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Armed Response Team is an
NMCC Portfolio Company

Armed and quick

New Mexico Business Weekly - by [Kevin Robinson-Avila](#) NMBW Staff

It's 2 a.m. and your office alarm -- across town -- goes off for the 10th time this year.

Who you gonna call, the Albuquerque Police Department? Not unless you're ready to pay \$500 for a false alarm.

And, even if there is a burglary under way, APD is unlikely to get there for hours -- long after the thieves are gone and the damage is done.

Businesses and homeowners now have another professional security group they can turn to: **Armed Response Team LLC**, which will send a veteran police officer to the scene in fewer than 10 minutes.

"If the APD responds, they won't get there for one or two hours, well after the burglars have robbed and left the place," said Mark Mullaney, area manager for **TNT Fireworks**. "With ART, an armed officer is out there in 10 minutes. They don't mess around."

Mullaney hired ART to monitor his company's alarm system last June, after losing \$50,000 in tools and equipment in four burglaries the past two years. When thieves again tried to rob the business in August, ART stopped them cold, preventing the theft of a TNT trailer, Mullaney said.

"ART came out immediately and the thieves just dropped the trailer and took right off," Mullaney said.

The company formed in 2004, but waited until 2006 to begin direct marketing to businesses and homeowners, said President and CEO David Meurer.

"We've grown from less than 100 clients last year to over 1,000 now," Meurer said. "We're adding new customers every day."

Rapid growth and ART's interest in expanding beyond New Mexico have attracted investors. **This month, New Mexico Community Capital approved a \$750,000 round of funding for the company, including \$650,000 from NMCC and \$100,000 from an angel investor, said NMCC Managing Director Tom Keleher.**

"ART has a real business niche," Keleher said. "They're filling a space that's valuable to both customers and police."

More than 31 million alarm systems are installed nationwide, and consumers spend about \$6 billion annually for security firms to monitor those systems and notify police.

But alarms offer little consumer protection because police lack the resources to respond effectively.

More than 95 percent of the time, alarms are triggered by accident, encouraging hefty fines to cover wasted time and resources. Many cities won't even respond unless they are sure a burglary is in progress, Meurer said.

APD, for example, charges \$150 for each false alarm after three such incidents in a given year. It charges \$500 per false alarm after 10 such incidents.

By hiring ART, consumers can avoid all fines because ART will only call police if they confirm a burglary. Then, ART will detain intruders until APD arrives.

ART hires only veteran police officers, all of whom are recently retired APD cops with 20-plus years of experience.

Apart from monitoring systems, ART can install new alarms, or rewire existing ones for compatibility with ART. And the company is rolling out proprietary technology to monitor construction sites and other open-air locations, Meurer said.

ART offers month-to-month service to allow customers to cancel any time. Homeowners pay a flat monthly fee of \$39.95. Businesses pay on a sliding scale starting at \$60 depending on property size.

Jean Bernstein, president of **Flying Star Cafe**, said ART provides excellent security for the 11 restaurants she runs in Albuquerque.

"ART picks up where APD leaves off," she said.

John Seaver, owner of **Just Sprinklers** in the North I-25 corridor, said ART has gotten rid of vandals and taggers.

"We had lots of problems with break-ins and teenagers painting graffiti, but the last time these kids broke in, an ART officer was here in just six minutes and scared them off," Seaver said. "We haven't had a problem since. These guys are the real deal."

kr Robinson-Avila@bizjournals.com | 348-8302



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Armed Response Team officer Rick Solis checks an unoccupied home.