



MSA Capabilities in Thermal Imaging Significantly Strengthened With Acquisition

Feb 22,2000

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 22 /PRNewswire/ -- Mine Safety Appliances Company (MSA) (Amex: MSA) today announced it has acquired ISI Group, Inc. (ISIG) of Albuquerque, New Mexico, a leading developer of infrared thermal imaging cameras (TICs) used for fire fighting and industrial maintenance. With the acquisition, MSA significantly strengthens its product offerings and capabilities in a rapidly growing area for both the fire service and industrial predictive and preventative maintenance markets.

ISIG will continue to operate from its Albuquerque headquarters location and will be run as a part of MSA's Instrument Division, based in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"The acquisition," according to John T. Ryan III, MSA chairman and chief executive officer, "substantially enhances MSA's existing line of infrared thermal imaging cameras and integration capabilities, and strategically positions MSA to seize new sales opportunities in the one of the fastest growing high-technology areas of safety."

According to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics, more than 30,000 fire departments in the U.S. respond to more than 2 million fires each year. Firefighters responding to these calls experience very demanding conditions with severely reduced visibility due to heavy smoke. Infrared thermal imaging provides firefighters with technology that allows them to see through smoke making it a crucial piece of life-saving equipment.

"TIC technology is being quickly adopted by fire departments all over the world," commented William M. Lambert, vice president and general manager for MSA's Safety Products Division. "Our ultimate goal is not just to have an MSA infrared thermal imaging camera in every fire department, but to advance the technology to the point where it's small enough, light enough and affordable enough that any fire department can easily integrate it into their protective equipment ensemble. That day is coming, and probably sooner than many people think."

A recent study by Maxtech International, Inc., a leading market research firm in infrared imaging and infrared thermometry, estimated the combined fire fighting and predictive maintenance markets for infrared thermal imaging to be \$126 million currently, and growing to \$220 million over the next five years.

"Clearly this is a tremendous growth opportunity for MSA and an area on which we will continue to place great focus," said Kerry M. Bove, general manager of MSA's Instrument Division. "The opportunities to both dramatically improve firefighter safety and be a leader in transforming the way firefighters conduct search and rescue operations is very rewarding," he added.

In addition to fire fighting applications, Mr. Lambert also cited increasing demand for infrared thermal imaging cameras used for predictive and preventative maintenance functions in a growing number of manufacturing and industrial plants. "As the automotive industry, power generation utilities and petrochemical plants all strive to keep operating costs low, infrared thermal imaging is increasingly being called upon to make early diagnoses of equipment problems. Detecting overheated circuits and switchgear, inefficient heat exchangers, worn bearings in running machines and inspection of insulated vessels and pipelines, are just some examples of how this technology is being applied," he said. "The trend of using thermal imaging to improve plant safety for preventative cost avoidance will continue to accelerate as more plant supervisors see the benefits of using this technology."

Thomas W. Anderson, founder of ISI Group, will continue to serve as president and will coordinate all engineering and operations activities of the Albuquerque operation. Mr. Anderson will report to MSA's Instrument Division.

MSA is the world's leading provider of quality products and services that protect people's health, safety and the environment. The company has sales and manufacturing operations throughout the United States and has 28 international affiliates.

SOURCE Mine Safety Appliances Company

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