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Homeland security market in the U.S. open for business

The \$30-billion homeland security and defence market in the U.S. is hotter than ever and is growing at about 12% a year. With many U.S. state and city emergency plans still not meeting federal expectations, there may be profitable opportunities for Canadian companies.

According to the U.S. government's *Nationwide Plan Review*, emergency operation plans in 75% of U.S. states and 90% of urban areas are inadequate. Corporations and governments continue to spend on technologies and systems for threat detection, identification and authentication, screening (of people and cargo), surveillance, tracking, data analysis and cyber-security management.

Many Canadian companies produce innovative niche technologies and security solutions and sell these to U.S. federal, state, and local government buyers.

Jack Gin, President and CEO of Vancouver's Extreme CCTV, is a case in point. The entrepreneur built a \$24-million public company over the past ten years by focusing on a remote surveillance niche he felt he could dominate: active infrared night vision. About half his business is with clients in the U.S., split between government and commercial end-users. His advice to others interested in the U.S. market is to specialize, and build a top-flight reputation one client at a time.

"Decide what you're going to do, and be sure it's something you're very, very good at," explains Gin. "Start small, start early and win small. If you start out trying to win big, you'll fail. Get that first order and focus on delivering well. Win with each of your first customers. You need these customers to build a reputation."

Extreme CCTV and other firms share their experiences in a new guide, *Homeland Security Market in the Northeast USA: Partnerships for Public Sector Business*, produced by Canada's Trade Commissioner Service. The guide includes

contacts for buyers and partners, and tells how to find upcoming federal, state and local opportunities. But it warns Canadian exporters to this market that they can expect to invest



Unlocking opportunities in the U.S.

upwards of \$250,000 a year on business development activities for two to three years before showing a consistent profit.

"We are a nation of innovators, but we can often fall down on the marketing. Many Canadian companies can imagine plenty of applications for their security solutions," observes Judy Bradt, CEO of Summit Insight and principal author of the guide. "They are surprised to find that large companies—

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