

## Build the Best and They Will Come

The Carolinas chapter of 7x24 Exchange has experienced phenomenal membership growth since its inception in 2010. In 2012, membership soared by 85% over the previous year.

We sat down with Membership Committee Chair David Knight, CEO of Integrated Power Systems, to find out why mission critical enterprises are flocking to the chapter and why you should too.

### **CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CAROLINAS CHAPTER?**

In the spring of 2009, I went to the national 7x24 Exchange meeting in Boca Raton. The quality of this meeting was something I'd never seen before. It was the quality of the content, the organization, the customers who were there - these were key decision makers. They were the top companies in the mission critical industry. I was just blown away with this meeting and this group. At the fall conference that same year, I made it a point to meet CEO Bob Cassiliano. That's where it started, along with Willie Bullock, Jeff Farlow, and Robin Aron with EAS/Envirotrol. We were all thinking the same thing: What we ought to do is start a new chapter. Bob said that he and his team would support us in every way possible.

### **WHAT WAS YOUR VISION IN BUILDING THE CHAPTER?**

We wanted to follow the policies and bylaws of the national 7x24 specifically. We made a commitment to run this chapter exactly the same way as the national organization. What makes us different from the other organizations is that it's truly an exchange of information. It's done in a non-vendor-assertive atmosphere. We don't accept any pressure from sales and vendors. Like our mission statement says, the goal of 7x24 is to improve end-to-end reliability by promoting dialogue among those who design, build, operate, and maintain mission critical enterprises.

### **WHAT WERE YOUR GOALS IN RECRUITING THE CHAPTER BOARD?**

We knew we needed leaders in top companies. Apple's Data Center Operations Manager Tom Jacobik became a target for us. He's the guy who was in charge of the whole construction, operation, and turnover of one



of the most sophisticated and highest technology data centers in the world here in North Carolina. He has been a terrific president and leader. Other members include Facebook, Google, American Express, BB&T, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Carolinas Health Care, Time Warner, Infocrossing, SteelOrca, and Duke Energy. To fill out the board, we have top companies that include design engineering organizations, contractors, integration services organizations, and key manufacturers in the industry. If we segment the different markets, we have the top companies in financial services, the top Internet service companies, top colocation data center services, the top telecommunication service groups, and top health care all represented. The common denominator is that it's all truly mission critical.

### **WHAT DO MEMBERS TAKE AWAY FROM BEING IN THE 7×24 EXCHANGE?**

They get this quality of information and the quality of the membership. They don't have that in other places. They don't have the same quality of exchange that we do. That's the big takeaway. What's working for a financial services company like Wells Fargo could be applicable to a company like Time Warner. What's working at Google may be applicable to the challenges facing Carolinas Healthcare with all the new regulations coming down. That's why our membership took off the way it did. Members are exposed to hot topics of technology, safety, and reliability. That's part of the content of every one of our meetings. Members have an incredibly hard job to maintain a 7×24 mission critical enterprise operation. We can help the end users do their jobs better.

### **HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THIS INDUSTRY AND YOUR CHAPTER?**

This whole industry of mission critical is the most exciting industry today. People's demand for quick information and the storage and transmission of this information: That's what the mission critical industry is all about. You're combining the top technology being developed on the planet with the application of that technology in the most cost-efficient and energy-efficient way that it can possibly be installed. Our chapter is perfectly poised to lead this exchange and help our industry stay abreast of all the current information. That's the future, and that's what our group is all about.

*David Knight is CEO of Integrated Power Solutions.*