



The Commercial Network

Commercial Services Inc.

National Coverage with a Small Business Attitude

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Commercial Monitoring Technologies, Inc. (CMT) provides nationwide alarm monitoring for Commercial customers. Unlike our competitors, we offer our customers personalized service with a single point of contact as opposed to simply being handed off to the next available national account manager. We have the ability to customize our program to your needs. Depending on the programs that our customers Facilities and Loss Prevention Departments have in place, we can assist with reports that show irregularities in arming/disarming times as well as looking for patterns in alarm activity. For the customer who simply wants to have the AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction) notified when an alarm is activated, to the customer who is looking for weekly reports showing how many times each location armed/disarmed out of their designated window and everything in between; Commercial Monitoring Technologies is the way to go. We offer a specialized team that works with our customers on a daily basis to solve problems at individual locations.

"As the Account Manager for CMT, I am notified via email any time there is irregular activity on any account that we monitor. This ranges from a missed timer test on a fire alarm account, to a trouble signal from a door contact on a security account", remarked Josh Cole. When we receive these notifications we research the signal and service history on that account and look for any type of pattern that could explain why the signal was activated. This is where CMT really distances itself from the

competition. While your typical alarm monitoring station will notify a designated call list when a signal is received, CMT goes the extra mile to see why the signal was activated, and if any irregularity is found. We then make a recommendation to the customer for resolving the issue. We regularly meet with Loss Prevention personnel from various customers to discuss common issues that we see; not only from an equipment standpoint but also to partner in problem solving procedural issues. Our team knows how to maximize the equipment that our customers have, as well as recommend the "best fit" equipment to help the customer accomplish the goals and objectives that they have. CMT also has the ability to partner with Commercial Fire Inc. to provide service for the alarm systems that we monitor. With cooperation between the two companies, we can offer the customer a "one-stop" provider for service in fire and security monitoring.

Josh Cole has been employed with Commercial Monitoring and Commercial Fire since June 2005. As Account Manager for both companies, he plays an integral part at Commercial.



AEDs & Fire Extinguishers Side by Side



Not only is February the month of valentines, it is also American Heart Month. February is long past and you may surmise this as old news, but with increasing incidents of sudden cardiac arrest; CPR and AED use should always be in the forefront.

Sudden cardiac arrest strikes more than 350,000 Americans every year, contributing to coronary heart disease as our nation's leading cause of death. When left untreated, about 95% of people who experience sudden cardiac arrest die before they reach the hospital. If more people were trained in CPR and had the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) more lives could be saved.

Last year The American Heart Association changed its national CPR guidelines to recommend hands-only CPR for untrained bystanders and common lay people, hoping to help increase the comfort level of first responders stepping up to assist in saving a life in an emergency situation. These new guidelines provide an alternative to people who are uneasy about giving rescue breaths.

San Diego City Council passed the first-in-the-nation bill including Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) as a requirement under the municipal building code. San Diego, CA President Pro Tem, Jim Madaffer commented in the Mission Times Courier, "San Diego is moving beyond measures that require lifesaving AEDs in only certain types of buildings, such as schools or recreational facilities. *This legislation grasped the point that wherever large numbers of people gather, there needs to be an AED and appropriate training just as there needs to be a fire extinguisher.*"

Statistics show that 96 people die from sudden cardiac arrest for every one fire death. When a shock is delivered by an AED within a few minutes of cardiac arrest, survival rates have been shown to increase significantly.

Because of the high number of deaths from sudden cardiac arrest and the importance of the time factor (within 3-5 minutes of onset), there is a need for AEDs in more public places.

It is only a matter of time before you see AEDs placed next to or near fire extinguishers in more cities, counties and states across the nation. *Won't that be a grand sight, fire and life safety together saving lives in so many ways?*

In September 2007, federal legislation was passed establishing **the first week of June** as National CPR and AED Awareness week, with the goal of keeping more victims of sudden cardiac arrest alive!

Contact Marlene Kenney at mkenney@commercialems.com or 1-800-359-7083 ext. 199 for more information.

by Marlene Kenney





“One Call Does It All”

On March 1, 1955, Ernie Horvath, a Korean War Air Force Veteran, bought a trunk full of fire extinguishers and a customer list from a Reverend on the south side of Chicago. As Ernie was growing the business during the day he attended college at night. He was also dating Barbara and she typed the invoices! As the legend goes, he couldn't afford to pay her, so he married her.

The business started in the basement, then to several buildings in the area including a garage, a couple service stations and a shack where recharges were performed to our current location. As the business grew, so did the family. With the arrival of Debbie and Pam, Barbara worked during the day, took care of the kids, and would finish projects at night. Debbie became part of the company at an early age. “It was part of my childhood,” says Debbie. “My dad started the business in the house where I grew up. As a kid, I used to go downstairs and shine the salespeople's shoes before they went out on sales calls.” I also remember helping my mom stuff invoices into envelopes at the kitchen table.

