

# **RIDES Warehouse Tours**



*Summer 2016*



## What a way to spend a Michigan summer – touring warehouses!

Many RIDES Advisory Committee members toured the RIDES courier hub warehouses in each of their regions. At some locations, staff from nearby libraries were also invited to attend.

At each site we met with the hub warehouse manager who explained the process and answered lots of questions.

We are sharing our observations so that everyone can get a better understanding of the process.

Sue Alt

MCLS/RIDES Coordinator



Our RIDES courier has 7 regional warehouses to service libraries. The regional warehouse hub number is the first part of your RIDES code.

100 – Grayling

101 – UP transfer stop/St. Ignace

200 – Grand Rapids

300 – Kalamazoo

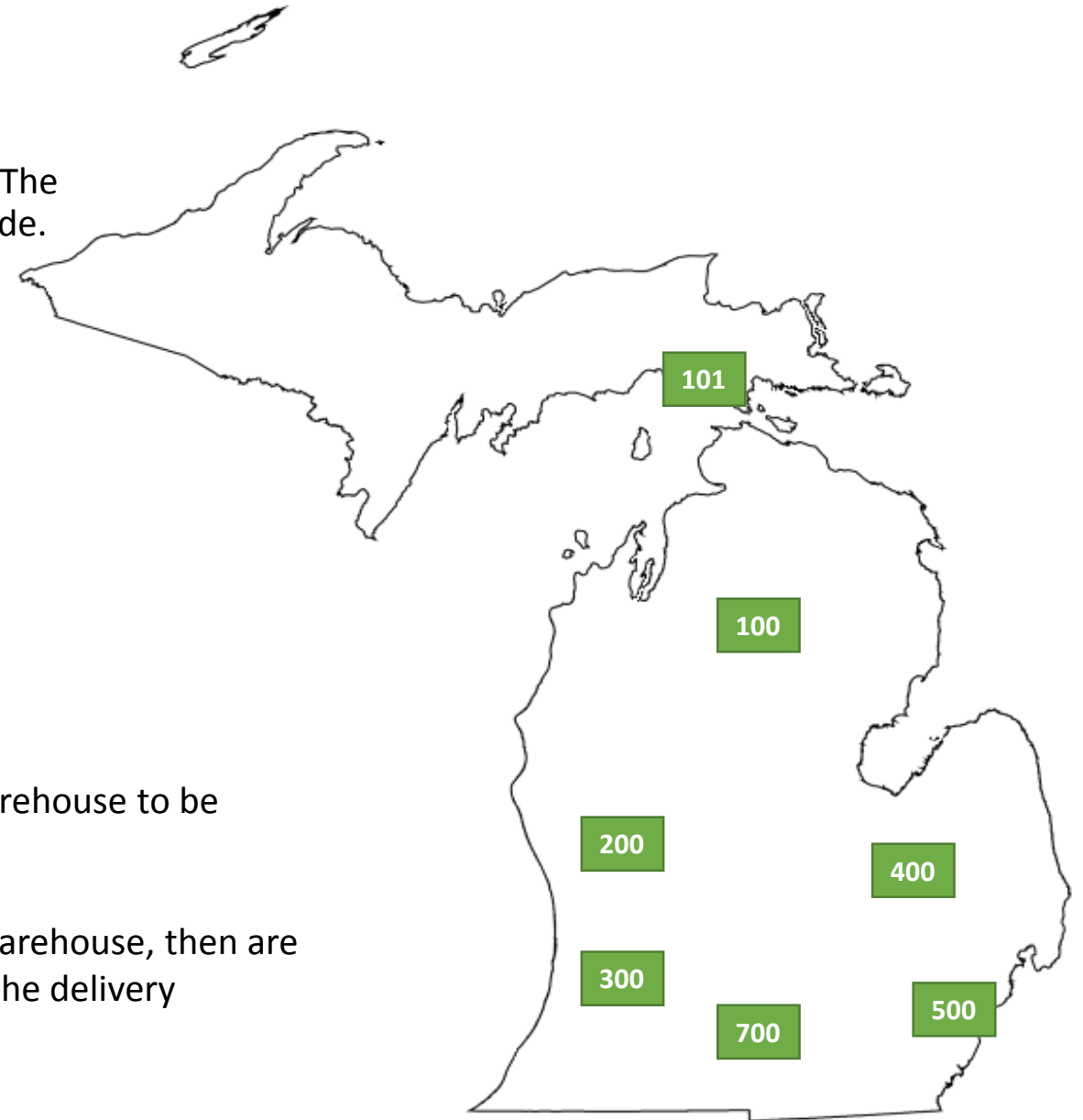
400 – Flint

500 – Royal Oak/Detroit

700 – Jackson

Items being sent to libraries in the *\*same\** area go to the hub warehouse to be sorted then delivered from the same warehouse.

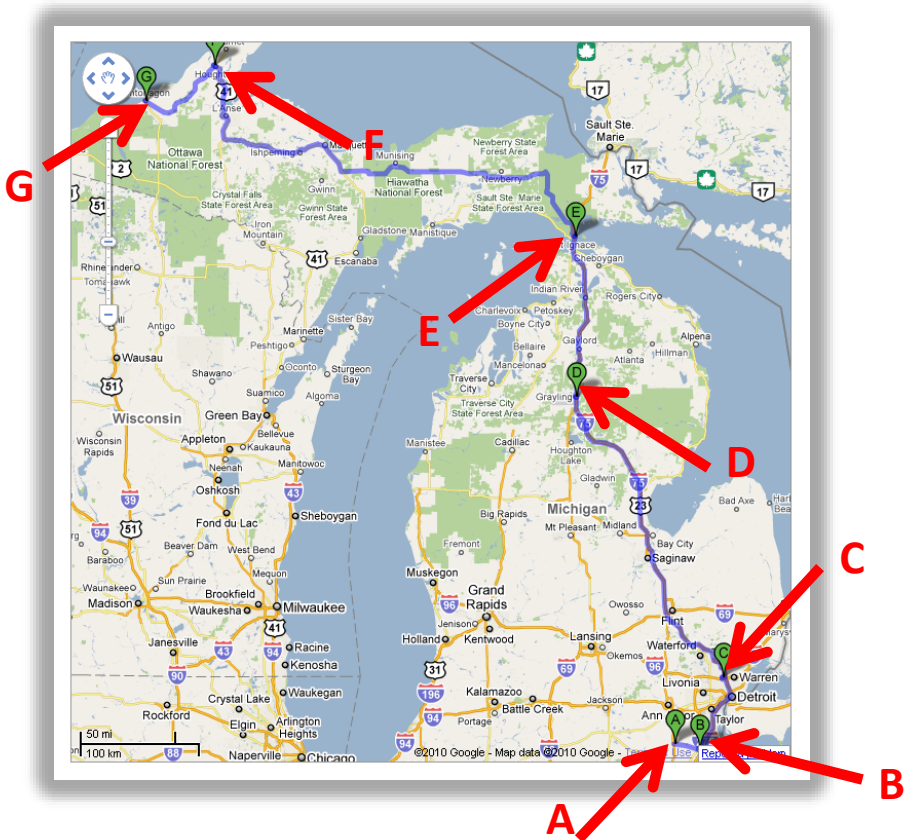
Items being sent to libraries in a *\*different\** area go to the hub warehouse, then are sent to the main Royal Oak sorting center. They are then sent to the delivery warehouse for distribution.





## A brief example of how RIDES works:

***Imagine a book is being sent from the Dundee Branch Library in SE Michigan to the Ontonagan Township Library in the UP. The book would begin in...***



**A** Dundee, where it would be labeled and shipped to...

**B** Monroe County Library System Headquarters in Monroe using their local delivery service. The book would be sorted there, put into a green RIDES tote and then picked up by the courier, who transports the tote to the...

**C** RIDES hub warehouse in Royal Oak. There the book is taken out of the tote and sorted by delivery hub code into another green RIDES tote. All of the totes destined for the UP are loaded on a truck and delivered to the...

**D** RIDES warehouse in Grayling. All of the materials going to the UP are packed together into green RIDES totes, loaded onto another truck, and delivered to...

