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Longtime Sunteck exec starts own freight brokerage after brief retirement

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A longtime Jacksonville logistics leader is starting his own company, after his brief retirement.

Mike Williams, former CEO, COO and general counsel for Sunteck, is now the leader of Aagex Feight Group, a Jacksonville Beach agent-based third party logistics provider.

The company will have motor carrier authority and will operate commercial vehicles, as well have broker authority to broker freight and serve as a non-asset logistics company.

Williams has been in the logistics business since he came to Jacksonville in 1995 with his law degree.

After working at Sunteck for more than eight years, he retired for just over a year.

“It was a pretty intense eight-and-a-half years,” Williams said in an exclusive interview with the Business Journal. “When I started the company was headquartered in Boca Raton. I commuted back and forth many



SPECIAL

Mike Williams, CEO of AAGEX

years. Over the course of time the company migrated its more corporate functions to Jacksonville.”

The company was sold to a private equity firm in 2013, and Williams stayed on for just over a year-and-a-half, serving as CEO.

“When you run hard and fast for eight-and-a-half years, and you sell the company to new investors with new ideas, there’s opportunities to go in different directions,” he said. “So I took time to take a breather and have more of a relaxed lifestyle than the fast-paced world.”

That meant creating his Jacksonville Beach law practice, which he will continue doing pro-bono work out of representing children in dependency court, and running his charity, which protects children from sexual abuse.

But after a year Williams said he was ready to get back into the transportation & logistics business.

“I have a real passion for the business, driven by my passion for working with entrepreneurs and small business owners,” he said.

Aagex, which stands for American Freight Agent Exchange, will be an agent-only network. Rather than having employees, all of the sales team will be independent contractors, who earn a variable commission based on how successful they are in pricing, getting customers, etc.

“Our agency model is clear-cut,” Williams said. “The benefit shows up in your paycheck that week. It’s easier to motivate sales. Agents are entrepreneurs, they take risk in their own performance. I love to work with those that take risk and love to support them.”

The company will have between 10 to 15 employees, with about seven to nine in Jacksonville and the remainder in Georgia. Those employees will be back-office and clerical support. Williams said he is now hiring agents.

While other companies, such as Landstar or Sunteck, use the agent-based model, Williams said his expertise and customer service will help set the company apart.

“A lot of these T&L companies are commoditized in the type of service they offer:

they say 'we keep up with tech advancements or regulatory advancements.' Ultimately, it's up to the competency of the team. Our basic services are in line with our competitors," Williams said.

"But I think I make a difference in the mix. I know what success looks like. It's important in an agent model to find the balance in commission, what you have after is for your platform to have top notch infrastructure. You have to have someone experience at the helm I think to have that value."

Jensen Werley

Reporter

Jacksonville Business Journal