

Rochester Hills firm on global computer team

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER

A fledgling computer network services company in Rochester Hills is one of three international firms that will team to establish a showroom of hardware and software products in Beijing, China.

SandA International, founded here by Peter and Deborah Stephenson, joins Computers & Peripherals based in Hong Kong and China International Software Engineering in Beijing to birth the American Computer Innovation Center.

The 11,000-square-foot ACIC, believed to be the first comprehensive, independent integration center to offer multiple vendor products to the Chinese marketplace, is expected to open in early April, the partners an-

nounced.

"The ACIC will provide a configurable state-of-the-art multi-vendor, multi-platform enterprise network, which Chinese customers can use to pre-test planned configurations," said Peter Stephenson.

"Since China is just entering the network age, this capability will add greatly to customer confidence as they adopt new technologies. American companies will benefit by having a showplace for their products in this emerging mega-market," he added. SandA International, and its prime subcontractor based in Edmonton, will provide the system engineering and support training services for ACIC.

"I'm responsible for two areas — liaison with U.S. manufacturers and

... all technical aspects," Stephenson said.

"The Hong Kong partner and I have basically picked up all the cash necessary," he said, declining to provide a specific number. "The China partner was allowed by a government agency to make arrangements for space inexpensively. Vendors are providing equipment at no cost."

"We (SandA and Computers & Peripherals) have distribution rights in China. That's how we make money. We take orders, we sell, we do the mark-up. We also do design, technical support, training. There's a lot of value added," Stephenson said.

If business take off as expected, Stephenson estimated his share of sales in China this year at upwards of \$1.5 million, significantly more in

successing years.

Stephenson said he expects to hire 10-20 specialists locally this year — computer scientists, computer engineers, programmers, perhaps, technical trainers — as he moves his current three-person operation from his Rochester Hills home to a formal office setting.

Stephenson, 49, said he has more than 30 years experience as a network integrator, trainer and technical writer. He also said he's traveled to Asia many times as a consultant.

It's taken two years of work to get the ACIC to this stage of development. "You have to be programmed to have a lot of patience, build a lot of relationships," Stephenson said.

A variety of vendors, including IBM China, Trend/Intel China, Novell and

Microdyne, are expected to participate in ACIC, the partners indicated.

"China's extraordinary growth — GNP rising at more than 10 percent a year — and national commitment to creating an infrastructure for the 21st century makes the ACIC a compelling market investment," said Philip T. Cunningham, chairman and president of Microdyne.

Liu An-Yi of China's National Planners Training Center also sees potential for ACIC.

"We are certain that China will benefit significantly from the easy availability of the advanced computer network demonstration, prototyping and testing facility, showcasing the most current computer networking products, systems and technologies," An-Yi said.

MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features a glimpse of suburban business news and notes, including corporate name changes, new products, new offices or office openings, new affiliations, new positions, mergers, acquisitions and new ways of doing business. Write: Marketplace, Building & Business, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is 313-591-7275.

TARGET GRANT

Continuing its 30-year tradition of grant-giving to the community, Target has awarded \$4,500 to Pathway Family Center, Southfield, a non-profit organization that provides substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment to area youths and their families.

The grant will help Pathway continue to offer cost-effective treatment that incorporates a 12-step philosophy with family therapy, emphasizing abstinence from drugs and alcohol, the center said.

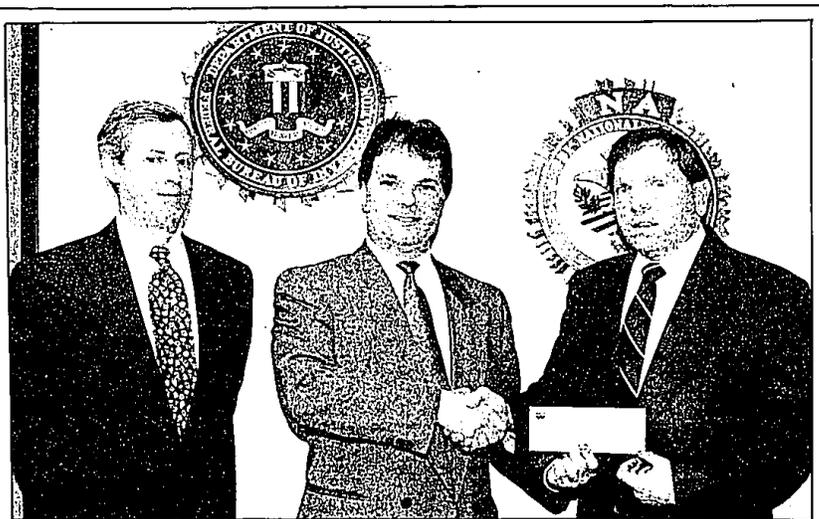
Said Target representative Gail Dorn: "When we place a store in a community, we're making a strong commitment to the families who live there that we will be a good neighbor."