In 1969, with Reliable Fire outgrowing the basement, it was time to relocate. Ernie chose to establish Reliable in a community where growth and mobility would be instrumental to his success. Cicero Avenue in Alsip was a 2-lane highway. It was surrounded by farmland and the 294 Interstate was just waiting for commerce to step in. This would be Reliable's lifeline. Today, Cicero Avenue is a 4-lane highway, the farmlands are now industrial parks and 127th & Cicero is the busiest intersection in the area with toll way connections to Chicago, suburbs, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa.

In 1989, the first addition was constructed to handle the expansion of employees. This lasted seven years before the next addition was built in 1996. Reliable's office and warehouse is now 47,000 sq.ft. In 2008, the last expansion was complete with a 31-space garage with a truck wash bay and lunch room.

The company expanded its product line and services to include first aid, restaurant, fire suppression systems, CCTV, card access systems, and security systems. From one employee in 1955, Reliable now has 100 employees, all dedicated to Reliable's mission of quality service. – “One Call Does It All”

Ernie Horvath's entrepreneurial genius, vision, dedication and hard work made Reliable Fire one of the largest fire equipment distributors in the Midwest. Reliable Fire is a charter member of NAFED, where Debbie served as Region 4 Director and as President in 1998. Ernie was chosen to be on NFPA 10 Committee, where his knowledge improved the

standards of portable fire extinguishers. Reliable has joined numerous other associations related to fire protection and is a leader in the industry.

In 1999, Ernie decided it was time to retire – sort of. Debbie was promoted to President and Ernie became Chairman of the Board. As Debbie handled the day to day activities, Ernie found time to golf, travel with his partner Barbara, and work part time.

On February 13, 2009, the industry lost a true visionary and leader. Ernie lost his short battle to cancer. Ernie was a husband, a father, a mentor, a boss, a friend to many and will certainly be missed by all.

by Pat Martyn



Commercial Services 20 Years and Counting

Part 2 of our saga, encompassed the growth of KEC and the beginning of Fire Suppression. It ended where Mike Qualls and Joe Kenney decided to form the Commercial Fire partnership in 2002. That's certainly not the end of this saga; just the beginning of Part 3.

Since Mike's offices were in Chicago and mine were in Jacksonville, we decided that Mike would run operations out of Chicago and I would handle sales, marketing and finance out of Jacksonville. This was marginally successful for about a year. At that point we realized that we had to have the complete company work under one roof, in one town. Hence it was time for Mike to move to sunny Florida. Our operational staff had grown to about twenty by this time. We offered to move everyone that wanted to move to Florida. About half decided that Florida was the place for them. During that year in Chicago, we had some fabulous people who worked for and with us, that for one reason or another, could not follow the rest to Florida. To them, I say thank you for helping us get off the ground and starting us on our path towards one of the finest Fire & Life Safety Companies in the United States.

The crew that decided to move to Florida was Scott, Liz, Ruth, Shannon, Brittany, Amanda, Amber, Darwin and Mike. Seven years later Scott is running the Repair Department employing a staff of 16. He has transformed that segment of our business into a respected and trusted department that our customers can depend on. His staff's knowledge and fairness carries the day when dealing with the unwanted repairs that usually have not been budgeted for by our customers. Liz has become our national account adviser on all aspects of cost analysis. Ruth and Shannon are priceless in the structure and control of repair pricing and ensuring that all repairs are done to the letter. Mike is our COO and my partner in the Fire & Life Safety Business.

Our goal from the beginning was to offer both KEC and Fire Services to all regional and national companies in the hospitality business. That strategy has not changed over the years. What did change was our

entrance into other industries. We soon found ourselves in the retail market, then the banking industry, then the grocery store business, then the high rise complex business, then the industrial business. All of which have their own set of challenges, but are also growing entities that have certainly pushed Commercial to new heights of success.

The decision in 2003 to move all of our operations into one building was and continues to be a huge success. We have grown by 400 percent during this time frame. Our staff has grown to over 80 office employees. Their functions are: Customer Service, Affiliate Coordination, Repair Management, IT Development, Accounting and Billing. I can say without hesitation that our staff is as strong as, or stronger than any staff in any service industry in the United States.

The biggest hurdle that we now faced was that of software programming. Not only wasn't there an off-the-shelf systems that we could use for KEC and Fire, but there really wasn't a structure set up on how to build a system of the magnitude that we now needed. Although I had already developed a system for KEC, it was becoming outdated. We went to all of the software trade shows, contacted everyone and anyone to get insight as to what they were using and what 'new' systems were coming out that would fit our given situation. What we found out in a nutshell was, "There was no system that fit our needs"!

