



## Business

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# Homeland Security makes pitch to area businesses

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MIDDLETOWN — Rhode Island’s high-tech companies, particularly on Aquidneck Island, are used to working with the U.S. Department of Defense, mainly the Navy. This week they got to hear from a relatively new federal player, the Department of Homeland Security, which sent its chief commercialization officer, Thomas Cellucci, to lead a presentation on business opportunities hosted by Rite-Solutions Inc., in Middletown.

Executives who attended the session, or sent company representatives, said they envision Homeland Security as a potential new market for Rhode Island companies.

“Now, we all sink or swim based on Navy programs, and any way to diversify is a good thing for us,” said Rite-Solutions Inc. president Joseph Marino. Rite-Solutions, based in Middletown, has about 165 employees. Marino said the Department of Homeland Security is a logical market for many Rhode Island companies, since technology developed for the Navy is often applicable to the needs of Homeland Security. Rite-Solutions, for example, has developed a non-lethal “swimmer neutralization system” that could be used to help protect ports from water-based attackers.

Wayne King, chief operating officer for Advanced Solutions for Tomorrow Inc., a Georgia-based company with about 100 employees in its Newport office, also sees the Department of Homeland Security as an opportunity for the state’s defense-oriented businesses. “There’s a huge defense industry support structure in Rhode Island,” he said. “This is a chance to transition technology that we’re already developing ... it’s a ready-made, very fertile market for us.” King said Advanced Solutions is mostly involved with defense contract work in the submarine area.

But the company also does some work in a field called information assurance — protecting the confidentiality, integrity, availability and authentication of information — and is working with the Port of Davisville on a Department of Homeland Security grant project.

Cellucci’s presentation in Middletown, one of many he’s made all over the country, was sponsored by the Newport County Chamber of Commerce; Tech Collective, an industry association for the state’s information technology and biotech companies; and the Middletown Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Cellucci said the Department of Homeland Security is eager to partner with private industry to develop

the products and systems necessary to keep the country safe. “If we give the private sector the guidance, the private sector will be beating a path to our door,” he said. He described a program called SECURE, designed to help private industry develop the products Homeland Security needs.

Under the program, he said, the government posts its requirements in Operational Requirement Documents, or ORDs, along with an estimate of the potential market. Companies develop the products themselves with guidance and testing from the government.

Cellucci said that in order for the Department of Homeland Security to consider a product for the SECURE program, it has to have reached a reasonable level of technological development. “I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve been taken into a university lab to see something that looks like a speck of dust in a petri dish, and they call it a fully developed product,” he said.

ORDs currently on the Department of Homeland Security Web site, for example, include one for a blast-resistant video camera that could be installed on vehicles such as buses and police cars. The department has a “conservative estimate” that demand for the product would be 1.5 million units.

For more information about the SECURE program, as well as other aspects of working with Homeland Security, Cellucci advised companies to go to the Homeland Security Web site ( [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)), and click on the box that reads “Doing Business with DHS.”

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