

Orland Park business keeps clients up on newest operating systems

By Darcel Rockett,
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Those who remember Windows 95 likely recall Windows 98.

Those in charge of Tallgrass Systems Ltd., an Orland Park network system specialist, remembers those operating systems too, but they also know Windows XP.

Knowing all these systems aids the business as it helps clients migrate from their legacy software/hardware to a contemporary one:

"Having been around for 20 years, we understand the evolution of network technology," said Louis Mulé, owner and president of Tallgrass.

"With the new generation of network technicians out there, they might only know Windows XP and that's going to be a challenge if a business has an older system.

"But we have the legacy component, unlike other network system specialists. We're good at migrating your information and data over from old to new without an organization losing a good portion of their investment."

As a reseller of network computing products for the Chicagoland area, Mulé's company handles numerous network solutions.

Mulé said 60 percent of his business entails network solutions, such as adding software to configured laptops and computers that the factory does not include. He added that one-third of such jobs are done for small- to mid-sized businesses that average 10 to 500 computers on site.

Another 25 percent of Tallgrass's jobs entail administering to network systems onsite as tech staff. The remainder of its works is handling Internet connectivity solutions such as e-mail, Web hosting and VoIP services (which allows one's voice-mail to appear in an e-mail box).

"Lawyers really love this option," Mulé said.

"As soon as a client calls, the system records a time. That means lawyers can automatically keep track of billable hours on the phone."

Along with small to midsize businesses, Tallgrass clients include state and local agencies, along with academic institutions, said Mulé, a former Governors State University professor of environmental science.

Locally, Tallgrass has put the first computer networks into Roosevelt University, Moraine Valley



Mulé, seen here with Mary Palmer, office manager, said a good deal of his company's business revolves around adding software to clients' computer systems.

Internationally, the firm has also sold 300 Panasonic Ruggedized Laptops to Beijing University and computer equipment to the government of Zambia to aid in the country's wildlife management with elephant herding, Mulé said.

Currently, the company is working on ruggedized laptops, (that can sustain dropping and liquid spills,) to be used in police squad cars for several municipalities in the South Suburbs, including Lemont, Palos Heights, Chicago Ridge and Worth.

"These wireless notebooks are able to go into the squads and allow a police officer to transmit reports to the station without getting out of their car," Mulé said.

"They also print out tickets, and let the supervisor know where all the squad cars are at any given moment with their GPS enabled system. It's the same spec that the military uses. We even sold some to the Air Force to place in jets."

Mulé started Tallgrass out of his Orland Park garage after dabbling in primitive Unix systems statistics. An interest soon became a hobby which took

decided to do it full time. He left the academic world in 1988 to pursue it.

The business now has 12 employees, divided into technicians, sales and support staff, all of whom receive certification training from vendor and manufacturers once a month. "Everyone knows the basics," Mulé said.

"We started off as a database consulting company and then moved to hardware- and software-builds on Novell, Microsoft and Linux networks.

"Now we handle any network issue from storage solutions to backups, and bring services into a variety of product lines such as Hewlett-Packards, IBMs, Compaqs and Macs. We make more money on the service side than on the product side."

The service is 24/7, with technicians making onsite visits for clients, sometimes as frequently as three or four times a week, Mulé said. "In our society of very busy lifestyles, we need the connections in technology, even if we don't use it to the fullest."

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