That piece of information left us but one option, which was to 'build and design our own software'.

Initially we began the building of the program with our two "techies", Darwin and Phil. Our first budget and time table was that we would have the completed system done in six months. Ok, I am sure you are laughing out loud right now! But I

actually thought we could do that. Shows what I know, doesn't it? We made some great strides when we brought Doug into the picture. We first hired him as a consultant, but soon realized that he really was and wanted to direct our IT Program. Doug and Darwin have done a phenomenal job in developing a system that is very flexible but also built on a very sound structure.

Seven years later it is still a work in progress. We have developed some very unique programs that include: scheduling, mapping, routing, billing, imaging, photo attachments, budget projecting, note storing, budgeting, asset analysis, survey data, and IVR to name just a few. Our newest and most promising program is our repair quoting program. It is unprecedented in the industry and will help us immensely in the near future. I have also come to the realization that our system will never be fully completed. This is mostly because the industry and customer needs keep changing, therefore our format has to be flexible enough to move with it.

Over the years we have tried to add many new services to our line. Some of them have been very successful and have become long lasting additions to our service structure; but, some have become distant memories. Those are probably the more interesting ones to reminisce about. Those would include such things as: type 2 exhaust stack replacement, water retrieval systems for roofs, equipment cleaning, bathroom cleaning, parking lot cleaning, dumpster cleaning, nationwide purchasing group, and of course AED's. Although I think AED's will actually be a viable service one day, that day has just not arrived.

Our development from 2003 till today has been more of a transition from a large

“mom and pop” business to a corporation. We have learned how to function as a corporate entity that can grow and develop without depending on one or a few individuals. In the past, if one or more of us would have left the company, the company probably would have failed. Today, I believe we would survive because we have learned how not to depend on one or even a few individuals. That was probably the hardest thing that I have ever had to do in business. In the past I wanted to touch everything because, ‘I could do it better!’ It took me years and years to learn that not only could I not do it better; in many cases I could not do it at all! As all businesses grow, develop and hopefully prosper, we as business owners must do the same. For if we do not grow, our businesses will stagnate, falter and ultimately fail. The question for many of us is, “Do we want to grow ourselves out of a job”? Some say that is the ultimate in development of both oneself and of a business entity. Some say, why? I love what I do. I think both are correct in and of themselves. It just depends on what your heart and mind tells you what is best for you. Today, we have so many absolutely fabulous people who work with us at Commercial that I truly could not name all of them in this article. Their ages range from 18 to 65 (more or less). They have truly become what Commercial Services is and stands for; a quality corporation that serves the needs of so many.

In the next issue, I am going to go back and reminisce about the impossible crazy things that have happened over the years. My wife loves to hear the stories, so at least she will enjoy my writing about them. I am sure you will also get a good laugh or two. Until then, I would like to thank you for being a part of Commercial and allowing us to be a part of your life and your business.

Joe Kenney

See how we've grown:

We started at 2443 St. Johns Bluff Rd. S. in the red ‘house’ in 1988 with three employees.

Built and moved into the blue awning building in 1992 on the same location.

With the merger of KEC and Fire, we soon outgrew the gray building and in 2006 built next door at 2465 St. Johns Bluff Rd. S. . We currently have staff in both buildings and our warehouse/shop in the back of our property.



Meet our Staff

Smiling Faces in Familiar Places



Steve Parham started his career with Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning in June 1994 as a technician in the Atlanta, GA area. Fresh out of the military, this was Steve's first civilian job. He thought he was prepared to do anything, but after the first week he told himself, "I can't do this!" He stuck it out and consequently was promoted to route manager after only one month. Steve was promoted again after the first year to Area Supervisor traveling all over GA, TN, AL, NC, and SC.

Steve recalls one of Commercial's first national accounts, a Cracker Barrel in Lebanon, TN, where he worked with Ken Jason and two other crew members. "Ken was relentless, he wouldn't let us leave until all the grease was out of the system"; thus earning Ken the title "bare metal Ken". Steve has worked through the aches and pains of a new company. If the current crew complain, he tells them, "You have it a lot better than we did back in the start up days. You should have seen the equipment and trucks we worked with before Dave Rossi, our Fleet Manager was hired."

Steve was promoted to Senior Field Supervisor in 2005 and moved his family to Jacksonville, FL., where he currently oversees 12 routes covering FL, GA, TN and AL and 24 field techs. Steve comments that he loves his job; loves to go to work. He gives his wife credit and praise for putting up with the late night calls he receives from his crew. When asked if he had any other remarks, Steve replied; "I appreciate working with Joe (Kenney). He has been there for me through many circumstances over the years. I appreciate the fact that he is always fair."

