



Pair of organizations pump up presence of security field in city

By **DOUG SHERWIN**, The Daily Transcript
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Michael Jones' idea was modest enough: Provide a two- or three-day forum where companies in the security business could exchange ideas.

Two-and-half years later, Jones is running a pair of year-round organizations dedicated to making San Diego the hub of the security industry, helping companies collaborate to develop innovative technologies.

"Originally we started with a conference called the Security Summit," he said, recalling the July 1, 2004, event. "It was very successful. We had a number of people say, 'Please don't do just a one-year event. Create an ongoing organization.'"

So in early 2005, Jones formed the Security Network, a nonprofit, nonpartisan agency whose mission is to advance security by "fostering innovation through collaboration worldwide."

The group will be hosting its fourth annual Security Summit this summer while co-sponsoring several other events throughout the year.

Jones, the CEO and acting president, envisions the Security Network doing for the local security industry what Biocom does for San Diego's biotech sector or what CommNexus San Diego does for the local telecommunications industry.

"There are hundreds of companies focused on the security field," he said, "and our network has the aspiration to help companies in San Diego by virtue of identifying technologies throughout the world."

This year, the Security Network has spawned the Center for Maritime Systems & Security, a networking organization for innovative maritime technologies that feature monthly meetings. In its January meeting, the group evaluated the Port of San Diego's strategic plan with John MacIntyre, homeland security program manager, delivering the keynote speech.

Both organizations are a natural complement to San Diego's burgeoning defense industry but not exclusively connected to it.

"We're always interested in technology that is not focused on the military," Jones said. "We're interested in some (devices) that have commercial applications, like alarms ... technology that is applicable to both law enforcement and defense."

Jones did say the Security Network is a great place for any number of players in the defense industry to recognize small companies.

"We are looking for innovative technologies and providing a forum for them to be seen by a broader array of people who want to use them," said Jones, who is the founder and president of **ProFinance Associates Inc.**, an investment banking firm focused on the security industry. "It's really our reason for being. Whether (that technology) is in Tucson, Ariz.; Calgary; Berlin; Perth, Australia; or San Diego, we don't care."

The organization, he hopes, will eventually have the added benefit of bringing business to San Diego because security companies will find this is the best place to partner with other companies.

Jones said he believes 2007 will be the seminal year for the organization as it sponsors or co-sponsors several programs while administering the Center for Maritime Systems & Security.

Tuesday and Wednesday, the group will be co-sponsoring the program "Information Technology for Defending the Homeland."

The Security Network also is gearing up for the 2007 Security Summit, which will be held June 6-7. The group is preparing for its fourth annual Security Summit.

Last year, New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin delivered the keynote speech, addressing the government's emergency response issues. The event also included a discussion regarding the integrity of the American-Canadian border.

And for the first time, the Security Summit featured a technology exposition and competition. Twenty-eight companies displayed their products, with 21 of them entering an "important services and products" competition.

Judges, including the heads of security from the Port of San Diego, the airport authority and the water authority, graded companies in several different categories, including command and control, sensor networks and security software interoperability.

The featured products weren't pipedream gadgets that may work some day. They were what Jones referred to as COTS -- commercial, off-the-shelf -- technologies.

"They are technologies that are ready for prime time," he said. "They are being utilized or just being introduced, or companies are looking for a partner to bring them to market."

Jones is expecting between 60 and 80 companies to exhibit at the 2007 Summit, including approximately 12-15 Canadian companies. There also will be Australian and British companies as well.

Jones said he hopes to have 30 officials judging the technology competition.

The keynote speaker has yet to be confirmed, but Jones is confident his invitation to a "very senior government official" from Canada will be honored.

"Last year we feel like we came up with a very good formula," Jones said. "And now we're really building it out and putting a lot of meat on the frame. We feel this is putting San Diego on the map internationally in the security field."