

Firm hopes flight bag will fly with pilots

Computer provides runway paths, maps while they are in air.

By Charles E. Ramirez
The Detroit News

AUBURN HILLS — Advanced Data Research Inc. hopes its electronic flight bag takes off.

The high-tech company's flight bag is a small touch-screen computer that gives pilots digital maps, charts and runway approach paths while they're flying.

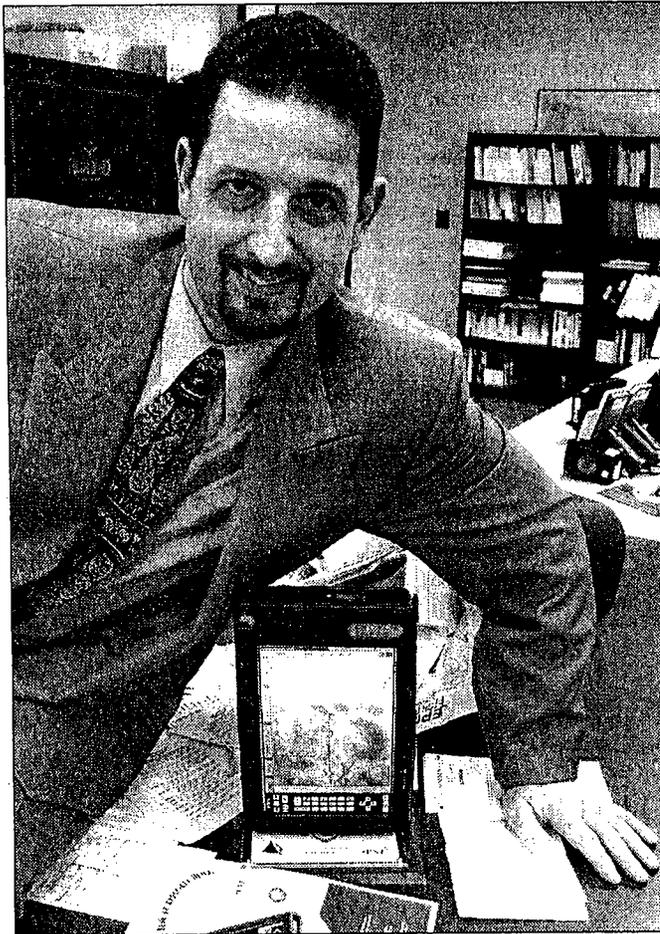
"It can also give pilots real-time weather information," said Jeff Geraci, director of business development for Advanced Data Research, or ADR. "We've even modified some to connect into hidden camera systems so pilots can look into the cabin without leaving the cockpit."

The cost of ADR's electronic flight bag starts at about \$6,400. The company has already sold about 2,000 devices to corporate jet fleets, commercial airlines and the military. The company, which typically sells 600 units a year, projects it will sell 1,000 next year.

ADR, which is privately-held, has 15 employees working at its 28,000-square-foot, Auburn Hills headquarters.

Next month, Geraci and representatives from other Metro Detroit businesses plan to fly to Hannover, Germany, to exhibit their products and services at this year's CeBIT show. The show is one of the world's largest telecommunications and information technology trade shows. Last year, it had almost 8,000 exhibitors and 700,000 visitors from 60 countries.

ADR and the other companies will be part of a trade mission organized by Oakland County's



Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News

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European businesses.

Automation Alley is subsidizing air fare, accommodations and exhibit space for companies on the trade mission. The group is using part of a \$400,000 grant it received from the U.S. Department of Commerce in October 2000.

The cost of the CeBIT trip is \$4,850. Besides airfare, hotel and the show, it includes an interpreter and meetings with European business executives arranged by the

for Automation Alley, said it would cost companies about \$18,000 to do all of that on their own.

"This is truly a great deal," he said.

The county used money from the grant to finance a trade mission to Dusseldorf, Germany, in 2001 and another to China last year. The first trip to Germany resulted in about \$2 million in contracts for the 11 Metro Detroit companies that participated. The trip to China generated \$3 million

CeBIT

The CeBIT — which stands for Center for Office and Information Technology — tradeshow is an exposition of information and telecommunications technology.

■ **Number of CeBIT exhibitors:** 7,500 from more than 60 countries.

■ **Number of CeBIT visitors:** 700,000

■ **Location:** the Hannover Exhibition Center, Hannover, Germany

■ **Exposition days:** March 12-19

■ **Show hours:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ **Web site:** www.cebit.de

For information about Automation Alley's trade mission to the show, visit www.automationalley.com or contact Hayes W. Jones at (248) 975-9636 or Laurie Rogers at (248) 975-9607.

Source: CeBIT and Automation Alley

another trade mission to Mexico later this year.

County officials hope revenues generated from the trade missions will create jobs in the area and strengthen its economy.

But for Geraci and ADR, the trade mission to the CeBIT is an opportunity to expand beyond the United States.

"We've been getting a lot of inquiries about our products from Europe," he said. "We're looking to CeBIT to introduce us to the marketplace there. Eventually, we'd like to have an office there and this trade mission is a great first step."

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