

Concord company finds use for old SNHU furniture in Somalia, Armenia

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By NICK REID, Monitor staff

Enough furniture to fill 11 shipping containers is being collected from the campus of Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester this week and sent to charities in Somalia and Armenia.

Casella Waste Systems, which manages waste and recycling for SNHU, hired IRN – The Reuse Network to coordinate this effort. Concord-based IRN works with colleges, public schools, corporations, hospitals and other entities when they're replacing furniture to find a new use for it.

IRN Project Manager Emerson Lennon said the company will spend four days filling 40-foot ocean containers with furniture from SNHU, which will be driven to a port and sent overseas.

SNHU is "undergoing a renovation, so we're the first piece in that puzzle, because they need to get everything out of the dorms," Lennon said. "It'll constantly be furniture coming down and going right up into the trailer."

Lennon said some of the furniture will go to a new housing community that is being built in Somalia, and the rest will go to Armenia. IRN works with 150 charities that make requests for furniture. About 60 percent of the recipients are outside the country, he said.

The company started in New Hampshire about 15 years ago, and now operates in 28 states. It has about 15 employees based in New Hampshire and California.

The project at SNHU will be the second this year in New Hampshire, Lennon said, following a removal from Concord High School in January that sent furniture to Jamaica.



Dan Fielders, a subcontractor for Diamond Relocation pushes a desk up into a container truck bound for either Somalia or Armenia at Washington Hall on the SNHU campus in Hooksett on Monday. More than 1,000 pieces of furniture were donated from the residence hall. (GEOFF FORESTER / Monitor staff)



A container truck that will be transporting the donated furniture to Somalia and Armenia from the SNHU campus is parked outside Washington Hall on Monday. More than 1,000 pieces of furniture from Washington Hall were donated. (GEOFF FORESTER / Monitor staff)