



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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## News Release

A dream come to life...meet EVIS

**West Union, Ohio** – Rob Fuller and Sandra Stevens, co-owners of EVIS LLC, developed devices that facilitate the emergency evacuation process in a variety of building and room types including hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, cruise ships, schools, dormitories, and other facilities where guests, residents, or patients stay in closely grouped rooms.

Sandra Stevens worked in the medical field for almost 40 years. She is a Registered Nurse who worked at a hospital and worked as a Nursing Consultant at local nursing homes where she taught staff safety by performing drills on fire safety response to alarms and evacuations.



Rob Fuller and Sandra Stevens, Co-Owners of EVIS LLC

To effectively confine the spread of smoke or vapors in an emergency, all doors must be closed immediately upon the alarm sounding. The dilemma that Sandra encountered was how to identify which patient rooms had been evacuated since all the doors were closed. During the drills, she observed that a great deal of time was lost while staff and rescuers re-entered rooms that had already been evacuated. This lost time could cost patients and rescuers their lives. Thankfully, hospital evacuations don't happen often, but when they do it is imperative that staff and rescue personnel are prepared and equipment and procedures are in place to make the process as time efficient and successful as possible.

A number of strategies are used, presently, to identify evacuated rooms, but none are completely successful. Sandra knew there had to be a more effective way to communicate which rooms have been evacuated. Her dream was to create a device that could tell hospital staff and rescuers at a glance that a room had been evacuated. Partnering with Rob Fuller with almost 15 years of engineering and manufacturing experience, they designed and patented a system.



Currently, EVIS provides clients with three product options:

- 1) Evacuation Status Indicator (ESI). During an evacuation, the ESI communicates the status of the room to which it is attached. In an emergency, a closed

device communicates that the room is still occupied. An open device communicates that the room has been evacuated. It is a simple visual and tactile stimulus that communicates the status of the evacuation.

- 2) Evacuation Status Module (ESM). The ESM performs exactly the same function as the ESI; however, electronics and software provide additional functionality and benefits. In addition to the visual and tactile stimuli that provide evacuation status information, the ESM enables facility personnel, incident command, and arriving rescuers to track the evacuation process electronically. This can be accomplished by using a facility computer set up at incident command or by logging on the facilities secure website via a portable device such as a smartphone or laptop.
- 3) Evacuation Status Module-Wireless (EMS-W). The EMS-W functions the same as the ESM; however, it operates wirelessly throughout the facility.



The company focus has been centered on the healthcare industry, but is continuing to tweak the system for hotels, schools, and more.

Rob stated, “The big hurdle initially became how two ‘Average Joes’ could bring an idea to reality.” So with a great idea and very little resources, Rob and Sandra turned to the Ohio State University (OSU) South Centers Manufacturing and Technology Small Business Development Center (MTSBDC). Brad Bapst, MTSBDC Director, provided no cost business counseling regarding funding options, business planning, and cash flows. Brad also contacted Meagan Barnes, OSU South Centers Entrepreneurial Signature Program (ESP) Specialist, who became vital in connecting Rob and Sandra with TechGrowth Ohio ESP funding. According to Rob, “The ESP Program provided funds in the beginning of the process for a patent attorney to help get patents nailed down, for prototypes, and for evaluation of the electronics and software part of the Evacuation Identification System.”

Fuller said, “I want to make sure that the people who have helped us are recognized. Meagan has been great. She has made herself available countless times on the phone and travelled all the way to Adams County to see us. OSU South Centers has been tremendous. They have been a very helpful group and I think that the whole idea of no cost small business counseling is very good for people like us who could not do it on our own. There are lots of people with lots of ideas out there, but they just don’t have enough resources to pull it off. So I want to give thanks and credit to the people that have been helping us. I just can’t say enough about it -- we wouldn’t have been able to manage from a couple of standpoints. We wouldn’t be able to continue without the financial support, but we’ve also received a great deal of help in putting our business plan together also.”

Rob continues, “Still after a number of years, OSU South Centers continues to provide counseling. The team is an excellent resource to bounce ideas around. Lowell Morrison, Business Development Specialist, has been tremendous helping me thinking through things.”

For more information regarding no cost confidential business counseling from The Ohio State University South Centers Manufacturing and Technology Small Business Development Center, contact Joy Bauman at 740-289-2071 x111 or email [bauman.67@osu.edu](mailto:bauman.67@osu.edu).

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