

TRUCKING TECH

Stillwater firm's software keeps big rigs rolling

STILLWATER — Chandler's Acord Transportation dispatches dozens of trucks across Oklahoma each day to transport fertilizers, propane, butane, asphalt, road oils and more.

The task of dispatching drivers, logging their deliveries and preparing invoices has always been a time-consuming, labor-intensive activity — until last year.

That's when the trucking firm began using a beta version of a new software called Land Traffic Control developed by Stillwater's Quest RTS specifically to automate the trucking industry's daily dispatch challenge.

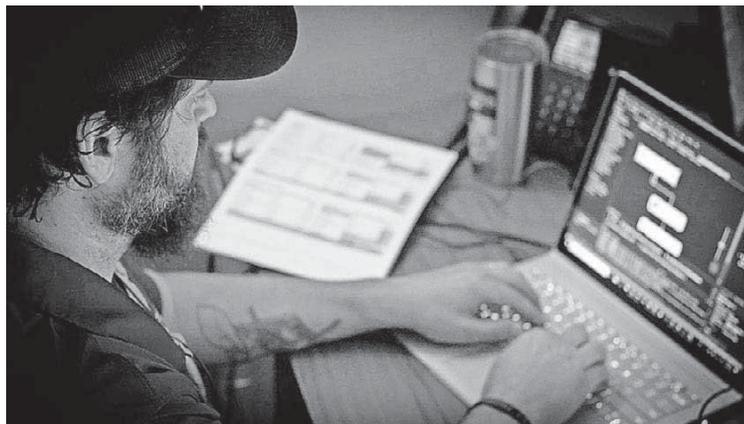
"A lot of the smaller trucking companies are pretty analog on how they dispatch," said Tony Payne, Quest RTS founder and CEO. "They have dispatchers that are receiving calls, writing down loads that customers want transported, then are calling truck drivers saying 'hey, driver, here is your dispatch.'"

Once the delivery is complete, drivers call back to the office with the bill of lading on what they delivered, the number of gallons used on the run and the hours they spent on the road. Office staff writes down the numbers, then attempt to create an invoice in a timely manner.

"When there are so many truck drivers and so few dispatchers, it becomes a bottleneck," Payne said.

Land Traffic Control eliminates the bottleneck by providing digital alerts to drivers via mobile devices. Payne describes it as an enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.

"They get their loads, we know when they've accepted a load, and as soon as they complete a load and enter the gallons, the bill of lading, the back



Quest RTS is designed to alleviate the time-consuming, labor-intensive chore of dispatching drivers, logging their deliveries and preparing invoices. [PHOTO PROVIDED BY OCAST]

office knows in seconds that the load is complete and has all the information."

Quest RTS — for Remote Technical Services — was founded in 2017 and released a beta version of the Land Traffic Control software in July of that year. The public version of the software went live last month.

"After our first batch went in automatically, we got a call from the CFO at Acord telling us that we absolutely knocked it out of the park," Payne said. "He was just ecstatic."

Said Lee Durbin, Acord Transportation's chief financial officer: "Using Land Traffic Control, we have streamlined our workflow and eliminated a ton of busy work."

Quest RTS is a sister company to an older business called Quest Technical Services, which was founded in 2013 and provides managed IT services and support to a base of customers across Oklahoma and beyond. The two companies employ seven people full-time, along with three interns and a varying number of contract workers.

For the past year, Quest RTS has been based at the business incubator on the campus of the Meridian

MORE ONLINE



To watch a video about Quest RTS, a Stillwater company that has created software to help trucking companies deal with logistics, go online to Oklahoman.com

Technology Center. Payne describes it as a collegial atmosphere in which he can bounce ideas and challenges off fellow entrepreneurs located nearby.

"This has been amazing for us," he said of the incubator experience. "There are so many brilliant and bright people here. It's nice not to be on an island by yourself."

Brad Rickelman is assistant director of the incubator, which is formally known as the Center for Business Development.

"Tony came to us with this great idea, this great product, going gangbusters on it," Rickelman said. "But in terms of being a businessman, he was just flailing."

So the incubator staff and fellow entrepreneurs offer assistance and feedback that a small business such as Quest RTS might not otherwise afford.

"We are trying to assist them in becoming a better manager, a better owner, a better businessperson, and that's what's going to

make them successful," Rickelman said.

In addition to the Land Traffic Control software, Quest also developed a companion scanning software and a "dashboard" that permits users to track all their drivers, deliveries and other critical information in real time.

News of the Quest RTS innovation traveled quickly across the trucking industry as people began to hear about the successful beta test and automation features built into the software.

"We are actually starting to get cold calls," Payne said. "People are calling Acord. They are hearing about our software and integration. I just think word of mouth and community is going to be great for us."

Jim Stafford writes about Oklahoma innovation and research and development topics on behalf of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology (OCAST).



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