

NDSU tech company develops Android flood app

H2O brings Fargo flood information to your mobile device

By Amy Dairymple
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FARGO — Is your community flooding?

Now there's an app for that.

A startup company in the North Dakota State University Research and Technology Park has developed a free app for Android phones to provide people with up-to-date flood information.

Jake Joraanstad, an NDSU computer engineering student who is the project manager, said the app provides people with news feeds, river levels, road clo-

sure maps and other information.
The app was created by Myriad Devices, a new company that is primarily made up of students and faculty members from NDSU's electrical and computer engineering department.

"Nowadays, especially with the younger generation, everyone wants their information instantaneously and on the go," said Mark Schroeder, an NDSU faculty member and one of the company's founders.

Brian Walsh, business development manager for Myriad Devices, came up with the idea to develop the app about two weeks ago.

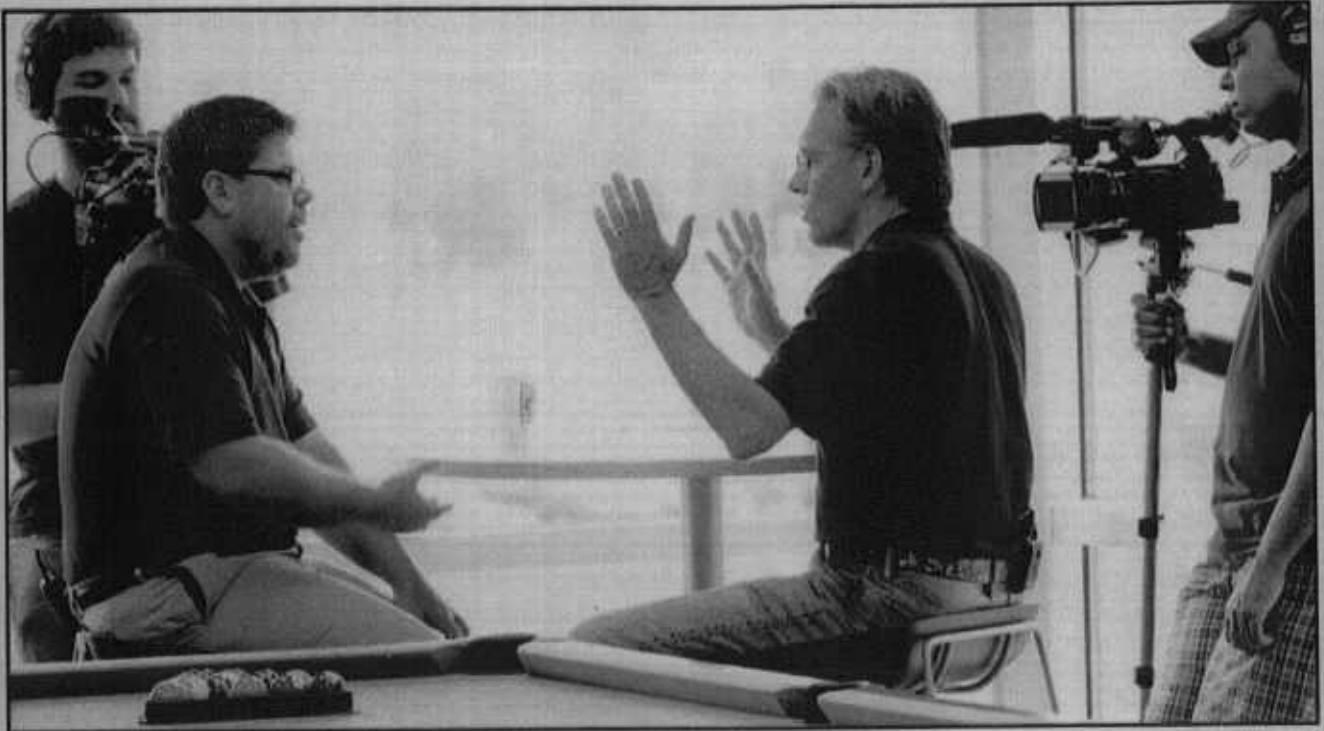
"They worked hard for a week to get it ready before the flood fight hit a critical stage.
"It's the best way we can help the community," said

Joraanstad, who heads the app division for Myriad Devices.
The app is called H2O, which stands for Helping To Organize.
Right now it's focused on Fargo, but they plan to expand it to other communities.
The company also is working with city officials to find other ways the app can be adapted for other situations.

"This is just the beginning," Walsh said.
Informs searchword: flood
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Jake Joraanstad, a North Dakota State University computer engineering student, shows off a free Android app he helped develop called H2O that provides flood information.