AH, SUNROOFS

Representatives from Auto Sunroof and Accessories of Troy, a sales and service center for ASC Inc. sunroofs, visited ASC's 112,000-square-foot plant in Columbus, Ohio. The new facility has the capacity to produce 600,000 sunroofs annually. ASC manufactures power, venting and sliding sunroofs and factory models for the Honda Accord EX and Chrysler LH models at the Ohio facility.

SPEED VIDEO MESSAGES

Fiber optic cabling has been installed at MVP Communications on-site studio in Troy, creating a faster, less expensive way to send video messages. The fiber connection links MVP with the Ameritech switch-



Helping hand: World Wide Financial Services vice president David Smith (center) presents a check to Robert Downey (right), special agent and FBI Agent Association president. Sam Ruffino, special agent and FBI Agent Association vice president, looks on.

World Wide Financial Services boosts FBI children's fund

World Wide Financial Services, a full-service mortgage company in Birmingham, has donated \$2,000 to the FBI Agent Association's Children's Education Trust Fund, a program benefitting children of special agents killed in the line of duty.

The donation is a gesture of appreciation for transferred agents who use World Wide, the lender said.

"We hope to continue a strong partnership with the bureau agents and, because partners support each other, we are contrib-

uting to a cause they believe in," said Jack Wolfe, World Wide president.

World Wide has several local locations, including offices in Bloomfield Hills, Farmington Hills and Troy.

ing center in downtown Detroit. From there, the video signal can be routed to its destination by fiber optic cables or to a satellite uplink station for transmission.

In the past, MVP needed one to two days to set up a portable uplink outside of their studio. With the fiber optic link, the cost to transmit a video signal will be

reduced by one-half to two-thirds the cost of the portable uplink, the company said.

AIR BAG VENTURE
Southfield-based AlliedSignal

Automotive, Sequa's Atlantic Research Corp. and BPD Dafusa e Spazio (Giardini) of Italy have formed a three-way venture to supply advanced air bag inflators

to European automakers.

The group, named BAG S.p.A., will design, produce and sell hybrid inflators for driver and passenger-side air bags. It will be the first company to produce hybrid inflators for driver-side bags. The inflators provide a cost-efficient way to inflate air bags, using compressed argon gas that operates on the principle that heated gas expands.

AlliedSignal has also signed an agreement to take the seatbelt business of Giardini. Terms of the agreement were not announced, but the agreement is expected to be final by Jan. 31.

EXECUTIVE AGENCY

Continental Search Associates, a Bloomfield Hills executive placement agency, has opened Continental Interim Executives, providing temporary senior level executives, superintendents and managers for a range of industries.

"The new company offers our clients more flexibility in the staffing process," said William R. Dewey, Continental Search president. "Our clients have gone through great changes during the last recession, and we have widened our spectrum of services to meet the growing demand for alternative hiring arrangements. Professional temporaries are increasingly used by corporations as part of their business plan."

The Continental Group is at 1190 N. Woodward, Suite 224. The telephone number is 810-644-4506.

TOP ACCOUNT

Anderson Paint Co., with stores in Farmington and Ann Arbor, was named Maximum UTMAX account of the year by Premier Coatings, manufacturer of Maximum coatings and paints, Elk Grove Village, Ill.

In 1993, Anderson sold more UTMAX than any other account in North America and Europe. Anderson was also commended for educating the public on proper painting procedures, product selection and problem solving.

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