

## **RIA Member ICR and its Employees Witness Benefits of Robotics Growth**

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Investments in robotics by North American businesses are on the rise and creating job growth opportunities for workers in blue-collar and working class areas. This trend is especially striking in the metro Detroit area, best known for its automotive manufacturing base, but where a new generation is growing up on a diet of high technology.

Southeast Michigan is a beneficiary to the flourishing market for robotics technology, which in 2004 posted its second best total ever in orders according to Ann Arbor based Robotic Industries Association. In fact, many of RIA's 225 member companies are part of the local Michigan job scene. One in particular, Warren based Industrial Repair Control (ICR), can attest directly to the good news happening in the robotics sector.

ICR's journey began more than 12 years ago when Paul Gutierrez founded the company. It started out as a repair shop for electronic circuit boards and other industrial electronics used throughout the automotive industry. Paul and his partners Don Czerniewski and Glenn Dantes have provided the necessary leadership to grow and expand the business. "As we became more successful, the company took on additional high-technology business, which led to our involvement in robotics. This involvement includes the repair of servo motors, robot rebuilds, buying/selling of used robots and associated parts as well as field service," said ICR Vice President, Glenn Dantes.

Dantes continues: "We are and have been in a hiring and growth mode for some time, now. We started 2004 with 90 employees and ended with about 125. And we (more than) doubled our floor space to 50,500 square feet when we moved into our new building in central Warren this January."

"Our robotic technicians all have electronic and/or mechanical capabilities. We draw from a variety of sources: Original Equipment Manufacturers, Technical Institutions, and a tremendous amount of in-house cross training and out-source technical training. Our technicians are required to have knowledge of many different manufacturers equipment and programming techniques. The average industry experience of our technicians is about 12 years."

The company, which hit its stride in 2002 with \$10 million in revenue, and added two to four million more each year since then, with expectations of \$22-25 million in 2005, is among the many successful businesses that are reaping and sowing the benefits of robotics.

Detroit, like any other city with a traditional manufacturing reputation, is a marvelous backdrop for successful businesses in which robotics is part of the equation, and the region is home to many examples of the positive effects that come from adding robots to the workplace.

Any company that can boast growth during the last few years can be proud of its accomplishments. Like ICR, many members of the Robotic Industries Association are part of the employment scene in southeastern Michigan community. This includes several of the leading robot arm manufacturers.

In the end, of course, it's all about people, so it is quite gratifying to report that the Michigan Business & Professional Association named ICR one of its 101 Best and Brightest companies to work for in the Metropolitan Detroit region in 2004. Additionally, the company was one of ten to win an Elite award for Employee Education and Training.