**E** The transfer warehouse in St. Ignace. The UP courier picks up the totes there, takes the book out of the tote and sorts it once again into the green RIDES tote designated for the library on the route. The driver delivers that tote to the...

**F** Central delivery site at Copper County ISD in Hancock, where the book is taken out of the green RIDES tote, sorted for their local delivery service, and, then finally, after traveling over 600 miles, the book is delivered by the ISD local delivery service to...

**G** Ontonagan!



# 100 – Grayling

Monday July 11, 2016

Jennifer Lucas – Superior District Library Bayliss

Mary Kay Hinkle – Crawford County Library

Connie Meyer – Crawford County Library

Anita Chouinard – Traverse Area District Library

Kristi Solberg – Traverse Area District Library

Susan Jacobs – Alpena County Library

Sue Alt – MCLS

Jim Kraft – ProMed

Jim – ProMed







Every night totes are delivered to the warehouses from the Royal Oak facility.

The Grayling warehouse also serves as the transfer warehouse for the Upper Peninsula libraries.

Incoming totes are emptied and the items are sorted by library, or into totes destined for the UP.

The blue totes are used by Traverse Area District Library for materials that are being moved between their branches.





This is an example of one of the problems our couriers have to stop and figure out. They would like to deliver the package, but since it has two shipping labels it is not clear where it should go. They cannot open packages so they send 'mysteries' like this to MCLS to be sorted out and sent to the correct place. Problems like this slow down the process, and can potentially mean a package delivered to the wrong location.



# 101 – Upper Peninsula

A unit at this storage facility is used as a transfer station for items moving between Michigan's Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula.

Our primary courier sub-contracts with a UP courier company. The drivers each deliver and pick up totes just as they would at any other site.







## 200 – Grand Rapids

Tuesday May 10, 2016

Sandie Enders – Muskegon Area District Library  
Michelle Wittkopp – Muskegon Area District Library  
Sheryl VanderWagen – Lakeland Library Coop  
Carla Moyer – Calvin College

Sue Alt – MCLS  
Jim Kraft – ProMed  
Mike – ProMed





“I was really impressed with the warehouse operation in GR. It seems so “compact” when I’m used to seeing our operation at Lakeland Library Cooperative. It’s also easy to see how things can be mis-routed but in comparison to the items that are sorted every day, it’s really a small number.” Sheryl VanderWagen





Vehicles drive inside the warehouse buildings to load and unload. The warehouses are neither heated nor air-conditioned.

The drivers pack their vehicles to deliver for the entire route, unloading and then adding new totes along the way.

Our courier has many other customers, so the loads are not always just RIDES totes.





## 300 – Kalamazoo

Thursday June 2, 2016

Ellen Hoyt – Richland Community Library

Sue Alt – MCLS

Jim Kraft – ProMed

Steve – ProMed







Materials come in daily from Royal Oak and each evening the drivers drop off what they have picked up along their route.

The next day, items going to libraries serviced by the hub are sorted to that library's designated tote.

Items going to libraries serviced by other hub zones are put into totes that are stacked and wrapped for pick up by the truck going back to Royal Oak for central sorting.



The Kalamazoo warehouse receives all of the boxes picked up for ROSEY. Our courier then delivers them to a BetterWorldBooks facility in Indiana.

These photos illustrate why only BWB boxes may be used for ROSEY. These skids of various size and shaped boxes are not stable or safe to move.





## 400 – Flint

Wednesday May 11, 2016

Debbie O'Brien – Caro Area District Library  
(not pictured)

Sue Alt – MCLS  
Jim Kraft – ProMed  
Brian – ProMed







The Flint warehouse services 103 separate delivery sites.

The large stack of totes in the center are waiting to be opened and sorted. Totes for sorting to individual libraries surround the sorting area.

Route information and scanning data is posted for the drivers.







“I have always been impressed at the amount of volume that ProMed and libraries move each day, and after going to the warehouse it really puts it in perspective. I am surprised that we have as little damage and loss as we do when seeing the large volume of materials that are moved each day. When procedures are followed correctly by libraries and ProMed I think it is pretty smooth!” Debbie O’Brien



Each library serviced by the warehouse has a designated tote or section, depending on volume.