Hi, I'm Deb Medina, Accounts Payable Manager for Commercial Fire and I joined the team 8 years ago. AP processes the affiliate payment. This is no simple task, because there are many checks and balances that are made between the time the invoice is entered into the system until we process and cut the check.

Last year we processed over 86,000 invoices for 1,200 affiliates. You may wonder why I pause for a moment after answering the phone when the caller says, "Hi, this is Joe, can you tell me when our next check is?" Work order numbers do wonders! I also handle our resale tax and insurance certificates and updates. Thank you for responding quickly to my requests and making this part of the job easy.

In my off time, my husband and I are *owned* by 2 beautiful Conure parrots – Paco & Sydney; both girls are very entertaining. They keep me busy making them new toys that they tear up. I also enjoy motorcycle riding and sailing. My husband and I lived on a sailboat for 3 ½ years. Now we're "land-lubbers".

Thanks to all of our affiliates for the service you provide. It truly is a pleasure working with Commercial and our affiliate partners.



Shannon Mugford has been with Commercial Service's Fire Division almost since it's inception in early 2002. She began her career in Fire/Life Safety as a Customer Service Representative before being assigned to manage her first National Account, Wal-Mart, in the spring of 2003. "I have the opportunity to work directly with our affiliate partners and customers in many different capacities, as an account manager, as a team leader and dispatch coordinator for the suppression group of our Repair Department", remarks Shannon.

I firmly believe the key to success in any business partnership (whether you are working with a customer or a business partner) is professionalism, willingness to go above and beyond what is expected, and the realization that it takes team work to accomplish a common goal. Anything can be done if you have a positive attitude and view challenges as an opportunity to "dazzle them with your brilliance", learn, and grow.

When I'm not working to ensure our customer's Fire Safety, I enjoy living near the beach and all that lifestyle has to offer, visiting and supporting our amazing local, state, and national park systems, and dabbling in gold prospecting. My favorite thing to do is to make someone laugh. I'm performing live from my desk Monday through Friday if you need a smile!

Kitchen Fire Safety

Have you had your daily serving of Fire Safety today?

When people think of the word fire they think of camping in the woods or maybe forest fires, but sadly, not many people think about using the word prevention in the same sentence. Preventing a fire is something that you should think about every day, especially in your home. According to the U.S Fire Administration, fires have almost doubled in the past 10 years. In 2007 there were a total of 141,274 home fires in which there were 978 deaths, 5,032 injuries and a loss of \$4,169 million. That's almost 84% of all structure fires! A fire in a home is also the leading cause of accidental deaths all over the world. The number one cause of home fires is the kitchen. Not many people know where to start on making their kitchen fire safe. Here are a few tips that you can take to prevent you and your home from joining future statistics.

Simple things to remember

There are many minor things that you can do in your kitchen to prevent a fire from starting. The easiest thing for you to remember is to never leave anything that you are cooking unattended. This includes anything on or in the stove. Never walk away without periodically checking your food, as it only takes a second for a fire to begin. If you must leave in the middle of cooking, make sure that you turn off any appliance that you are cooking on. Unattended cooking is the number one cause of a kitchen fire. Another major cause of a kitchen fire is leaving an appliance, such as a toaster, plugged in. It comes as a shock to many people when they find out that a toaster can catch on fire, even without being used. When the toaster is left plugged in, there is a higher chance of a short happening, which can turn your toaster on, and keep it on. Those small crumbs on the bottom of your toaster can easily become ignited from the rising temperature, which makes your toaster catch on fire.



Can water really be my enemy?



Something very important to know is how to put out a grease fire. Most of us associate putting out a fire with water, but did you know that if you pour water on a grease fire, you are actually making it worse? It cannot be stressed enough that you must never, ever put water on a grease fire. Why you ask? Water is heavier than grease. When water is poured in with the burning grease, the water will instantly sink to the bottom of the pan and evaporate, causing the steam to rise and explode into a big fireball that will go as high as your ceiling. The way that you can put out a grease fire is to cover the pan with a moist towel (not dripping) or to cover it with the lid. This will prevent the fire from getting the oxygen that it needs. You may have heard that baking soda will also do the trick; what you did not hear is that it usually takes a very large amount for it to work. Also, never confuse baking powder for sugar or flour. One cup has enough power to create the force of 2 sticks of dynamite.

Although the kitchen is not the only place where home fires start, it is the main area for you to practice fire safety. As you enter your home again today, walk around and notice the little things that can potentially cause a fire. Are your candles away from flammable objects? Are you over loading electrical sockets? Is your space heater too close to objects that can easily over heat? There are many things that you may have not noticed in the past that never crossed your mind as being a fire hazard. It's always better to be safe than sorry. And remember; only you can prevent home fires.

-Jeimy Ribado

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