

# Send Solutions offers go-to team for R&D

STORY BY CHRISTINE KNAUER

Most aviation insiders know David Gray from his excitement and passion for in-flight entertainment, from movies to music to moving maps and more. In 2014, Gray sold his company, Flight Display Systems, to a private equity firm. With the transition complete, Gray has turned his attention to a new venture – researching and developing technology products for civilian and military aircraft as well as non-aviation industries. In short, he has created

a go-to engineering team for companies needing R&D services.

“Send Solutions was formed to create products that customers need,” said Gray, founder and president of Alpharetta, Georgia-based Send Solutions. “Many of the solutions to customers’ problems have either been ignored by large companies, been passed over as too trivial, or considered not profitable enough.”

Gray emphasizes his team’s ability to listen to customers and present alternative solutions to challenging issues. The team includes a cross-section of younger and older employees with varied experiences, helping to foster outside-of-the-box ideas.

“The customers we see are those that we have developed a long and supportive relationship over the years,” said Gray, who served six years in the military and has more than 33 years of experience in the avionics industry. “First, aircraft owners and operators. They have unique problems that need to be solved. They do not mince words or ideas and have often been snubbed by their current vendors. Second, the military. They have special needs, and most of their applications are custom and not related to large programs. And third, we have customers with similar needs who have taken us to some non-aviation platforms.”



*In June, Send Solutions received an STC for its first product, Airtext, an aircraft SMS messaging system, for installation on Cessna 750 aircraft.*

**WEBSITE:** send.aero

**FACILITIES:** 13,000 square feet

**FOUNDED:** 2015 by David Gray

**WHAT THEY DO:** Send Solutions researches and develops technology-based solutions for civilian and military aircraft and non-aviation industries.

**EMPLOYEES:** 11

**AEA MEMBER SINCE:** 2016



*The Send Solutions team includes experts in software, firmware and hardware, as well as those with experience in aviation, electronics and technology. Pictured at the company's headquarters north of Atlanta are (seated, from left) David Gray, founder of Send Solutions; Sharon Heideck, accounting manager; Brian Benavides, senior software engineer; (standing, from left) Colton Cross, firmware engineer, and Joe Little, research and development hardware engineer.*

### **First product**

In July, Send Solutions received a supplemental type certificate for its first product, Airtext, for installation on Cessna 750 aircraft. The 5 cents per minute text-messaging system allows up to 16 passengers to send and receive SMS messages via iOS or Android cellphone. The system utilizes the Iridium satellite network, connecting cellphones via Bluetooth to the onboard hardware.

Send Solutions markets Airtext as a way to stay in touch with business, family and friends anywhere in the world, at any altitude. Gray anticipates a large market in aviation and other transportation categories. The company plans to announce expanded capabilities for Airtext at the National Business Aviation Association Convention and Exhibition, Nov. 1-3, in Orlando, Florida.

“This fall, Iridium will start launching its NEXT satellites, the company’s second-generation satellites,” Gray said. “We are about to drastically increase the bandwidth available to our customers. Increased bandwidth equals increased capabilities.”



**SEND  
SOLUTIONS**

### **Family-owned business**

As with Flight Display Systems, Gray’s new electronics business is family-owned and -operated, as well as located in the same northern suburb of Atlanta where

Gray has established relationships with vendors, contractors and the Federal Aviation Administration.

“A family-owned business has unique and interesting dynamics,” Gray said. “The input from family is fast and direct with usually no filters. Not worrying about your job stability enables people to honestly assist when needed.”

*Continued on following page*

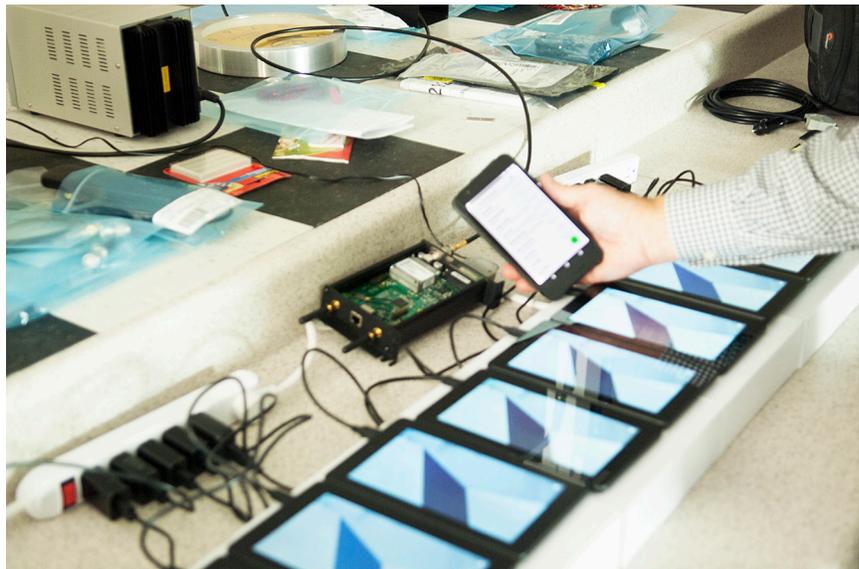
## SEND SOLUTIONS

*Continued from page 43*

This banter and watching each other's back is reassuring in one way. In another way, it is difficult to separate the business personal interactions from the family interaction, and that challenge is constant. I have a lot of respect and empathy for family-owned businesses.”

Currently, Send Solutions occupies 13,000 square feet in a company-owned building, which previously provided engineering, manufacturing and production space for Flight Display Systems in years past. The location near Atlanta offers the company a diverse talent pool from which to draw employees who prefer not to commute through the city's notorious traffic snarls.

“Housing is affordable and quality



*The company helps engineer solutions for a variety of industries, from aviation to military and marine to home and business.*

of life is high,” said Gray, who earned his first pilot's license at 16 years of age. “We have accessibility to the Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport for international and long domestic flights. Also, our company airplane is located at an

airport outside of the Atlanta TCA, which makes for fast departures.”

### Facing challenges

Send Solutions faces numerous challenges as most startups do, from navigating regulatory issues to generating revenue to ensuring a strong future by attracting young talent to the industry.

“The regulations ensure that we do not endanger pilots and passengers as well as the safety of those on the ground, but it's difficult to certify against standards that are outdated,” Gray said. “Also, we need to bring young blood into what I consider an exciting career field. We need to continue to show a path to a rewarding career in aviation. Air travel is taken for granted, but it's actually an exciting process.”

“I once talked to a friend in China about my ability to get into my plane and fly anywhere I wanted at anytime I wanted. He could not fathom that we have so much freedom. From movie stars to sports figures, from head-of-state aircraft to special operations military, from corporate aircraft to general aviation, we service such a wide swath of needs and interests. There is a growing future in avionics, and I am excited to have chosen this career field.” □

# Georgetown