

Local Tech Wire

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On eve of 9-11, RTP startup XinRay lands contract to help keep us safer



XinRay

Note: The Skinny blog is written by Rick Smith, editor and co-founder of Local Tech Wire and business editor of WRAL.com.

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. – XinRay Systems, an RTP startup working to make us all safe, has won its first major contract for its advanced x-ray technology. And the timing could not be more appropriate given that tomorrow is 9-11.

As another day nears in which we all should bow our heads in grim remembrance of what happened in New York, Washington and above that hallowed ground of Pennsylvania, XinRay has been awarded a \$1.13 million contract to develop an “advanced x-ray source” for high throughput baggage and cargo screening.

“This contract is not our first, but it is our first contract as a prime government contractor,” XinRay Chief Financial Officer Mike Poe tells The Skinny.

The management team has been busy, submitting bids for other work. But this contract and other work is enabling the company to grow and Poe said it is not seeking any additional financing.

However, this deal could be even bigger – it’s worth as much as \$2.7 million if options are renewed.

XinRay, a two-year-old firm that employs 11 people, received the funding through the Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate. Specifically, XinRay will be working with the Explosives Detection Subgroup of the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Group.

The task facing XinRay requires development, testing and evaluation of an x-ray system based on carbon nanotube “cold cathode multiple beam x-ray” sources. In other words, sophisticated nanotechnology is going to be used to develop more effective means of checking baggage both home and abroad. XinRay believes it can deliver a system that improves on existing x-ray devices that will:

- Improve imaging resolution and related detection capabilities
- Reduce false alarm rates

- Improve the throughput of baggage screening
- Cut down on heat
- Be more durable

XinRay is a joint venture between Xintek, a spinout from UNC-Chapel Hill, and Siemens Medical Solutions, which has a major presence in Cary. XinRay turns two years old this month. And if the Homeland Security contractor is an indicator, XinRay has much more work in the pipeline.

“We have performed similar work as a subcontractor to Xintek, Inc. under an earlier contract with the Technical Support Working Group, and we have performed under development contracts with commercial and nonprofit entities,” Poe said.

“We have submitted proposals to the Department of Homeland Security, to the National Institutes of Health (via other organizations with XinRay as a subcontractor), and other commercial entities, but do not have a contract award under these proposals at this time.”

According to XinRay Chief Executive Officer Moritz Beckmann, the company’s “secret sauce” is a blending of nanotechnology and x-ray technology that delivers images of better resolution – and faster.

“Our distributed x-ray sources based on carbon nanotube technology enables multiple beam, high resolution, fixed x-ray tubes to be positioned around a CT tunnel [computed tomography - think CAT scan] sequentially, thereby eliminating the need for a rotating gantry,” he explained in a statement. “The intent is to develop faster scanning speeds with potentially better throughput and image quality as compared to today’s EDS scanners.”

We should never take for granted our security that has been won and is continually protected by our Armed Forces abroad. At home, let’s all pray that advances in technology by companies such as XinRay help prevent another 9-11-01 day of disaster and horror from ever recurring again.

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The Skinny

WRAL Local Tech Wire Publisher and Editor Rick Smith dishes out tidbits from the local technology sector.