

Business **Outlook**

eye in the sky

BY LISA ABEYTA

For the Journal

It is, unfortunately, quite common for people to drive their dinged-up cars into the parking lots of a business or a school and blame the damage on someone else.

It costs insurance companies, the businesses themselves and taxpayers millions of dollars a year in bogus insurance claims.

It costs a lot unless the school or business has a good surveillance system such as those provided by Energy Control Inc. in Rio Rancho.

So says the company's president, Jack McGowan, who adds that he has seen many such scenarios.

One school's principal said he was having a terrible time with kids coming to school with dents they had put into their parents' cars, then blaming it on an accident in the school parking lot, McGowan says.

"The video evidence has put a stop to that, saving the school district thousands of dollars in insurance claims," he says.

ECI describes itself as providing "computer-based technology solutions for efficiency, security and safety in commercial and institutional buildings."

Incorporating technology from Israel, long known for its security prowess,

ENERGY
CONTROL'S
EXPANSION
INTO
SECURITY
HELPS
CLIENTS
SAVE MONEY



This is one of the remote surveillance cameras used by Energy Control Inc.

DEAN HANBON/JOURNAL
Energy Control Inc. president Jack McGowan, left, and CEO Bruce Cantrell show up on a surveillance camera in the company's parking lot. ECI provides energy management and security systems.

ECI has developed a system capable of wireless on-site security and monitoring and integrated it with comfort-control systems.

The company uses state-of-the-art security cameras, monitors, software and other equipment from Yehud, Israel-based MATE Media Access Technologies and Buzz-VC, McGowan says.

Special Buzz-VC software allows cameras to detect intruders. System

operators can create secure areas in the camera's field of view and, if one pixel changes, it sets off a virtual trip wire and alarm.

ECI is one of the first U.S. companies to put these products to use, McGowan says.

Albuquerque Academy is a good example of the dual services ECI provides.

The company installed an energy management and automation system for the school's buildings, and upgraded many of the energy components on campus to reduce costs. The company also installed security cameras and equipment for 24-hour-a-day monitoring from ECI's surveillance center.

The result is a high-tech system that allows one person to check temperatures in a specific area of a building at the click of a mouse and adjust systems to accommodate changes for more energy efficiency. Live monitors allow teachers to check parking lots anytime. And remote-controlled cameras allow activity to be recorded throughout the campus.

Founded during the energy crisis of the '70s by Bruce Cantrell, the company originally focused on using technology to analyze what energy was being consumed in a facility and implement technology to use it more efficiently, says McGowan.

Adds Cantrell, "I saw the crisis as an opportunity to find a better solution to the inefficient way we use energy."

The company initially consisted of Cantrell and his brother, but they added



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three more by the end of the first year. As the business focus expanded to include security and remote-control access, the company grew.

“At one time we had offices in

Says McGowan, “The bank finances the project, which means that they loan the money to the customer to pay ECI. Therefore ECI gets paid by the bank in progress payments as the project is

does this protect the company from unreasonable claims, it also protects the customer when damage does occur.

“Cameras don’t lie,” Chalmers says. “It helps us know when we are

This is a portable, wireless monitor used by Energy Control Inc.

Jack McGowan, left, is president and Bruce Cantrell is CEO of Energy Control Inc.

FOCUS ON:
Energy Control Inc.

PRINCIPALS: Bruce Cantrell (currently turning over ownership to several key employees)

PRODUCTS/SERVICES: Energy management, security systems

FOUNDED: 1976

LOCATIONS: Two, in Rio Rancho and Las Cruces

WEB SITE: www.energyctrl.com

ANNUAL SALES: Growing about 50 percent per year for last three years; projected average of \$7 million for this year

EMPLOYEES: 40

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Denver, Phoenix and Dallas, but it made more sense to have one base in Albuquerque with a branch office in Las Cruces. So we now do everything from one of those two locations,” McGowan says.

Currently the company has 40 employees and 30 service trucks.

ECI said it also provides a unique financing system for customers.

“We go in and assess their current situation,” McGowan says. “We do a complete analysis of what needs to be repaired, what needs to be upgraded, and what needs to be replaced. Then we provide an estimate of how much the new system will save them in dollars from better energy control over a period of time.”

ECI said it is a state-approved vendor to public schools and it also helps provide the financing for such systems. Schools using ECI systems include: New Mexico Military Institute, Santa Fe Public Schools and Albuquerque Academy.

implemented and the customer approves payments. The bank is then repaid by the customer over time with the cost savings that the project generates.”

Similar terms were made available to Don Chalmers, owner of the Don Chalmers Ford auto dealership in Rio Rancho. “We were able to completely amortize the loan in just three years from the cost savings we realized,” Chalmers says.

And while Chalmers initially approached ECI for an overhaul of the company’s energy systems, Chalmers eventually signed on for the security aspects as well.

“We used to have a security guard here around the clock when no one was here. Now we have monitoring at all times.”

The security cameras are also useful for more than catching criminals in the act: They provide a way for the company to document auto damage on a vehicle before it is serviced. Not only

responsible for anything and allows us to make it right.”

Focus on business reports on companies that demonstrate successes, failures or innovations in their operations. If your company has implemented an idea that “makes business work” or has come up with a creative solution to a business problem, give us a call at 823-3834.



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