



Cintas offers the gift of life *Grants provide heart revivers*



By Mike Boyer
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MASON - One of Cintas Corp.'s hottest items isn't a uniform, but a life-saving product.

This week, the nation's largest uniform supplier launched a grant program for local police departments to receive the portable automated external defibrillators (AEDs) it markets.

Cintas doesn't sell uniforms or AEDs to police departments, but hopes the grant program for its ReviveR defibrillators will further spread use of the technology to save lives.

"Every year, more than 250,000 people die from sudden cardiac arrest," Bob Mitchell, vice president of Cintas' first aid and safety division, said.

Unlike heart attacks, in which blood flow to the heart is interrupted, sudden cardiac arrest occurs when the heart's normal electrical signals become disorganized and erratic, causing the heart to cease pumping blood effectively. Defibrillation can restore the heart's natural rhythm by applying an electrical shock, Cintas says.

The American Heart Association has urged businesses and public facilities to establish AED programs.

The Mason-based company plans to award up to 16 of the units and related training to police agencies annually and is offering special financing to non-profit civic groups that want to donate them to local police. For more information, go the program's Web site www.reviverprovider.org.

Cintas has sold first aid and safety products such as eye-wash stations and first-aid kits for about six years. Mitchell said Cintas' uniform customers are focusing more and more on emergency preparedness.

"It's a hot topic these days," he said. Although first aid and safety products are a small part of Cintas' \$2.3 billion in sales, it has been one of the firm's fastest-growing areas.

He said the company's sales staff has been selling "a couple hundred a month" of Cintas' ReviveR defibrillators, which retail for \$1,495.

Mitchell said Cintas began marketing the defibrillators after its customers began asking where they could get the phone-book size, battery-operated devices.

Cintas has a master distributor agreement with Defibtech, a Connecticut company that makes the devices. Mitchell said Cintas researched the product line and found the Defibtech product cost less than competitors' and was easier to use.

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