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CMC Technologies can help schools in an emergency

COMMENT: Are you concerned about safety at area schools?



By Jessica Lander-Heffner
Staff Writer

Friday, April 11, 2008

HAMILTON — CMC Technologies has implemented a new technology that will help first responders in an emergency situation similar to one that shocked the nation a year ago at Virginia Tech.

The software, created by FacilityONE, would allow schools and emergency workers to access vital information off-site or en-route about campuses, such as room sizes, shut off valves, air ducts and windows.

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College has contracted the company to use the software to make a virtual layered drawing of the campus.

"Having the ability to access accurate facility prints and system shutoffs is crucial in disaster planning and response," said Mike Wylie, campus police chief at Cincinnati State.

School officials said such technology is necessary in situations like the Virginia Tech shootings that occurred April 16 and left 33 people dead, including the shooter.

"We can't prevent (a situation like Virginia Tech) but if it gets to the point of a possible hostage situation, officers would know where exactly to go and would not be going in blind," said Marion Charnege of CMC Technologies.

The information would be available online to anyone given the access codes. After creating the site, CMC trains school staff on how to use the site and releases codes to them to be distribute as they deem fit, Charnege said.

Since the online program includes building prints, electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems, limited access can also be given to staff for maintenance, construction and financial needs. It's simplicity allows for daily use as well as easy access in the case of an emergency, she said.

CMC has already applied its software to map out a Cincinnati State location in

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Evendale. Charnegie said they expect to begin implementing the software on the main campus after an April 17 meeting. The project could be completed in June.

In the past, Charnegie said their technology was mostly used at hospitals. But after the tragedy at Virginia Tech, they realized it could be better employed at school campuses.

A successful demonstration of how CMC's online program can help in an emergency was completed by Jewish Hospital in Kentucky last year.

Homeland Security, FacilityONE as well as the Jewish Hospital simulated a train wreck, tornado and chemical spill at the facility. The technology allowed crews to work more efficiently, safely and effectively, Charnegie said.

The company is in talks with The Ohio State University and Butler Tech about possibly employing the software there, Charnegie said.

Contact this reporter at (513) 705-2843 or jlander@coxohio.com.

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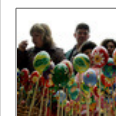


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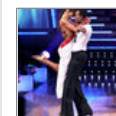
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