



# Homeland security finds homegrown resources:

Kentucky workforce, research help with national security, public safety efforts

BY SARAH RAZOR

The heightened attention to safety and security has spurred the growth and development in Kentucky of businesses and research facilities that provide local, state and federal governments with state-of-the-art safety equipment and technology.

As the organizations develop products that are marketed internationally, they also are having an economic and social impact on their communities.

Here is a closer look at some Kentucky companies that focus on security products.

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## Lion Apparel, Beattyville

Beattyville Mayor Charles Beach III describes Lion Apparel as a community fixture.

“They are very involved corporate citizens who have helped out for many, many years with scholarships for the local students, fire equipment for the fire stations and just a strong connection to the community,” he said.

Lion Apparel, which located in Beattyville nearly 30 years ago, sells clothing and gear to police and fire

departments, civilian government agencies, emergency services and military organizations worldwide. The family-owned company is based in Dayton, Ohio, and has nearly 300 employees in Kentucky, including about 125 employees in Beattyville.

Lion employees’ community involvement led to the company being recognized with the local chamber of commerce’s Industry of the Year award. The employees’ volunteer efforts include Habitat for Humanity, the county school system and community festivals. Several employees also serve on the Lee or Owsley county fire departments.

In August, the Chicago Fire Department awarded a \$10 million contract to Lion Apparel for supply and maintenance of firefighter protective clothing and equipment. The contract, which is expected to run through 2008, begins with an initial order of 4,700 turnout coats and 9,400 turnout pants that will be produced in Beattyville. The new style of equipment—which covers the entire body, keeping firefighters drier and safer from burns—has already been adopted by many other major cities.

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## M2 Technologies, Inc., Lexington

It isn’t every day that you come across a small, woman-owned company that touts itself as being both a high-tech defense contractor and equine veterinary equipment developer. At first, it might be difficult to understand how any company could combine the horse industry and national defense, but it’s a logical connection for M2 Technologies, Inc.

M2 Technologies began in 1996 as the brainchild of Janet Morris and her husband, Chris, while they were living in Massachusetts. The company’s early focus was to help governments and the military develop equipment and technology that would give them non-lethal means of stopping enemies.

A passion for Morgan horses prompted the couple to buy a farm just outside of Lexington in 2003 to bring them closer to Kentucky’s unique equine resources. After moving to Kentucky, Janet Morris developed a partnership with the University of Kentucky College of

Engineering.

"UK's engineering skill set coupled with Kentucky's horse assets made for a perfect location for M2 and the Morrises," said Roger Deon, program manager for M2 Technologies.

Through the partnership, faculty and graduate and undergraduate students have helped develop an anti-sniper infrared targeting system (ASITS) that uses an infrared sensor to track a bullet's heat, helping soldiers pinpoint the origin of enemy sniper fire. The new design, which will be especially helpful near civilians, is said to be more accurate than current methods that depend on acoustics to locate a sniper. ASITS is still in testing stages, but Deon estimates that production is approximately 18 months away.

"Strong efforts are being made to base production of ASITS in Kentucky. Once it goes into production, it will likely have a huge economic impact on Kentucky," he said.

M2 Technologies makes it a priority to use local resources and facilities when possible. As part of the testing phase, the company has developed a working relationship with the nearby Blue Grass Sportsman League shooting range in Wilmore to test the new ASITS technology. Area Boy Scouts helped build the research building at the range to obtain their Eagle Scout ranking.

M2 Technologies, which also has offices in New Hampshire, Kansas, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Ohio and Virginia, has 27 employees nationwide, with 20 employees located in Lexington. M2's Lexington office is the only facility working on numerous equestrian projects. Those include a portable equine isolation chamber for veterinarians that is to be produced in time for the 2010 FEI Alltech World Equestrian Games.

"We have a long-term commitment to Kentucky, to the equine industry and to developing products that are applicable to the real world," Deon said.

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### **Electronic Warfare Associates Government Systems, Inc., Bowling Green**

Bowling Green became home to Electronic Warfare Associates, Inc., a

company specializing in defense and broad-based information technology, in early 2005 when EWA became the first participant in Western Kentucky University's Small Business Accelerator program.

The accelerator program provides state-of-the-art office suites as an incentive for science and technology companies to locate in Bowling Green.

"We considered several locations in a number of states before deciding to locate in Bowling Green," Doug Armstrong, president of EWA Government Systems, Inc., said during a recent press conference. "The favorable business climate, the presence of a well-educated and motivated workforce and the overall quality of life for our employees were the deciding factors."

The Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority approved tax benefits for EWA under an incentive program aimed at increasing the number of service- and technology-related jobs in the state.

Headquartered in Herndon, Va., EWA has facilities in Canada, Australia, Bulgaria and Italy and throughout the United States. The company provides information technology products and services to state and local governments, law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Department of Defense and other federal agencies. The Bowling Green branch will focus primarily on homeland security projects and support to the national intelligence community.

EWA collaborates with the engineering schools at the University of Louisville and WKU, and looks to the schools to provide a workforce. About 20 new software engineering jobs were created with the Bowling Green opening; more growth is expected in coming years.

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### **Education, research efforts focus on homeland security**

In addition to several partnerships with national defense contractors, many of Kentucky's colleges and universities are working on homeland security efforts through grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Since 2003, Kentucky schools

have been awarded \$34 million from DHS for a number of security measures, including the development of a tracking system for cattle, various surveillance systems, mass communication coordination in emergency situations and portable command systems to use in emergency response.

Many colleges and universities are also designing programs to prepare graduates for jobs in homeland security, emergency response and public safety. Midway College will soon offer an undergraduate degree in homeland security assessment. The program, which is funded through tuition and private donations, will address homeland security from a business-management perspective, including coursework on minimizing the economic impact of terrorism and protecting employees as well as sensitive information. Eastern Kentucky University also offers graduate programs that include coursework on homeland security, emergency response and intelligence analysis.

Kentucky also is competing for a national bio- and agri-defense facility to serve as a hub for homeland security scientific research. In August, DHS officials announced that a site near Somerset is one of the 14 finalists in the nation.

DHS estimates the facility, scheduled to open in 2012, could employ more than 400 people with an annual payroll of \$30.5 million.

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