



Problem solver

Redlands company on tech forefront

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The U.S. invasion of Iraq inspired the think tanks behind Advatech Pacific Inc. to come up with a new product.

The 19-year-old Redlands-based aerospace engineering company has developed uGATE - a product to solve communications problems that has been getting positive feedback from military agencies as well as local first responders.

When troops pushed into Iraq, some of them got too far ahead of the rest, resulting in the breakdown of their voice communication system, said Joe Holland, chief engineer at Advatech.

"They didn't have a communication pathway back to their command center and wound up - they basically walked into the teeth of fairly classic ambush set up by the Iraqi army," said Holland, who uses his expertise in engineering and technology to oversee Advatech's many projects.

The company began working with the Office of Naval Research and the Marine Corps System Command to develop uGATE.

The product line, uGATE C-Plus, was designed to be used by first responders to major disasters or incidents, such as the fire and police departments.

uGATE C-Plus allows agencies to use their existing equipment to set up instant command centers in the field near the event. They can also use regular telephone lines and satellite phones to connect to anyone in the world.

"We've gotten extremely positive responses to everybody we showed it to, but at the same time they're all strapped for money," said Kenneth Moore, vice president of business development at Advatech.

The product is still new as far as getting it out commercially, but most sales have been through the military, he said.

The tight economy is making it more difficult to sell to fire and police departments.

"Right now with the economy like it is they all seem to love it and all want it, but don't have the money for it right now," Moore said.

Anticipated grant money should make communications purchases more possible in the near future, Moore said.

"We think that will open up market again and give us again some ability to make some sales," he said.

Although company officials are facing some

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difficulty in getting their product in the hands of first responders, they are seeing continual growth from their other products.

The majority of Advatech's work is related to multidisciplinary engineering software as well as analysis and design of aerospace structures and turbine engines. Much of its work is for the Defense Department.

While the main office is in Redlands, Advatech has offices in Palmdale, Tempe, Ariz., Cebu City in the Philippines and a small site in San Diego.

"Actually, we're having a good year," Moore said. "We're meeting our goals as far as projection of revenue. A lot of things we've been looking at are coming to fruition."

Advatech is also looking to fill numerous positions to help expand the uGATE product line.

"We're a \$10 (million)- or \$11 million-revenue company and we're looking at maybe exceeding a little bit of that," Moore said. "We've got enough things in the works I think we'll have a couple of good years."

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