

Business

clarionledger.com

The Clarion-Ledger ■ REAL MISSISSIPPI

[Local News](#) [Nation / World](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Opinion](#) [Obituaries](#) [HealthScene](#) [Travel](#)

Local Search:

Find what you need with our New Search!

ADVERTISEMENTS



September 23, 2007

Old gadgets, new growth

- Intechra expands company as electronic waste adds up

By Jack Mazurak
jmazurak@clarionledger.com



Special to The Clarion-Ledger

A conveyor at Intechra's recycling facility in Casa Grande, Ariz., carries monitors to the first step in the recycling process.

As discarded computers and electronic equipment pile up at three times the growth rate of municipal waste, a Jackson-based recycler is expanding just as quickly.

Intechra Inc., one of a handful of national electronics recyclers, processed \$18 million in used gadgets in 2004, its first full year in business.

This year, it's on track to hit \$100 million in revenue. Intechra snapped up six smaller companies in the last 10 months and employs about 700 people.

Executives are considering starting a division to handle cell phones and PDAs. And next year they plan to jump into foreign markets: India, Asia and Latin America.

"I see no reason why we won't continue to grow," Intechra Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Chip Slack said. "Think about the continued reliance our society is going to have on

electronic devices."

Expansion developed into a nationwide network of warehouses, refurbishing centers, a trucking division and recycling plants. While no Intechra recycling facilities are in the state, Jackson gets the corporate headquarters, which soon will be moving into a bigger space within the Meadowbrook Road office park.

Amid the growth, Intechra has maintained its green image and says it puts no computer or electronic products into landfills.

The company's genesis was at a lunch at the Old Trace Grill in 2003. Slack was looking to leave the banking industry and wanted to build a company. He and other investors had considered document shredding. But over his burger, the idea hit him.

"The industry was really fragmented when we looked at it," Slack said. "Most were small and based around a particular company. Nobody had all the pieces together from pickup to remarketing."

Instead of building new facilities across the country, Intechra used its investor capital to buy existing companies. With four investors, Slack bought RCI, outside Dallas, in April 2004. RCI was founded in 1987, and its acquisition gave Slack the industry expertise he needed.

Strategic purchases over the next three years built its network, particularly strong in the Northeast and on the West Coast, where many companies and tech firms have headquarters.

"The biggest expense is trucking," he said. "You want to have your logistics centers within 700 miles of your customers.

Folding each new facility into Intechra became a matter of instilling the company's production processes, practices and corporate thinking.



Related Items:

[Directory of electronic equipment recyclers](#)



what's on
YOUR plate?

Intechra has competitors, but Slack said Intechra's advantage is it offers customers an unbroken chain of custody. It may sound like CIA-jargon, but a lost computer containing medical histories, Social Security numbers, payment information or account numbers is a serious problem for clients such as hospitals and banks.

Federal regulations such as the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act that require companies to protect consumer information virtually created a market niche for data destroyers like Intechra.

And the boom in green industry has private-sector companies examining their environmental impact. Firms like Intechra are all too happy to step up with eco-friendly solutions.

The global market for e-recycling is about \$7 billion, Slack said, but Intechra expects that to triple in the next five years as India and China develop.

The state Department of Environmental Quality encourages e-recycling by offering grant programs to cities and counties. DeSoto County received a DEQ grant for just such a program, DEQ spokesman Robbie Wilbur said.

"Obviously, this is a growing issue because more computers and televisions are being sold," Wilbur said. "Cathode ray tubes have lead in them, flat-screen monitors may contain small amounts of mercury, and batteries have acids, so we certainly try to keep them out of landfills as much as possible."

Intechra's clients pay to have their used IT equipment picked up. By dealing mainly with larger, Global 2,000 firms that regularly replace hardware, Intechra can put customers on a schedule. Trucks haul the hardware to processing centers where workers refurbish or destroy items. Security and data destruction are given top priority, Slack said.

Refurbished parts and systems, about 20 percent of the company's intake volume, are remarketed and sold, some on eBay, some on Intechra's Web site.

Destroyed computers are ground up and separated into plastic, metal and glass pieces. That material is sold to factories that melt and reuse it.

Intechra concentrates its business on corporations and doesn't provide drop-off or pick-up service for Jackson metro residents. But it plans to again sponsor an Earth Day collection in April.

The city of Jackson Environmental Service Center at 1570 Terry Road accepts computers and peripherals from tri-county residents. DEQ also maintains a Web site of electronics recyclers in the state and in the South.

The city of Jackson accepts computers and peripherals at its Environmental Service Center, 1570 Terry Road, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and every fourth Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The service is for residential, noncommercial equipment from the tri-county area.

- In the U.S., e-waste is growing at three times the rate of municipal waste.
- Eighty million personal computers are discarded globally per year.
- Fifty million tons of electronic equipment waste is generated globally per year.
- Eighty to 85 percent of that ends up in landfills.
- As much as 35 percent of North American electronic assets get recycled.
- North American e-waste generation is roughly split between businesses and households.

Source: Intechra Inc.

To comment on this story, call Jack Mazurak at (601) 961-7271.

Related news from the Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- [TV](#)
- [Social Security](#)
- [Environmental](#)
- [Electronic](#)
- [Cathode](#)
- [Personal Finance](#)
- [Waste Management](#)
- [Electronics](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

 [Send this link to a friend.](#)  [Join our forums.](#)  [Send a letter to the editor.](#)

 [Subscribe to The Clarion-Ledger.](#)

[Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) - [Cars: Cars.com](#) - [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) - [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

Sept 2007							>
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30							

Clarionledger.com - Clintonnews.com - MCHerald.com - Rankinledger.com - Northeastledger.com
VIPJacksonmag.com - MississippiMoms.com

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#)
and [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#), updated March 6, 2007.

©2007 The Clarion-Ledger

