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Intellon acquires Canadian company

Acquisition should make local company stronger

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STAFF WRITER

OCALA - Intellon Corp. has acquired Toronto-based competitor Cogency Semiconductor Inc., a move that officials say will strengthen the local company's place in the technology industry.

Cogency, a fellow player in the high-speed powerline networking industry, will become the new Toronto office for Intellon, a privately owned Ocala company founded in 1989. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

With the transaction, 18 Cogency employees, mostly engineers, will be grafted into the new Intellon office in Toronto. Cogency president and chief executive officer Ron Glibbery has been named president of the newly merged company, and will report to current Intellon chairman and CEO Charlie Harris.

In a recent phone conference with the Star-Banner that included Glibbery, Harris said Cogency was a respected rival, and its inclusion will only strengthen Intellon.

"Ron's team drove us crazy," said Harris with a laugh. "We were very aggressive competitors and are very glad to have them aboard. The goal is to bring everyone together as one team."

Glibbery gave credit to Intellon for developing the technology Cogency was able to successfully market. Intellon pioneered high-speed powerline, which typically utilizes a home's electrical system for importing data commonly gathered from wireless or ethernet platforms.

"We were basically implementing what Intellon had invented," said Glibbery, who also served as general manager of the Canadian digital video group, LSI Logic Corp. "Our two companies share a high-performance, customer-focused culture and we look forward to becoming part of a team that embraces similar values."

Intellon currently employs about 50 workers, but the roll could balloon to more than 80 by the end of the year, Harris said. It is unclear how many jobs would be added in Ocala, which remains Intellon's headquarters. The company also features a sales/marketing office in San Jose, Calif.

"Business will dictate the hiring," said Harris, noting that about half of the current employees are engineers.

The high-speed powerline concept was gathering steam prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but like others in the technology industry, was slowed by the ensuing economic fallout.

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"And it's taken awhile because of the buzz of wireless (technology), " added Harris. "But the strengths of powerline will become evident over time. Our sales in Europe and Asia in particular are doing well, and you will be hearing more about it in the coming months."

Nearly 1 million homes worldwide have installed the trademark HomePlug system, according to Intellon figures. And the company boasts that its next generation PowerAV circuits will allow for better bandwidth, coverage and reliability than current wireless technology -- allowing for transmission of HDTV video streaming, among other capabilities.

Intellon considered going public in the late 1990s, filing intent for an initial public offering (IPO) in 2000. But like others at the time, Intellon pulled back after the technology industry swooned. Harris said Intellon has no plans to go public, but wouldn't close the door completely on the idea.

"It will really be driven by market conditions, and the need to raise capital," he said. "You have to continue to look at it."

James Vander Mey, the man most credited with growing Intellon, remains on the company's board of directors, Harris said. Vander Mey, who founded Intellon with his brother Tim, gave up his title as company chairman to pursue other interests when Harris was promoted in 2001.

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