DDC continues implementation of pRFID projects

By Jessica Roman, DDC Public Affairs

Defense Distribution Center, or DDC, is currently embarking on an ambitious project to implement passive radio frequency identification devices, or pRFID, at its distribution facilities. Eighteen DDC distribution centers will be activated for pRFID between October 2009 and January 2010.

Department of Defense, or DoD, has implemented the DoD Automatic Information Technology, or AIT, Implementation Plan and Concept of Operations, where pRFID will be used as a primary AIT for the transportation layer. Each of the military services requires DoD to label their shipments with pRFID.

pRFID labels allow for the hands-free identification and tracking of material as it passes through strategically placed pRFID readers. The pRFID labels are non-line-of-sight, meaning that when receiving the information on a shipment, the readers capture all pRFID labels in the range it is able to read.

Divert portal to determine lane assignments

Louis Fingerman, supply chain management specialist, noted several advantages for pRFID, "By utilizing pRFID, DDC gains enhanced visibility to shipments in the DoD pipeline, as well as reduced receipt processing time."

New Scanning device being tested

New procurement material passes through a pRFID portal. If the shipment contains pRFID labels, the Distribution Standard System, or DSS, annotates the date, time, and location and assigns a Receipt Control Number. DSS is programmed to use the pRFID label and Advanced Shipment Information during the receipt process.

DDC's process that makes use of pRFID begins when DSS receives a material release order, or MRO. A selector then proceeds to the first item's pick location, as directed by DSS. The selector scans the location from the location label. They then scan and verify the national stock number, or NSN, and the pick control number. Using a handheld scanner, the selector then scans the pRFID label, affixes the label to the material, and stages the order for packing.

DDC is also implementing three projects at the Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, Calif., or DDJC. The first project, Fast Lane Receiving, enables the use of vendor pRFID labels in the receiving process. DDJC has four receiving lanes specifically dedicated to pRFID. The receiving conveyor diverts shipments to the receiving lanes based on whether or not the package has a functioning pRFID label and associated Advanced Shipment Notice (electronic information). It is envisioned that this project will increase inventory accuracy, and shorten the receiving process. The Fast Lane Receiving project began at DDJC in August, and if successful, a standardized approach to improve receiving operations will be implemented at additional distribution centers.

Secondly, the next DDJC project is Intra-depot Transportation. While utilizing pRFID labels, this project supports enhanced visibility between the mission-side and the Containerization Consolidation Point, or CCP. As packages move through pRFID receivers, an email is sent to a DDJC dispatcher to alert that material is ready for pick up.

The third and largest pRFID project at DDJC is the CCP Freight

Terminal. A hardware and software package, called Mojix, is utilized to read pRFID labels everywhere in the warehouse. By using repeaters, Mojix plots the location of anything containing a pRFID label within five feet or less on an electronic diagram of the warehouse. This provides for increased visibility of items, reduces resource time for finding lost packages, can reduce costs by having only one pRFID device, rather than multiple pRFID door portals, and will hopefully provide us with the capability to reduce open lines for shipments shipped but not closed out in DSS.

All three projects are providing DDC the opportunity to test out state-of-the art pRFID equipment that will enhance distribution operations and improve productivity.

DDRT employees becoming "greener" thanks to expanded recycling programs

By Emily Blubaugh, DDC Public Affairs

Alongside their efforts in supporting the Warfighter, the leadership and employees of Defense Distribution Depot Red River, Texas, or DDRT, have adopted an additional mission: create a greener Texarkana.

DDRT has been semi-green since a white paper and cardboard recycling program was introduced in its Distribution Receiving department in October 2008. These efforts are now being expanded upon with the participation of DDRT's administrative and support directorate.

Under the program, spearheaded by Terry Carter, supervisory distribution facilities specialist, each employee has a separate wastebasket for recycling white paper. When the wastebaskets are full they are collected along with the cardboard, and are then emptied into larger containers which are then emptied into a main recycling container.

Currently, these participants are receiving inquiries from other divisions about how they can join in the recycling.

According to Carter, he sees the movement as integral not to just DDRT, but throughout the Defense Distribution Center. "DDC as a whole has several initiatives in place to go greener. Everything from recycling paper to using energy efficient light fixtures is being done now across all the depots."

Terry Carter, supervisory distribution facilities specialist at the Defense Distribution Depot Red River, Texas, or DDRT, is shown delivering new recycling containers to various offices around DDRT.

In addition to the white paper and cardboard recycling, DDRT has purchased flashlights which run on an electrical charge, thus reducing battery usage, resulting in a cost savings. Once recharged, the lights are good for 8 to ten hours based on use.

The lights, in combination with the warehouse's energy-efficient motion sensing lighting, are setting in motion a plan to create not only a greener DDRT, but a greener Texarkana.

The expansion on the existing program at DDRT comes before Texarkana implements changes to increase participation in its recycling program. Due to launch in January 2010, the expanded program, which includes distribution of larger receptacles to handle recyclables, will serve to make it easier for residents to participate in recycling.

DDRT hopes that the knowledge city officials provide to the public regarding the impact recycling has on the environment will make its own recycling efforts easier.

DDRT doesn't just focus on what employees can do at work to decrease their energy usage, but also what they can do at home. In DDRT's July 2009 newsletter, ideas are offered on how employees can further their green efforts with small adjustments such as switching to electronic bills, statements and payments, turning the thermostat down one degree, and air-drying clothing on clothes lines or drying racks.