The Flint warehouse services 18 Genesee District Library branch RIDES locations.

GDL libraries use cardboard boxes for materials moving between branches.





## 500 – Royal Oak/Detroit

Wednesday May 18, 2016

Kim Cruce – Baker Colleges

Judy Dyki – Cranbrook Educational Community

Penny Kazmierski – Monroe County Library System

Mike Hawthorne – Wayne State University

Sue Alt – MCLS

Sean Cwiek – MCLS

Dan Gundry – ProMed

Rich – ProMed





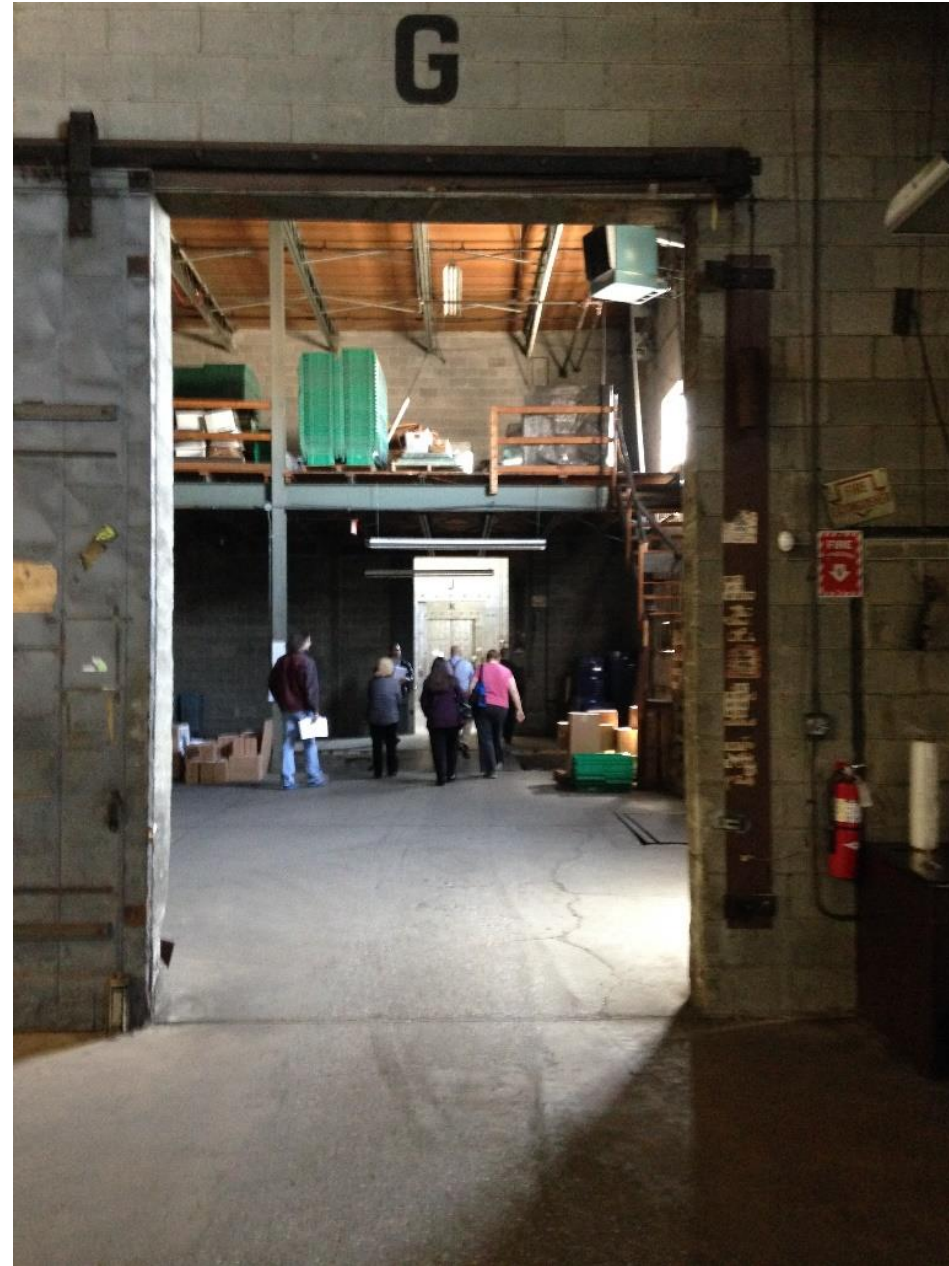


The Royal Oak/Detroit warehouse is the central sorting facility for all of the courier customers. Every night truckloads of totes from all of the other warehouses are delivered. 35,000 – 40,000 items are sorted every night, both for delivery within the 500 Royal Oak/Detroit zone and for transfer to the other hub warehouses.





