

# Company creates improved system so emergency vehicles can weave through traffic

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Dave Gross was stuck in heavily congested traffic the day after Thanksgiving several years ago at a Coliseum Boulevard intersection near the Glenbrook Square mall in Fort Wayne when he saw an ambulance trying to work its way through.

With cars and trucks unable to move to the side to clear a path for it, "you could only wonder whether somebody was in the back of the ambulance dying of a heart attack," he said. It took about five minutes for the ambulance to clear the intersection.

Even when the lights atop emergency vehicles are equipped with strobe equipment that can change traffic lights to let them through, that equipment relies on an optical signal that can be blocked by a bus, a semi trailer, tree limbs, even fog, Gross said.

That could soon change. Next week, fire-station vehicles in Indianapolis will start testing equipment Gross invented that will get them through traffic more quickly, with less chance of running into another emergency-response vehicle. The testing will take two to four weeks.

"We've crafted a deal with the city of Indianapolis to donate the technology," Gross said. "Any statistical data that can be gleaned from use of the device, we'd like to use for our marketing purposes. Also, we'd like to have the emergency vehicles available to TV camera crews for drive-alongs."

Gross' Eliminator system uses radio, rather than optical, signals to interact with traffic lights up to a mile away.

Prior to an emergency vehicle's arrival at intersections, traffic signals in its path recognize its approach and will turn green in its direction of travel, while displaying a red light to all other directions of traffic flow.

In the event that two or more emergency vehicles are on an impending collision course, the Eliminator will warn the vehicles when they get within a mile of each other via an audible alarm and a flashing display.

The display on the face of the Eliminator looks like a dial, and the position of one or more lights flashing at the circumference indicates the direction of approaching emergency vehicles within 6 degrees.

Gross formed Collision Control Communications to design and develop the technology and then patent and license it, spending most of his savings for retirement in the process.

He recruited Thomas Laverghetta, professor of computer science and broadcast technology at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne in 2000 to begin the design work.

Eventually, an associate professor there and two additional design engineers were added to the team to design and develop working prototypes.

The Department of Justice and the National Institute of Justice have taken an unusually keen interest in commercialization of the technology because they believe it could speed a large-scale response to an emergency caused by a terrorist attack, Gross said.

The Eliminator was among only a dozen technologies selected by the Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization three years ago for a commercialization-planning workshop it held in Albuquerque, N.M.

Gross has patent rights for the technology in the United States and foreign countries, including

Canada.

Collision Control is preparing to sell the Eliminator for about \$4,000 per traffic light - the same amount charged for competing technology. The cost includes the equipment installed in emergency-response vehicles. Gross has discussed outsourcing production of the Eliminator to White Electronics in Fort Wayne.

But he hopes to license the technology to another company or group of companies, which would produce and market it. And he has arranged for Lagerman & Associates in Washington, D.C., to handle the licensing.

Collision Control has issued 100,000 shares of stock and has been selling it at \$10 per share, he said.