

## Chattanooga: Panther puts footprint in city

### Designer of grant oversight software makes deal with center

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Chattanooga is landing a branch office of a Florida high-tech company that's developing a new business niche.

Panther International, based in Clearwater, Fla., is entering an alliance with the Enterprise Center, the Chattanooga nonprofit that oversees many of the city's technology growth initiatives.

"It's another peg in Chattanooga's advancement in terms of technology development," said Wayne Cropp, the center's chief executive.

Chase Stockon, Panther's CEO, said the company's grant management software business primarily deals with grantors.

He said his BlackCat Grant Management System works with government granting entities in states such as Florida, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico, focusing on airports, seaports and transit.

However, in its new business niche it plans to develop in Chattanooga, Panther wants to work with grantees, Mr. Stockon said.

The company will work with the Enterprise Center to develop a software model to streamline grants received by the center and use that to help develop Panther's new system.

"Our goal is to diversify our services by designing a new business niche," Mr. Stockon said.

Mr. Cropp said the company will help his organization track its federal, state and local grants and monitor project milestones.

#### Fast Fact

Panther International was started in 1994 in the Tampa Bay area of Florida.

"The intent is to create a 'dashboard system' for tracking, managing and reporting," Mr. Cropp said.

The system will align the center's goals with its grant milestones, progress reports and other reporting requirements, he said.

Mr. Cropp said his group, located at the Development Resource Center, will enter into a six-month contract with Panther and pay the company \$200 a month primarily to cover software licensing.

Mr. Stockon said Panther's current 17-employee staff managed over \$6.5 billion in grant volume last year. That's up from \$4 billion three or four years ago, he said.

Mr. Cropp said he hopes that in three to five years Panther could double its staff with half the total in Chattanooga, though Mr. Stockon wouldn't make any projections.

Jim Frierson, a Chattanooga Technology Council board member, said Mr. Stockon could have chosen to locate Panther's third office anywhere, but he picked the Scenic City.

"It's a growth platform," Mr. Frierson said. "We like companies that have a niche technology."

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., said in a statement that it's a top priority to bring advanced technology and new jobs to the region.

He called the alliance "another step forward for the economic stability of our community."

Mr. Stockon said he hasn't selected an office site yet, but he plans to build a second home on Lookout Mountain.

[Subscribe Here!](#)

**ONLY IN TOMORROW'S timesfreepress**

Spiritual sculptor