This facility  
is HUGE.





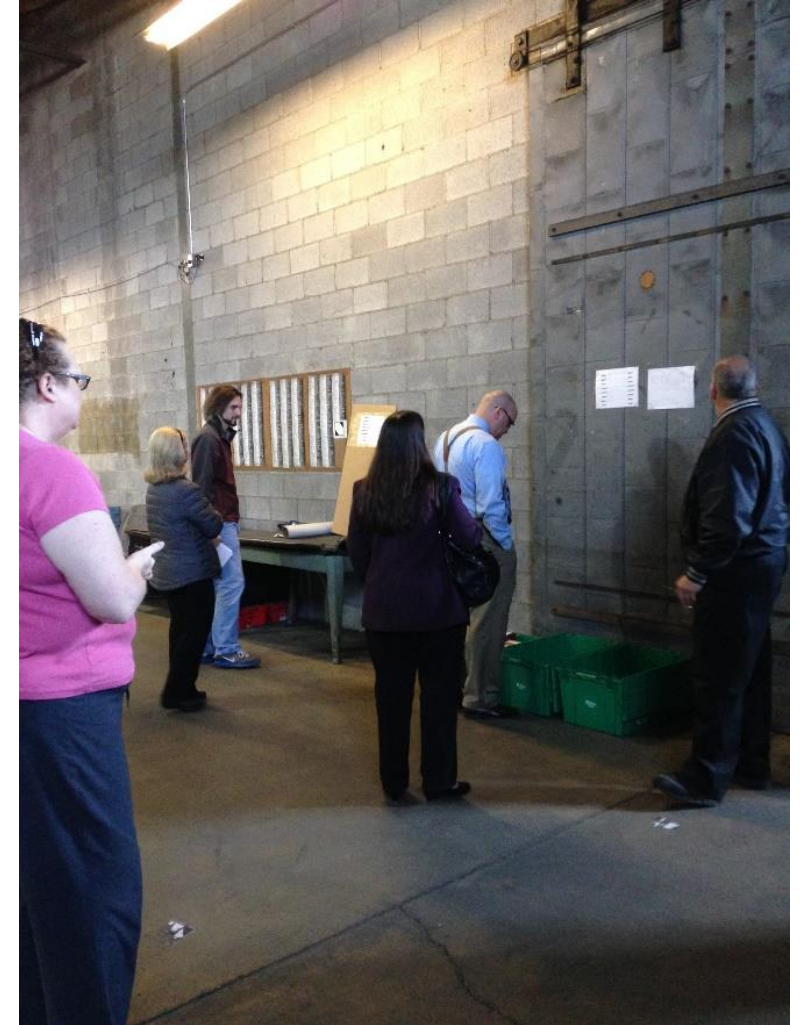
“I went on the previous tour of the Royal Oak (500) warehouse several years ago, and I was impressed by how much cleaner the building was this time. They also had many new systems in place and appeared to be much more organized. They seem to have very good controls for processing the huge quantity of packages and unpacked books that pass through every day.” Judy Dyki



