, tools and clothes while their homes are rebuilt or filing cabinets, paperwork and computers until their offices are reopened. It also can aid those who have resorted to short- or long-distance moves.

“Every area of New Orleans has a different need right now,” McKenzie said. “Attempting to find a moving truck and traditional storage space is nearly impossible. SMARTBOX is here to help solve some of those problems.”

The SMARTBOX process is simple.

Customers contact SMARTBOX, which delivers its storage containers directly to their door (no calling around town to locate a rental truck). SMARTBOX lets users load safely and easily at ground level (no watching their step while carrying heavy objects up wobbly loading ramps).

Adding to the convenience, users can pack and load their Smartboxes according to their schedules and in many cases, pack them only once. When they’re finished packing, they can either keep the Smartboxes at their existing site or call SMARTBOX to pick them up and store them at one its storage centers or deliver them to the next destination.

“SMARTBOX eliminates the hassle of locating a rental truck, packing and loading it, delivering it to a storage facility, unloading it, racing to return it on time and paying for gas and insurance,” McKenzie said. “Pack your belongings at your convenience, and we’ll take over from there, whether it’s storing or delivering to another location.”

Smartboxes are made of wood, which helps protect stored items from changes in temperature and humidity, and are protected by a weather-tight vinyl cover that protects the box and its contents from weather damage. And they’re designed to help users compartmentalize, allowing them to pack potentially messy items like garden tools separate from nice items like furniture.

“We bring storage to New Orleans,” McKenzie said. “From the second a customer calls, we’re all about simplifying the storage process.”

About SMARTBOX

SMARTBOX is a leader in the portable self-storage industry, servicing more than 5.5 million people in 650 cities in 15 markets across the United States. Based in Richmond, Va., SMARTBOX offers simple, smart and affordable storage solutions for individuals and businesses alike. www.smartboxusa.com