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Overnight service launched from Jo'burg to Maputo

JAMES HALL

MBABANE Hot on the success of its start-up Johannesburg to Botswana overnight consolidated service, Swaziland-based Express Cargo plans to extend its service within the month to Maputo, Maseru and Bloemfontein.

"We will be operating a groupage service from Johannesburg to Maputo from November 1. The delivery time will be four days because of customs which is a bit of a challenge there," said company manager Mark Svenningsen.

While a courier service takes three days, Svenningsen says: "We are a bit of a different animal from courier. Other consolidators drop off their deliveries at customs in Maputo, and

customers have to go and pick up their goods. We deliver to the customer's door. This adds another day or two because we handle the customs work, but we believe we are adding value with this service."

Vehicles will depart Johannesburg for Maputo daily, Monday through Friday.

"We are in our fifth month of the Botswana service, with trucks leaving Johannesburg Monday through Thursday to Gaborone. It's overnight from Johannesburg, two days from Durban. Goods are pre-cleared via EDI on the SA side, and in the near future will be cleared by EDI on the Botswana side, too," said Svenningsen.

Swift delivery of groupage goods from Johannesburg to Maseru also begins



*Mark Svenningsen...
'Services also launched to Maseru and Bloemfontein.'*

November 1, where the final hurdle toward establishment of the service has been cleared: the acquisition of a warehouse. That same day sees the launch of the Johannesburg to Bloemfontein route.

Unions want compensation for crew of hijacked ship

TERRY HUTSON

A SMALL general cargo ship, Danica White, which arrived in Durban last week, was at the centre of a dispute involving Danish trade unionists, who were ready to go to court to fight for compensation on behalf of three crew members.

The ship became world news in June when it was hijacked by Somali pirates and later held for ransom. Eighty days later the ship was released into the custody of a French warship, after a ransom of US\$1.5 million (R10.5m) was allegedly paid by the owners to free the ship and crew, a decision that has earned fierce criticism from

several circles including the Danish government.

Now the union wants adequate compensation paid to the three ordinary seamen serving on the ship (which had a total crew of six). It was en route from Dubai to Tanzania with a cargo of building materials when seized.

The union says the ship's master placed the ship and crew in danger by sailing too close to the coast in waters known to harbour pirates. They want US\$1.8m (12.6m) for the three crewmen, for back wages (while they were in the pirates' custody) and compensation for suffering and trauma to them and their families.