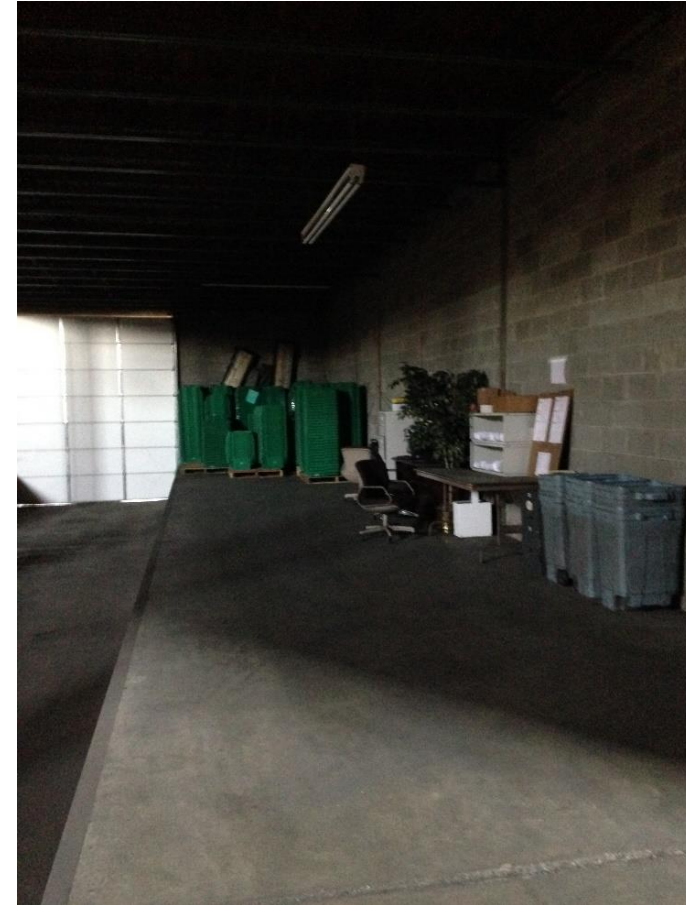


Security cameras are used as well as close supervision of everyone in the warehouses.

Every day drivers deliver to the Detroit metro libraries, and trucks are loaded for delivery to the other warehouses.







“While the Royal Oak tour was informative, I was unable to get a sense of just how chaotic it could be when they were processing our items. The neat and tidy, but huge, warehouse showed that it would be very hard to misplace/ignore a tote of items.” Penny Kazmierski

Note: we are not able to tour certain times of the day due to courier security concerns.



Sorting at the Royal Oak facility. Photographs provided by ProMed Delivery, Inc.





## 700 – Jackson

Thursday May 12, 2016

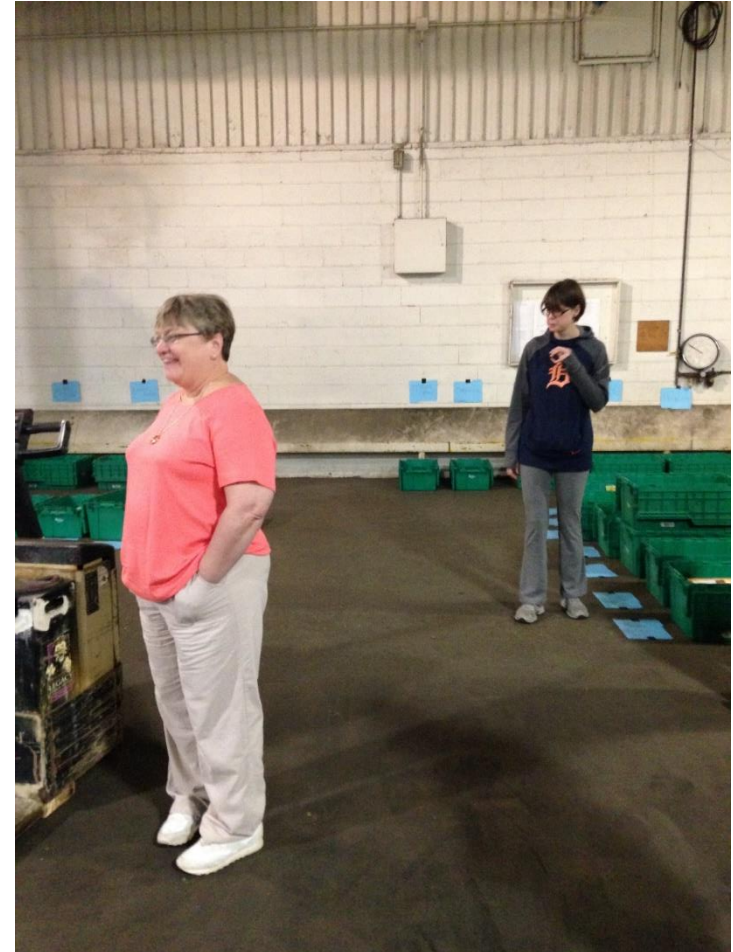
Joann Crater – Hudson Carnegie District Lib

