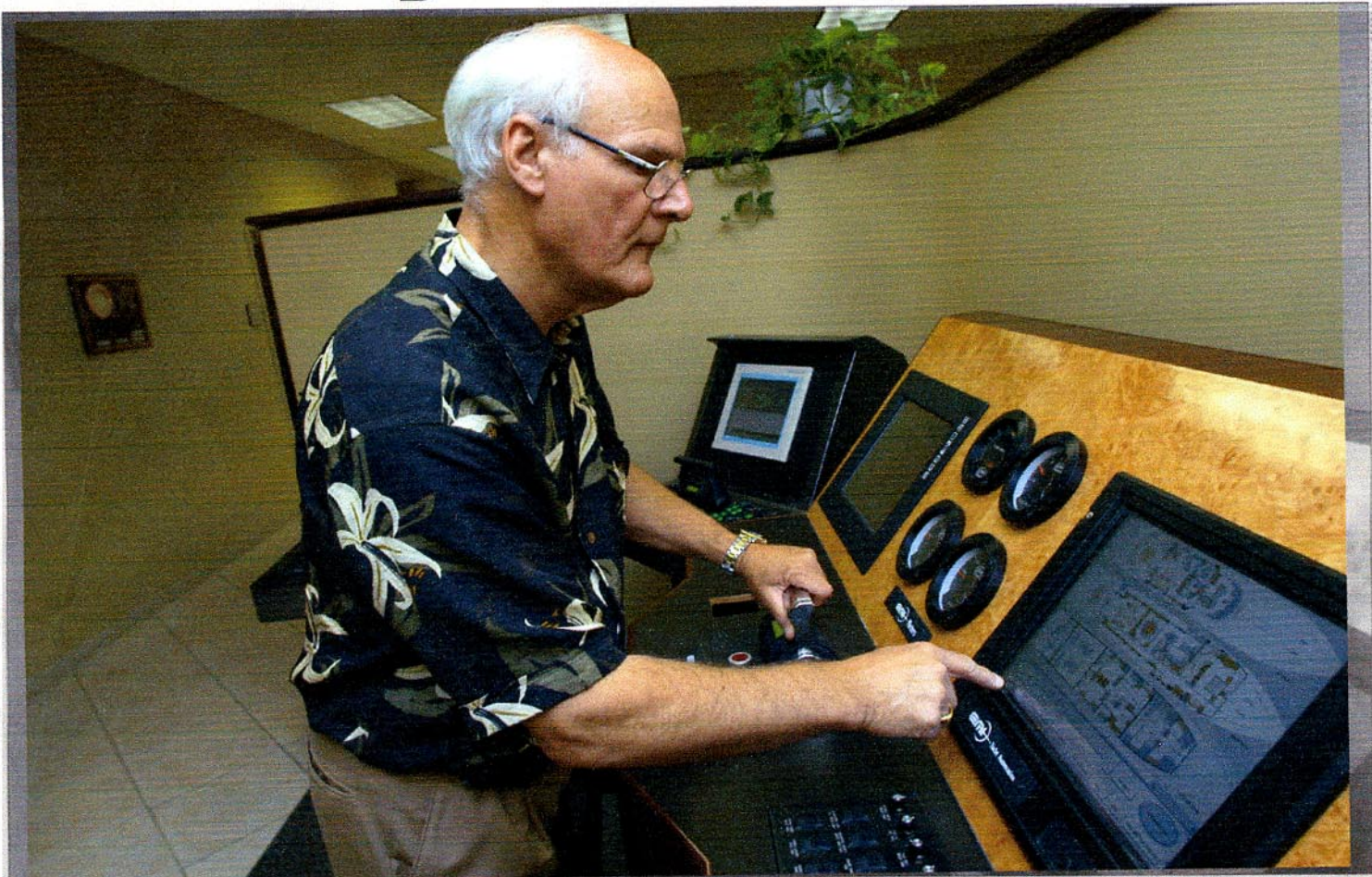


Silver Award Engine Monitor Inc.



Ken Cognevich is the owner of St. Rose-based Engine Monitor Inc., which invented the dynamic positioning system that keeps vessels in a stationary position without manual controls or anchors in varying depths of water, wind and current conditions.

By Angela Johnson
Contributing Writer

Engine Monitor Inc. of St. Rose is the only U.S.-based manufacturer of integrated dynamic positioning systems for offshore vessels.

A dynamic positioning system keeps vessels in a stationary position without manual controls or anchors in varying depths of water, wind and current conditions.

In a nutshell, it means everything needed to keep a workboat stable in rolling seas is within easy reach of the pilot.

EMI's dynamic positioning system includes a joystick, autopilot controls and dynamic positioning. It also provides real-time roll/pitch and control surface status information.

"I've been involved in the industry with EMI for 30 years," said Ken Cognevich, 62, EMI owner. "Five years ago, EMI saw a need to provide an integrated bridge allowing customers a one-stop manufacturer for all their needs. At this time, EMI decided to get involved with the dynamic positioning system."

EMI's dynamic positioning system has unique capabilities. The system uses data collected from motion reference units, global positioning system receivers, gyroscopes and anemometers. It can also be integrated to receive information from EMI's engine control, steering and monitoring systems, according to Shane Fauchoux, EMI operations manager.

Once information is collected, it is put to use in several ways. For example, joystick mode allows manual operation of multiple systems.

EMI's system has been years in the making. Now that the technology is more readily available, other companies are expressing an interest in developing this type of system. Cognevich said the urging of a friend who owned a small business started him working on the idea.

"Five years ago when we started, there were only two foreign companies marketing this product. At that time EMI developed the first U.S.-manufactured dynamic positioning system based on the point of view from the operator," Cognevich said.

EMI subcontracted with a software company the first two years to help set up the baseline for its dynamic positioning system.

"Over the last three years we have expanded our engineering, service and software departments to support continuing growth in our DP program," Fauchoux said.

Finding the \$1 million needed for research and development and to bring the product to market is the biggest EMI challenge.

"What makes EMI unique is that I'm a manufacturer. We don't just sell one product. With the DP system, automation, engine controls and steering an integrated bridge is the result," he said. "I consider EMI small enough to be able to listen to the customers' needs and

provide service that is equal if not better than larger companies in this industry. Being bigger is not always better. EMI employees focus on customer needs and a built-to-last mentality."

Cognevich considers himself a small businessman in an oil and gas industry dominated by giants. But he thinks little EMI will be competitive.

"I believe that given the opportunity EMI can compete (with the larger companies)," he said. "With the advancement of technology, more sophistication (in the equipment) is required. Thirty years ago a standard offshore vessel was 130 feet. Now we work with offshore vessels that are twice that size."

Trinity Yachts of New Orleans has been an EMI customer for the past several years.

"They are using our automation and steering on all their yachts. I think that shows the quality of the product we produce here," Cognevich said.

John Dane, president and CEO of Trinity Yachts, says EMI products are top notch.

"I've known Ken since the 1970s and he's always been an innovator. We use his steering, automation and engine monitoring systems because they are of such a high quality," Dane said. "He does a very good job and the company provides excellent customer support."

EMI plans to upgrade its DP-1 system within the next year, said Cognevich. •