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Viera antenna company boasts worldwide market

SkyCross Inc. products inside wireless devices

BY SCOTT BLAKE
FLORIDA TODAY

SkyCross Inc. is a small local company with a growing global presence.

Some of the company's executives once worked at Florida Tech in Melbourne, and, together with some private investors, they have made the Viera-based firm a growing player in the wireless-communications industry.

The company describes itself as "a global wireless company providing antenna-centric (radio-frequency) solutions."

SkyCross' specialty has been developing antennas for cellular phones; smart phones with e-mail and Internet capabilities; and other wireless devices. Its antennas also can be found in other popular products, such as Sprint and Verizon wireless personal-computer cards that attach to laptop computers for connecting to the Internet.

The company's tiny antennas can be found in Samsung BlackJack smart phones, Novatel Wireless cards offered by Sprint and Verizon Wireless, as well as several Samsung and Pantech handsets marketed in South Korea, among other products.

One new focus of SkyCross is the mobile television/video market.

"This is a strategic step, as we continue to extend our leadership in this important market," SkyCross Chief Executive Officer Chris Morton said.

The firm has 15 employees at its headquarters in Viera. The firm has a research-and-development lab at its corporate office off Wickham and Murrell roads.

In addition, the company has opened production centers in Seoul, South Korea, and Shajing, China.

The new assembly and manufacturing facilities in East Asia -- where most of its work force is located -- ensure the company's production levels can meet the needs of its major customers, which include some major names in the consumer electronics industry.

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Tiny antenna. Ron Smith puts together a PC card antenna for laptop at SkyCross in Viera. The firm has 15 employees at its headquarters in Viera. Michael R. Brown, FLORIDA TODAY

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SkyCross

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Marie Snively, the company's marketing and sales coordinator, would not disclose the privately owned company's sales and employment totals.

SkyCross was founded in 2000.

Before joining SkyCross, Morton, the company's CEO, was an executive at Milcom Technologies, where he oversaw the start of new communications companies.

Frank Caimi is the company's chief technical officer. Previously, Caimi was an associate professor of electrical engineering at Florida Tech.

Jo Min-Young is the company's managing director of SkyCross Korea and vice president of technology development. Before joining SkyCross, he worked on a smart antenna program funded by the Air Force as a lead researcher in the antenna systems lab at Florida Tech.

This spring, SkyCross announced two significant partnerships with other companies.

- It has a venture with Kleer, a California-based semiconductor company, to produce wireless audio products. Their initial product is wireless earphones -- a pair of small earphones that are completely unattached from each other and from an adapter that connects to iPod portable media players.

"The powerful combination of the ultra-low-power Kleer technology and the SkyCross innovative antenna technology will benefit . . . consumers, who will enjoy superior wireless audio," Kleer Chief Executive Officer Levent Gun said.

- SkyCross also has a new partnership with DiBcom, a semiconductor company based in France, to provide mobile television systems for wireless devices. The project includes antennas that can be embedded into wireless products, as an alternative to current designs using external antennas.

"Antenna integration into handsets and portable devices has been a difficult task in the design of a mobile TV receiver," DiBcom Chief Executive Officer Yannick Levy said.

"The combination of DiBcom features offered in its chipsets along with SkyCross' engineering expertise and innovation in antennas is the perfect way to achieve this," Levy said.

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