Carey Sperl – Capital Area District Library

Sue Alt – MCLS

Jim Kraft – ProMed

Jake – ProMed



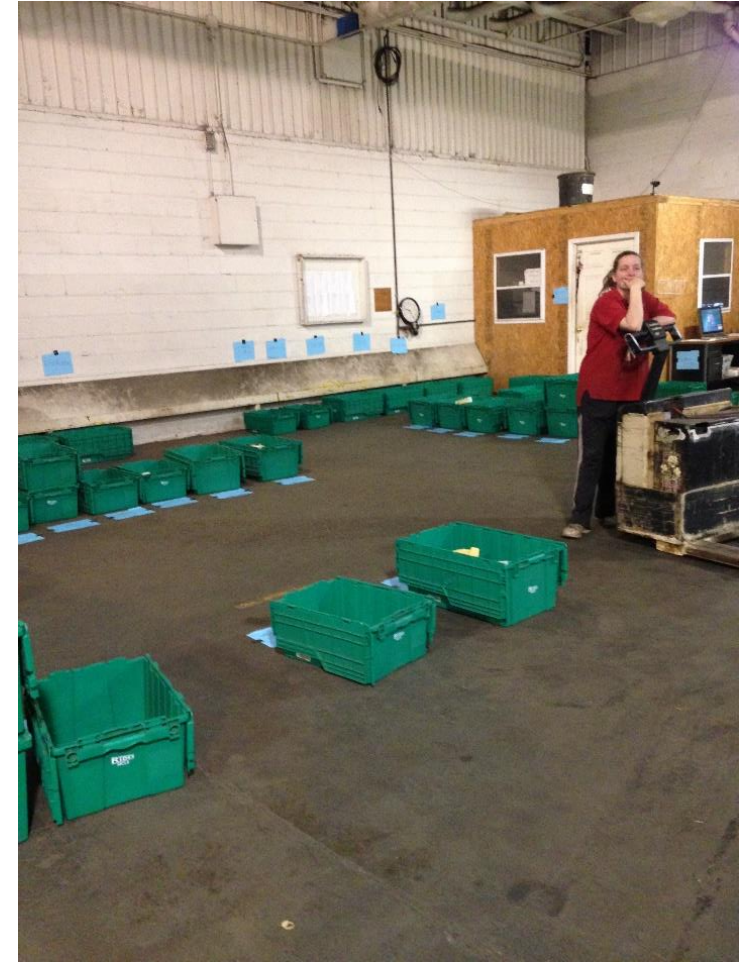


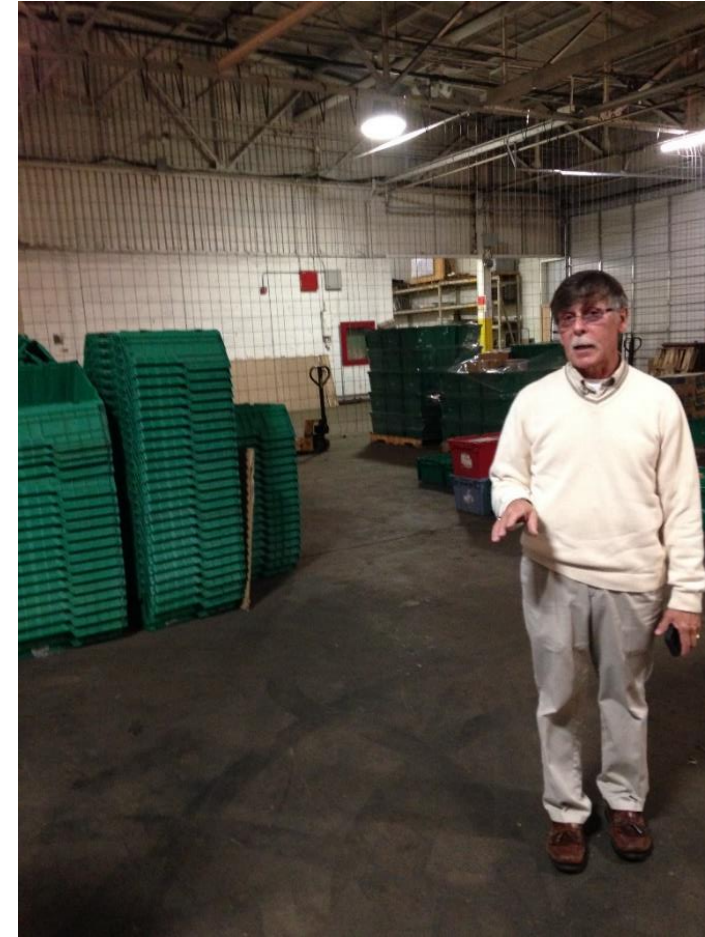


The RIDES sorting area in the warehouse is separate from other customer materials.

Sorting is done twice a day in Jackson.

Managers track incoming and outgoing totes.





“I am now aware of the sorting process and how easy a mistake every now and then is possible. If it's a huge mistake I know it's important to send a notice through the assistance form. I don't think twice about the lateness of the delivery....unless it doesn't happen at all. We are not guaranteed a 1 o'clock delivery...I try to have the staff not give times to patrons....in fact, if delivery is on Wednesday, I encourage them to tell the patrons to check on Thursday. That gives everyone time to process everything.” Joann Crater





Boxes that are too big and heavy fall apart and slow the process down. Materials can be lost.

Using standard size totes for all of our materials is more efficient and secure.







“Items arrive from the 700 hub libraries and are sorted by ONE person. I think she does a darn good job considering CADL processes 8000 items each month!

She sorts items for 700 hub libraries while placing the other items into large totes that will be delivered to Royal Oak.

She sorts the items by route (12-20 totes of both sizes) and then sorts the items that were delivered from Royal Oak, about 32 large totes.

If an item loses the label (as we know they can) the sorter puts the item into a “black box”. This box takes time to fill up, so this is why sometimes it takes a month for a lost item to get back to us. ProMed does not try to guess where the item needs to go and the items are sent to MCLS and they return them to the owning library.

The warehouse was very clean and secure.” Carey L. Sperl



