

# The Patriot Ledger

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## NEW VISION - CAPE OPENING: Home electronics company answers the call

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HINGHAM - After five years of designing custom home electronics systems from its Hingham headquarters, Advanced Communication Technologies is expanding.

The electronics consulting and installation firm opened a 660-square-foot office and showroom in Falmouth last month in response to a call for more service on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

Paul Diggin, the firm's managing director, said 30 percent of its \$1.5 million in revenue last year came from business on the Cape and the Islands.

"We did a lot of work on the Cape last year," he said. "Toward the end of the year, we were really building up a rapport down there."

The firm is leasing an office at Ballymeade Country Club. One employee provides consulting services from the Falmouth office, which also includes a small showroom.

ACT specializes in designing and installing home theater systems, surveillance systems and networking and communication systems that allow users to control audio, lighting and video throughout the house from a central location. About 80 percent of the firm's business is residential.

"We sell products, but we pride ourselves as consultants," said Keith Bartholomew, the firm's director of operations. "We find out what the client wants to do and draft a game plan to approach that."

As technology changes, residential designs and installations are becoming more sophisticated, Diggin said. When he and Bartholomew partnered in 2002 to start ACT, they anticipated changes in technology, but they had no idea how the changes would affect their business, Diggin said.

"Five years in our business is like eons," Diggin said. "Things are cheaper now and performance is better."

The average customer spent \$75,000 or more five years ago for a home entertainment system. Today the average cost is less than \$30,000, Diggin said.

Lower prices means more business for ACT, Diggin said. It is outgrowing its 2,800-square-foot showroom on Route 53 in Hingham, and the firm is looking for a bigger space.

The two-man team at the company's inception has expanded to 11 employees, and the firm plans to continue to grow.

"It's the right time to be in this business," Diggin said. "We're looking at adding a couple more people and finding another property."

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Paul Diggin and Keith Bartholomew of Advanced Communication Technologies in Hingham show off a living room model with a plasma TV, surround sound with tower, box and in-ceiling speakers. (LISA BUL/The Patriot Ledger)