Cook Security Group opens Hermiston office

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A security company that combats everything from trespassing to ATM fraud is looking for new technicians and new clients after opening an office in Hermiston.

Cook Security Group, headquartered in the Portland area, celebrated the opening of its Northeast Oregon office Wednesday, located at 1150 W. Hartley Ave., Suite E in Hermiston. The company provides an array of security measures such as high-tech video surveillance systems, bank vaults, access controls and alarms.

Ian Schuchardt, general manager, said the company used to specialize mostly in protecting financial institutions but has been expanding into hospitals, schools, private companies, government institutions and data centers.

Cook Security Group has developed the Suspicious Activity Notification system, for example, known as the SAN Solution, to combat ATM fraud such as skimming and jackpotting.

"Whenever there are new solutions from vendors, (criminals) seem to have a way to work around it," Schuchardt said. "The SAN Solution covers a lot."

One of the most popular ways criminals use ATMs for theft is a technique known as skimming. The thieves hide a device on an unattended ATM machine or gas station pump that reads a person's credit/debit card information at the same time as the machine, then stores that information for the thieves to use themselves or sell on the black market. In 2016 dozens of Hermiston residents reported falling victim to a skimming scheme.

Another newer method is jackpotting, in which criminals install malware on the ATM and tell it to "test" the dispenser by dispensing cash over and over again.

"They can clear out an ATM in less than an hour," Schuchardt said.

The security company can install a system on the ATM that combats fraud in a number of ways, such as cameras that sense when someone has been standing in front of an ATM for an unusual amount of time, allowing Cook Security or the financial institution to shut down the machine remotely or notify police after reviewing the video.

Craig Cook, vice president of operations, said the Cook Security Group has invested a lot in development of new technology and creative solutions in order to keep up with the constant stream of new methods criminals use. The company also provides technology such as door access controls and surveillance for "high-security environments where you want to regulate where everybody goes."

Glen Valiguette, an installation technician who was based in the Tri-Cities before Cook opened the Hermiston office, said the local office will allow the company to serve more businesses and government institutions in what has been a growing market.

"We finally got to the point where we needed an office, needed a base of operations here rather than our truck," he said.

For more information about Cook Security Group, visit www.cooksecuritygroup.com.

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Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

For CEOs, $11.7M a year is middle of pack

By STAN CHOE
AP Business Writer

AP Photo

This photo combination shows the five highest-paid CEOs at big U.S. companies for 2017, as calculated by The Associated Press and Equilar, an executive data firm. From left: Hock E. Tan, Broadcom, $103.2 million; Leslie Moonves, CBS, $68.4 million; W. Nicholas Howley, TransDigm, $61 million; Jeffrey Bewkes, Time Warner, $49 million; and Stephen Kaufer, TripAdvisor, $43.2 million.

NEW YORK — Chief executives at the biggest public companies got an 8.5 percent raise last year, bringing the median pay package for CEOs to $11.7 million. Across the S&P 500, compensation for CEOs is often hundreds of times higher than typical workers.

The pay increase matches the bump that CEOs received in 2016, according to salary, stock and other compensation data analyzed by Equilar for The Associated Press.

For the first time, the government required companies to show in their annual proxy statements just how much more bosses make than the typical employee. The typical CEO made 164 times the median pay of their employees, according to Equilar's analysis.

Because the government gave companies wide leeway in how they calculated the median pay of their workers, and because some industries rely heavily on part-time workers, the CEO-to-worker pay ratios are imperfect and make comparisons difficult. Despite pushback, Congress forced companies to publish the data as a way to shine a spotlight on income inequality.

A debate has already ensued about the significance of this newly released data.

"High pay ratios send a dispiriting message to the workforce," said Liz Shuler, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, which has been calculating its own tally of CEO-to-worker pay ratios for years. "Companies are asking their workers to do more with less, at the same that CEO pay is on the rise."

Detractors among business groups, academics and compensation consultants say the ratio can give a false impression. For example, some companies exclude some of their lower-paid foreign workers, which regulations allow. And companies with large part-time workforces will show much greater disparity between the CEO's pay and median pay.

Across the S&P 500, votes on executive compensation passed in 2016 and 2017, at 95 percent, according to the data compiled by Equilar. The boards of directors who set CEO pay, meanwhile, say they are tying more of their executives' compensation to how the company is performing, as well as the need to pay the going rate to keep talented executives.

The highest-paid CEO in Equilar's analysis was Hock Tan of Broadcom, who made $103.2 million. The vast majority of Tan's compensation came in the form of a stock grant, valued at $98.3 million. He'll receive the shares if the stock hits certain performance targets over the next four years. The company said in a filing with regulators that the figure looks substantial, but the amount Tan earns will "only be exceptional if our (stock returns relative to other companies) is exceptional."

The second-highest paid CEO was Leslie Moonves of CBS. He made $68.4 million, including a $20 million bonus. CBS stock fell in 2017, but the company's board highlighted how CBS is producing more premium content where it has an ownership stake, among other accomplishments.

No. 3 was W. Nicholas Howley at TransDigm, which designs and produces aircraft components. He earned $61 million, including $51.2 million of payments from the company on stock options he holds, as if they had earned dividends. Howley, a TransDigm co-founder, left his position as CEO last month. He is now executive chairman.

New store offers real deals

LA GRANDE — A pair of regional entrepreneurs recently opened a shop offering home décor and trendy fashions.

Janet and Tim Camp launched Real Deals on Home Decor May 17 at 1108 Adams Ave., La Grande. The shop features everything from clocks, mirrors, lamps and fine art to metal wall art, garden items, seasonal décor and candles. Also, the clothing boutique offers the latest in trendy tops, jewelry, graphic T-shirts, jeans, ponte pants, handbags and accessories. The couple promises you'll find something you can't live without.

The store's hours are Monday through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 541-962-7770 or visit www.realdeals.net/lagrande.