

## O'Gara makes acquisition

The O'Gara Group Inc. is back in the vehicle armoring business with the acquisition of a Texas company, and the opening of a second plant in Fairfield.

The privately held Sycamore Township security products and services company acquired San Antonio-based Protection Devices Inc., which produces armored passenger vehicles such as Chevrolet Suburbans used by U.S. government officials in high-risk locations.

PDI has a 30,000 square-foot plant and employs 50. The purchase price wasn't disclosed.

In addition, O'Gara has leased 36,000 square feet on Osborne Drive in Fairfield with an option for an additional 29,000 square feet to begin turning out additional armored SUVs for the government this spring.

Bill O'Gara, CEO, said the Fairfield plant expects to initially employ about 25 and hopes to grow to about 100 employees in a year.

Bill O'Gara and his brother Tom, and partner Michael Lennon built the former O'Gara-Hess & Eisenhardt Armoring Co. in West Chester into one of the nation's largest vehicle armoring companies in the 1990s before selling the company to

Armor Holdings Inc. in 2003.

Armor later sold the business to BAE Systems, which continues to operate in West Chester.

"We are delighted to be back in the business of armoring vehicles in our own facilities," Bill O'Gara said. The company has done some vehicle armoring using subcontractors.

He declined to discuss revenues, but said O'Gara hopes to build on PDI's current business supplying between 50 and 75 armored SUVs annually to the government.

PDI, which will continue to be managed by former owners Dennis Hendrix and Jorge Resendiz, is one of five suppliers under contract with the State Department under a five-year, \$500 million agreement to supply armor protected vehicles for diplomatic personnel around the globe.

O'Gara said with the Fairfield operation the company hopes to secure more of the State

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Department business, contracts with other government agencies and foreign governments as well.

Getting back in the vehicle armoring business has been a long-term goal for the O'Gara Group, which provides security training and services, and has a night vision goggle business in Beavercreek.

Prior to the 2008 recession, O'Gara planned a \$120 million public stock offering to finance the planned purchase of a Mexico-based vehicle armoring company. That public offering was subsequently withdrawn.

"With the end to U.S. military operations in Iraq, we think vehicle armoring business will see significant consolidation," said O'Gara. He said his company is continuing to look for acquisitions to expand its footprint in the vehicle armoring market.

Late last year, O'Gara hired Tony Russell, former president of BAE's West Chester armoring unit, as president of its emerging Mobile Systems business. He will oversee PDI and the new plant in Fairfield.

Russell, who holds a doctorate in aerospace engineering, started his career with the former O'Gara-Hess & Eisenhardt Armoring.

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