David Samson / The Forum

Robert Cringely, right, a technology expert who has written for NPR and PBS, interviews Brian Gramer, CEO and founder of Avenue Right, a marketing and technology company in the NDSU Technology Incubator center.

Local CEO interviewed for TV

Show focuses on start-up tech companies around country

By Emily Hartley
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"I just don't see any super-nerds here," Robert Cringely told Avenue Right CEO Brian Gramer as two cameras filmed their conversation at the Fargo business in the NDSU Technology Incubator building.

"We keep them in the back. I'll take you to them," Gramer said, following the quirky national technology writer's lead.

Cringely was in town Tuesday to film a segment for a new television show set to air on an undisclosed "major" cable station this fall. As yet untitled, the show focuses on 24 start-up technology companies around the country, including Avenue Right.

Robert X. Cringely is

actually a pen name for technology journalist Mark Stephens, as well as for the group of writers behind the "Notes from the Field" column in the technology publication InfoWorld. Cringely and his family are traveling the country in a conspicuous black RV with "Startup America: Cringely's (Not in Silicon Valley) Startup Tour" plastered across the side, filming television segments.

"The most exiting thing to me is to get exposure to Fargo, to this region," said Gramer, a Moorhead native. He figures Avenue Right's location in Fargo was a big reason it was chosen out of 400 businesses nominated for the show.

Avenue Right, a marketing technology company

that helps advertising agencies buy more efficiently, is the third of Gramer's start-up companies. He sold the first two, anycollege.com and Vtrenz, and now has 18 employees at Avenue Right, which was founded in January 2008.

"I think it's the idea that I'm a serial entrepreneur that started three companies in this area, all on the cutting edge of software," Gramer said of being chosen for the show.

He said being on a national television show certainly won't hurt business, especially since Cringely has several successful PBS documentaries, including one based on his book, "Accidental Empires: How the Boys of Silicon Valley Make Their Millions, Bat-

tle Foreign Competition, and Still Can't Get a Date."

Gramer and Cringely discussed subjects ranging from Gramer's father's job in advertising to transparency in the advertising business to the people and weather in Fargo. Gramer planned to show Cringely around Fargo on Tuesday night after their interview to give him a taste of the area he says he'll always be loyal to.

"You can be loyal to your country, to your region, to your city," Gramer told Cringely of keeping his business in Fargo. "I like the land, I like the people, and I think they deserve high-paying jobs."

Inform searchword: Avenue Right
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BUSINESS

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His own 'Buddy' system

Man's invention helps workers avoid injuries while delivering goods

By Craig McEwen

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Former deliveryman Aaron Lamb has developed a remote-controlled, battery-operated hand delivery cart that lifts and lowers materials, work that was previously done by muscle power.

It's called Lift'n Buddy Pro, a two-wheel cart fitted with a battery-powered activator that can lift 1,500 pounds to elbow height, reducing strain for operators.

Its predecessor has been the common, two-wheel delivery cart often seen attached to the front of beverage and other delivery trucks that workers load and unload using repetitive muscle motion.

"I lived this," said Lamb, who was once a route sales and product deliveryman for Sara Lee Coffee and Tea.

The theory behind Lift'n Buddy is to enable people to work in proper ergonomic positions so you never have to bend over again, he said.

"This was specifically designed for supply-chain industries," said Lamb, a 2002 North Dakota State University graduate in French international studies with a business focus.

Lamb developed the concept and prototype with the assistance of NDSU's research and technology incubator at 1854 NDSU Research Circle N., Fargo.

"All these hand trucks are completely customizable to a worker's needs," he said. "So there's just a ton of stuff it could be used for."

On-vehicle docking stations enable users to recharge the hand trucks between deliveries, he said.

The idea of developing an automated hand delivery cart floated in the back of his mind for some time, he said.

"I drew it on a cocktail napkin," Lamb said, while visiting a friend from Chicago.

Lamb took the drawing to Fargo-based TRS Industries, 4119 14th Ave. N., which built a prototype and hopes to be manufacturing Lift'n Buddy Pro by the end of this year, he said.

"We just took a medium-duty hand truck, two-wheel cart and redesigned it to the configuration they had drawn," said Richard Cossette, TRS president.

TRS is redesigning the product for end use by literally any industry, Cossette said.



David Sameon / The Forum

Former deliveryman Aaron Lamb demonstrates his invention, the Lift'n Buddy Pro, which can lift 1,500 pounds to elbow height.

"We already have had customers that would buy it just the way it is," he said.

Lamb said he expects the hand trucks to sell for about \$750.

Lift'n Buddy was one of

the top 20 finalists in the 2010 Innovate ND competition.

For more information, call (701) 499-5293.

Inform searchword: business

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