## Carey explains why it can take so long...

700 hub items stay in the hub. So, a Delta Township item can get to Charlotte quickly or it may take a few days for a CADL item to get to MSU.

If CADL is sending an item to Central Michigan, the item goes to Jackson, where it is sorted, then heads to Royal Oak. It is sorted by hub there. Then it goes to Grayling and from Grayling to CMU.

What about an item going to Monroe County? Once again from Jackson to Royal Oak then to Monroe County's central location. Monroe County receives approximately 20 totes a day! Then the items need to be delivered to the branches.

Other libraries do a central sort but TLN, out of Novi is actually a consortium of 76 libraries! The libraries are all over the Detroit metro area and are sorted at Novi. So our item goes to Jackson>Royal Oak>Novi>Borrowing library!



## Things Sue learned along the way...

- Managers and drivers do the sorting except at Royal Oak and Jackson where there are dedicated sorters.
- ProMed contracts with a company for security checks on drivers.
- The driver's job is more difficult now because of the technical aspects.
- A "big truck" transfers material between Royal Oak and Jackson/Kalamazoo/Grand Rapids every day.
- Another "big truck" transfers material between Royal Oak and Flint/Grayling every day.
- Managers keep notes on special instructions from libraries such as keys, drop boxes, locations, etc.
- There is one library where the instructions are to "stop and pet the cat".
  
- Libraries are using old labels all of the time. It causes confusion with delivery and managers like to check the dates on the labels to see at a glance how long the materials have been in transit.
- Some libraries are rubber-banding too many in one bunch, if the bands break shipping labels are lost.
- Some libraries are not using enough 'strong' rubber bands – they break and shipping label is lost.
- There are too many boxes! Boxes do not load in the truck or delivery vehicles as efficiently. They break. They can be sent to ROSEY by mistake.