



Demand soars for tamper-evident security products

Wall business makes criminals' jobs tougher

BY KIRK MOORE • STAFF WRITER • JULY 29, 2008

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WALL — Stick-on labels and seals are such an ubiquitous sight, from medicine bottles to airport luggage, that the key reason for them — security — is not always obvious.

In the industry, they are called "tamper-evident" products, and demand has soared with new applications in the years since the 2001 terrorist attacks. Now one manufacturer, CGM Applied Security Technologies Inc., based in Wall, has seen a new market expand as elections officials scramble to ensure the integrity of electronic voting machines.

"California is really on their game. They don't want to be the next Florida," said Robert Frucci, business development manager for CGM, which

makes labels, tapes, bags and seals to secure voting machines at its Staten Island manufacturing facility.

"Since the Florida incidents (during the 2000 election), people have been looking for more voting-machine uses," added Gina Levinson, the company's operations manager. "One of the applications was for a bag to seal an entire Sequoia voting machine."

Security of the Sequoia voting machines was at issue in a recent Ocean County court case brought to challenge the 2006 election results. During testimony in that trial, state Division of Elections Director Robert Giles described the types of seals and security devices already in use. Growing demand in that market has helped CGM attain annual sales around \$6 million and annual growth of 20 percent, Frucci and Levinson said. The company is a subsidiary of publicly held security technology firm ASIL.

"My thing has always been looking at theft — theft of pharmaceuticals, theft of goods," said Frucci, who got his start in transportation security, first as a truck driver, a vessel operations manager at Port Newark and then as a private investigator and port security specialist.

"Security was still porous then," but the tightening of port security has merely pushed common criminals farther down the supply chain, Frucci said. "The crime doesn't go away. It just shifts," he said. "They will follow you 200 miles to the first truck stop."

"Here, we're talking about the theft of data — maybe theft of an election," Frucci said. By using tamper-evident seals, "you want to be able to target when and where that breach occurred," he said. "It's a matter of chain of custody, and being able to go back and track that down."

As Giles explained in the Ocean County testimony, voting machines are sealed so they cannot simply be opened by anyone with a Swiss army knife. For the industry, the other part of that is providing reliable



Gina Levinson, the operations manager, sits with Frucci at a table displaying many of their products, which are designed to protect against tampering. (STAFF PHOTO: BRADLEY J. PENNER) [Buy this photo](#)



Robert Frucci, business development manager for CGM Applied Security Technologies Inc., places a laptop computer into a tamper-evident bag. If the bag is opened after it is sealed, it becomes discolored, alerting the owner to the tampering. (STAFF PHOTOS: BRADLEY J. PENNER) [Buy this photo](#)

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security products that don't make poll workers' jobs too difficult, Frucci said.

Virtually every state has its own twist on voting laws and practices, and the company has to provide appropriate products, Frucci said.

When seals are removed at the appropriate time, too much adhesive residue — which normally is one of the security safeguards — can also be a problem. "Cleanup in between is a pain, and time consuming," Frucci said. Another product is a tamper-evident plastic tag that can be removed by hand without using tools, he said.

Abroad, the company sells in Europe, Asia and South America, and has security clearance for its considerable government work, Levinson said. The company sees more growth in pharmaceuticals, where manufacturers "right now are waking up to counterfeiting," Frucci said, and in changes to air freight and other transport sectors that create more need for pallet security of goods.

Rising fuel costs have complicated supply systems, and that "makes the cargo easier to hit. It's going to be handled more times. More time, more handling, more hands in the game," Frucci said.

"It doesn't change his (the criminal's) game, it only changes his venue," he said.

Over time, Frucci expects a trend away from single long-haul truck routing, toward more use of domestic intermodal transport, moving containers and trailers by rail and water.

"It's just a matter of time. Guys are already paying 85 cents a mile" for trucking, he said. "That's why the pallet to us is the biggest growth market."

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