



MSA and CMU Spin-Off Deploy Gaming Technology for Firefighter Training

Aug 31, 2006

Video Game Presents Challenges, Demonstrates Effectiveness of Thermal Imaging Technology

PITTSBURGH, Aug. 31 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- In the video gaming industry, where development partnerships are the norm rather than the exception, even experts might have to agree that a new video game partnership in Pittsburgh is somewhat novel for the industry.

In a move that gives firefighters a new and interactive tool to train in the use of a Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC), global safety products manufacturer MSA (NYSE: MSA) and Carnegie Mellon University spin-off firm Sim Ops Studios have teamed up to bring video game technology to the firefighter training arena. For the fire service industry, the partnership marks the first such effort involving a safety equipment manufacturer and a video gaming technology firm.

The game, "Fireslayer Challenge: Thermal Response," requires players to react to instructions given by an incident commander. With the help of MSA's Evolution(R) 5200 Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC), the player must navigate a smoke-filled environment to rescue several victims and find the seat of the fire.

Since being introduced at the annual Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, the game has attracted significant interest from the fire service community. Overall, gamers' interests are on the rise - more than 13,000 games have been played with 87% of players requesting new "levels" or additions to the game. It is available for download from MSA's fire service website (<http://www.msafire.com>).

Sim Ops Studios is a pioneer in applying gaming technology to the training needs of emergency responders. Most recently, the company developed a hazardous materials response game called HazMat Hotzone that is currently being tested by members of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).

"While developing HazMat Hotzone at Carnegie Mellon University, we envisioned the value of using game-based training technologies to assist emergency responders in preparing for dangerous scenarios," said Shanna Tellerman, CEO and Executive Producer at Sim Ops Studios. "In a world of newly emerging threats combined with the challenging demands of a new generation of learners, this interactive method for training in the field of emergency response is in high demand."

Sim Ops Studios was founded in 2006 with the vision of using video game technology to train emergency responders worldwide. A key benefit to this type of training is the ability to create highly realistic and easily accessible virtual training scenarios using the engaging and immersive graphic capabilities of video game technologies.

The key tool used in the MSA game is the thermal imaging camera. Introduced in the mid 1990s, TICs utilize infrared technology that allows firefighters to see through smoke and darkness. In use, TICs enable firefighters to locate trapped victims in conditions with zero visibility, pinpoint the seat of a fire and identify "hot spots" after a fire has been brought under control.

MSA, a leader in thermal imaging camera technology, introduced the first hand held TIC for firefighters in the mid 1990s. By deploying extensive research and new product development processes, the company has steadily improved TIC technology over the years. "We are certainly proud of our accomplishments in this product area," said Eric Beck, Director of Marketing and Product Planning. "The development of TIC training that uses video gaming technology to demonstrate the effectiveness of such a tool is clearly the next evolution in this category. We're excited about making the game available to fire departments around the country and we look forward to hearing their reactions to the challenges presented."

Established in 1914, MSA is a global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of sophisticated safety products that protect people's health and safety. Sophisticated safety products typically integrate any combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive line of products is used by workers around the world in the fire service, homeland security, construction and other industries, as well as the military. Principal products include self-contained breathing apparatus, gas masks, gas detection instruments, head protection, respirators and thermal imaging cameras. The company also provides a broad range of consumer and contractor safety products through retail channels. These products are marketed and sold under the MSA Safety Works brand. MSA has annual sales of more than \$900 million, manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Europe, and more than 30 international locations. Additional information is available on the company's Web site at www.msanet.com. To learn more about MSA products for the fire service, please visit www.msafire.com.

SOURCE MSA

CONTACT: Mark Deasy of MSA, +1-412-967-3357