



Seaford Transfer is Going Places

After 30 years, family-owned moving business has grown to major transportation service

By Melissa James, York County Contributor



The Moore family will never forget the day they achieved what they were told was unlikely, if not impossible, for Seaford Transfer: their interstate military authority. This designation places them in a select number of companies (most of them big household names) that can conduct out-of-state moves for military families.

About 800 applicants tried to get the interstate military authority when it was available—only 12 made it. In typical government understatement, they informed the Moores via a one-sentence email.

"It was a big coup for us," said Kathy Moore, co-owner. "We called one of the big moving companies to say we'd gotten it, and they said, 'No, you didn't. You couldn't have.' You could hear whispers on the line, then they put

us on speaker, then made us send them the email!" The big company was excited, because by partnering with Seaford Transfer, they too would benefit from the "SCAC code" that came with this designation—worth millions of dollars.

Staying a close-knit, local business while also playing in the big leagues is a hallmark of Seaford Transfer's success.



Two generations of the Moore family operate Seaford Transfer: (from left) Jeff, Kathy and Reggie.

Jeff and Kathy Moore purchased the operation back in 1989, when Jeff was an engineer and Kathy was working in banking. During a chance encounter at a PTA meeting, a woman mentioned to them that she and her husband were moving away and were looking for someone to take over their business, Seaford Transfer. It was a side job for the original owners—conducted during nights and weekends. But true to their name, the Moores saw potential for more.

Jeff and Kathy quit their jobs and devoted themselves to the company. They operated Seaford Transfer from their home for 13 years, and each of their three children remembers folding packing paper in the living room when they were little. But what started as two moving trucks soon became 13, and their driveway in Seaford grew so packed that they received a letter from the County about the nuisance. The Moores decided it was time to develop a piece of land they owned on Freedom Boulevard. To help with the costs, they applied for and received a business assistance grant from York County's Economic Development Authority in 2001.

"[Office of Economic Development Director] Jim Noel really facilitated moving things along," said Jeff. "Codes and compliance were difficult to get through, but Jim was so helpful in leading us in the right direction." A year after receiving the letter, Seaford Transfer moved into its new digs. Jeff had put back on his engineer hat and designed the building himself. Those same technical skills have come in handy for servicing the fleet of vehicles and equipment. Kathy, meanwhile, continues to adeptly manage the business's finances.

Rounding out their leadership, son Reggie joined the team in 2010 after earning his broker's license, then deciding real estate wasn't for him. Reggie holds a degree in economics, bringing a wealth of business expertise to help Seaford Transfer run more efficiently and grow its services and market. (Siblings Tony and Jessica live elsewhere in Virginia, working in trucking and at the U.S. Patent Office, respectively).

"We've tried to update our technology as we've gone along. We switched to doing digital surveys out in the field, which has sped up the process of getting estimates to our customers—if you take too long in this business, they find someone else!" said Reggie. He also helped his parents add back freight as a service, which had been too time-consuming previously, but which Reggie streamlined through online management systems.



In addition to residential moves and freight handling, Seaford Transfer offers storage, as well as specialty services—especially for commercial moves.

"We've done a lot of big commercial jobs: print shops with heavy industrial machines, electron microscopes from William & Mary, high-value equipment from Northrup Grumman," said Jeff.

"And the Canon executives use our services," added Kathy, "We have a good reputation with the Japanese community. Anyone sent here from Japan to work, they will deliver them down to Hampton Roads ... and hire us to finish the move, because we're very respectful of their culture. They like for you not to wear your shoes in the house. For a normal customer who asks us to take our shoes off, we can't do that due to liability. But we'll remove shoes on their jobs—two movers stay outside with their shoes on, and two go in. No one else will do that for them, so they call us."

"What makes us stand out is our willingness and ability to do things a lot of the movers in this area can't or won't do," said Reggie. "We get calls from Allied and Wheaton and other van lines, to ask if we can go move a safe from the house onto the truck. So we go out to a job where a customer hired a different mover and do the hardest part of the job."

And then, of course, the designations the company has earned give it access to moving jobs that other companies legally can't touch. In addition to their interstate military authority, the Moores worked with the Virginia Movers and Warehouse Association to secure both their interstate and intrastate authorities—at the same time!

"That allowed us to operate in all 48 contiguous states, which makes us a van line," said Kathy. "It was super-hard to get back then. It was a big win for us!"

Despite the heights Seaford Transfer has reached in its industry, the company maintains its commitment to treating staff and customers like family.

"Moving is one of the top five significant emotional events, so we don't always get to deal with people in their best mood," said Jeff, "but 99 times out of 100, people are happy. We have fun when we go out and do moves. One worker left after 15 years for a better paying job, but came back 6 months later because he said at the other place, 'nobody cares.' Everyone here cares!"

"We hire people who are clean cut, responsible and take it seriously when they come to interview," said Kathy. "Our staff is incredible."

The Moores described a couple they recently helped move from their home to assisted living. They had just finished loading up in Seaford, and the foreman, Justin, helped the wife into her vehicle after switching from her normal oxygen machine to a portable one. Within one minute, Justin noticed that her legs were turning purple. Certain something was wrong, he ran back to the moving truck, pulled out the oxygen machine, plugged it in, and gave it to her. It turns out the portable had malfunctioned and was not giving her enough oxygen. It was not in his job description, Kathy said, but he probably saved her life.



Like every business, Seaford Transfer has its challenges.

"Fly-by-night guys with a truck take the business away, who charge less but will give you major problems," said Reggie. "The proof is going to be during the move. We've had people come back and say, 'We're so sorry we didn't go with you.' "

Outside the office, Jeff stays busy with boating and motorcycles, while Kathy enjoys cooking and gardening. Reggie spends time with his wife,

Meredith, and children Mason, 6, and Allie, 5, and also finds time to coach swimming at York High. All of them live in York County.

With many business awards and nonprofit support endeavors, Seaford Transfer is making a deep impact on the community. The Moores are considering growing their storage business and expanding into distribution, by adding another building. In the meantime, they're focused on relationship building. As Jeff said:

"The No. 1 favorite thing for all of us is the interaction that we have with our customers and the public."

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