

Giant Dolly Takes on Big Role

Nathan Kimmel gets promotional lift from 16-foot hand truck.

Nathan Kimmel Co. is one unusual firm.

First, there's the obvious distinction: a nearly 16-foot dolly – more precisely known as a hand truck – that is parked in front of its headquarters on busy Santa Fe Avenue in downtown Los Angeles.

The giant landmark reflects the company's status as one of the largest dealers of Magliner Co. hand trucks in the United States. In fact, the Standish, Mich., manufacturer awarded the huge dolly to the company 10 years ago.

"Putting it in front brought us so much business," said owner Carol Kimmel Schary, who noted that the dolly is used as a point of reference when giving directions. "If people know they need to buy a hand truck, they come here because they already have us in their minds."

However, selling hand trucks only amounts to a side business for Nathan Kimmel. In another distinction for the company, it is one of a relative few to make commercial-grade tarps used for large surfaces that need to be covered. They start at \$265 for a 20-foot-by-50-foot piece and go up depending on material and size.

The company's tarps, manufactured in an adjacent plant, have been laid down at Dodger Stadium and Yankee Stadium, and during the construction of LA Live and the Freedom Tower in New York.

Sales totaled \$2.6 million last year, giving Nathan Kimmel yet another distinction: It was on the Business Journal's list of the biggest 100 women-owned compa-



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Pick-Me-Up: Schary with giant hand truck in front of her downtown L.A. store.

nies in Los Angeles last week, and in an industry – construction – where women still haven't made much headway. Sales are projected to hit \$3 million this year.

Schary took over the 56-year-old company when her father died in 1996. Among its 14 total employees are her sons Jason, 36, and Adam, 32, who help manage the business.

Nathan Kimmel sells other construction accessories, such

as fumigation paraphernalia and safety equipment.

As for that giant dolly, it hasn't gone unnoticed by other vendors who would like to boost sales. A glove vendor sent her 4-foot-tall safety glove that also sits at the headquarters, but it plays a definite second fiddle to the Magliner.

"Nothing has gotten as much attention as the hand truck," Schary said.

– Yasmeen Al-Shawwa

Putting Value on Celebrity

Ad firm's game lets players guess wealth of rich and famous.

At a Los Angeles Kings game this past season, Winston Binch and two co-workers from advertising agency Deutsch LA started guessing the wealth of celebrities who were seated nearby.

The diversion became inspiration for High Rollaz, a new online game that the agency released Aug. 10. It represents the first project the agency has created as an entertainment product rather than for advertisers.

High Rollaz is on a website accessible by computer or mobile phone. In the game, a

photo appears of an athlete or show biz personality together with an estimated net worth. The player must guess whether the true figure is higher or lower than the number displayed. Wealth estimates come from media reports.

"It's Hot or Not for net worth," said Binch, chief digital officer at Deutsch LA in West Los Angeles. "It's designed for those in-between moments at bus stops and sports events when you want fun and simple mind engagement."

The game is in test phase and people can play for free. If successful, it could become a paid product. Binch sees it

as an experiment to see what works in attracting mobile phone users to a website.

The agency will try selling more games and apps, but history shows it requires many attempts to create a

best seller. He cites the experience of Rovio, an Espoo, Finland-based studio that created 51 games before striking gold with "Angry Birds."

"We want to get into product development, but to play in

that space you have to get prolific and experiment a lot," Binch said. "This is the first product we've brought out to the world. Hopefully it will lead to other ideas and eventually to a breakthrough success."

– Joel Russell



Binch

San Antonio On the Cheap

Lone Star city launches low-cost campaign to lure L.A. businesses.

Rival cities have long been trying to snag a piece of the L.A. business community – and making a splash doing it.

Las Vegas spent more than \$1 million in mailings and advertising in 2009. That same year, Denver flew a plane over Los Angeles with an advertising banner.

Now, another city has come calling, but it's conducting its campaign on the cheap.

The San Antonio Economic Development Foundation is spending only \$30,000 on its effort. That means no aircraft or moving billboards – something Vegas tried in 2006 – but a print and online ad campaign to recruit businesses with a minimum of \$5 million in sales and 50 employees. That was followed by direct mailings to 600



Crackin' the Nut: Las Vegas' 2006 campaign in L.A.

companies, with follow-up visits scheduled this month with about a dozen firms that have been most responsive.

"It is sales, but it is very targeted," said foundation President Mario Hernandez.

San Antonio's main pitch is that the two cities have complementary economies, including strong biotech, information technology, manufacturing and aerospace industries. It also asserts, as have other Texas cities, that its home state has a better business climate without a personal income tax or cap-and-trade regulations.

The foundation started targeting L.A. businesses in the mid-1980s and recruited downtown L.A.'s Capital Group Cos. Inc. to open a data center in its region in 2010; Capital now has 2,500 jobs in the area.

Robert Kleinhenz, chief economist for the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp., isn't worried, though.

"Yes, we do see some businesses leave and take jobs with them," he said. "We also see businesses come into the area and bring jobs with them."

– Bailey Brewer

So Much Walking at Car Museum

More than 30 years ago, Terry L. Karges was feeling burned out from a career working in theme parks such as Disneyland and Sea World. He tried to figure out his next move.



Behind the Wheel: Karges.

"I thought, 'What am I missing in my life?'" he said. "It dawned on me that the only pictures I had on the walls at work were pictures of race cars."

Karges went on to a second career in the

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CHARLES CRUMPLEY

auto industry, which included working in sales and marketing at car parts suppliers and running his own drag-racing team.

Last Monday, Karges, now 67, started as executive director of the Petersen Automotive Museum. On his first day on the job, he walked through the museum, met staff and asked each one to submit ideas for the future.

But there was one task that surprised the lifelong car enthusiast: the amount of walking required to check out the museum's various nooks and crannies.

"I'm getting a lot of exercise moving around the museum," he said. "Let's put it this way: I wore driving shoes in here today. Tomorrow, I think we'll see tennis shoes."

Tastes Good, Though

Christina DiSalvo is such a horse person that riding figures prominently in both her job and charity work.

An equine insurance expert at Momentous Insurance Brokerage in Van Nuys, DiSalvo recently arranged for her company to sponsor

the Aim for the Moon fundraiser at Gibson Ranch in Sunland, where she boards her three Arabians. The Aug. 4 event raised money for Dusty's Riders, a non-profit group that gives at-risk youth the chance to ride and groom horses. The organization is named for Dusty, a horse at Gibson Ranch.

DiSalvo, who started riding at age 6 and is now 35, got involved with the event after Robert "Dale"

Gibson, a professional stunt rider and owner of the ranch, invited her to a planning meeting.

"Horse lovers are a big family community," she said. "It was only natural for me and our equine practice to rally behind Dale."

Aim for the Moon started with a two-hour trail ride followed by a cowboy barbecue and barn dance. A big feature was a silent auction of donated desserts to raise additional money for Dusty's Riders.

The desserts included a red, white and blue flag-shaped cake and a moon-shaped cake that made reference to the fund-raiser's title. But one dessert stood out as something only horse folk could appreciate.

"It was a chocolate cake decorated on top to look like a cow pie," DiSalvo said. "It was a hit."

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