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## **Security firm combines high-tech systems to help area facilities**

by Taris Savell

The business of protecting one's business is an essential one. Industry analysts say that businesses without alarm systems are 4.5 times more likely to be burglarized than commercial locations with electronic security in place. And, as with other industries providing services to tech-savvy business owners, businesses want the latest in technology and innovation.

Sonitrol has developed what it calls an "innovative approach to security."

One such way this is being accomplished is by combining video surveillance equipment, SonaVision, with the company's verified audio detection system. Sona-Vision allows a person to know what's going on when not watching because the system's operators see movement anytime an activation signal is received.

According to Angela Baroco, security consultant/market manager for Sonitrol of Northwest Florida, whether a business has five or 50 employees, protection against loss and personal safety is vital.

"We are the only company nationwide with impact activated audio detection. Activation sends a trigger alarm and while other companies may have audio capability, it's not what activates the alarm," Baroco said. "With SonaVision, our central station in Tallahassee watches video as it happens, it's live."

A business can have one system or both installed. The cost of just the audio generally runs between \$1,200 to \$1,500. However, because of improved technology and the competitive marketplace, the average price of a security system has decreased in the last seven years.

"A Sonitrol system is cost-effective because it prevents loss, rather than just alerting you that a loss has already occurred," Baroco said. According to STAT Resources Inc., about half of the businesses installing alarm systems have annual revenues of less than \$250,000 per year and employ four or fewer employees.

Jim Haley, owner of Davis Pawn on Fairfield, can testify to its advantages.

Haley said that before he installed Sonitrol he had a number of burglaries. "The Sonitrol system has caught 17 burglars," he said.

Haley, 77, also credits the fast response of the Escambia County Sheriff's Office in catching the criminals. "With Sonitrol, everything is recorded as it's happening. They've caught the burglars on the roof, inside and even one on the side of the building," he said.

Sonitrol has a list of diversified clients in the area, including Escambia County Employees Credit Union, Pensacola High School and even the Girl Scouts of Northwest Florida.

According to Girl Scouts Executive Director Cindy Nelson, the company does its due diligence, even calling her if the alarm is not set when the last employee leaves.

"Lightning struck it once and when I got there - I live three minutes from the office - the fire department and police were there. Those people (the monitoring operators) are not just sitting there sipping Coke. They're plugged in," she said.

Television crime shows such as "CSI" can glamorize the modern technological equipment that detects and results in catching the perpetrator. And according to local officials, early signal detection has helped Northwest Florida law enforcement.

Technological advantages include a low false alarm rate and detection while an intruder is still attempting to gain entry. Also, operators can continuously inform law enforcement of activity inside a building.

PHOTO

Angela Baroco

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Section: Pensacola Business Journal

Page: 18A

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