

# ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Irvine Startup Targets Police With Vehicle

■ By SANDI CAIN

Irvine Startup Targets Police With Vehicle—Timing could be on Irvine-based T3 Motion Inc.'s side when it comes out with its upright scooters this month.

Segway Inc., which has sold more than 23,500 "personal transporters" since 2002, recalled all but its latest model last month due to a software glitch that could cause wheels to reverse.

It's the second recall for Bedford, N.H.-based Segway, which fixed a different software glitch in 2003.

What's bad news for Segway isn't so bad for T3 Motion, a 3-year-old startup that makes a three-wheeled, upright vehicle.

The company is looking to sell the transporters to police, military and security guards. In two weeks, T3 plans to pitch its rides at the International Association of Chiefs of Police convention in Boston.

Security officers at the University of Southern California and police in Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach have been testing the T3.

"It's a very versatile vehicle," said Sgt. Mike Reynolds of the Huntington Beach Police Department.

Huntington Beach officers tested the T3 at Bella Terra mall and in downtown.

### Airport Considering

John Wayne Airport also is looking at the vehicles.

In July, the airport got the go-ahead from the county to buy Segways to replace golf carts and bikes that have been used to get around the airport. Now airport officials are looking at the T3 as well.

"We wanted something we could use both indoors and out," John Wayne spokeswoman Jenny Wedge said.

T3 still faces an uphill climb in taking on better-known Segway. Airport officials aren't dissuaded by Segway's recall as it appears the company is handling the problem, Wedge said.

Depending on the outcome of the Segway recall and the T3 test, the airport might buy



**In motion: T3 vehicle goes up to 25 mph**

some of each, she said.

Like Segway, the electrically powered T3 is environmentally friendly and designed so riders stand as they move through crowds.

The T3 goes up to 25 mph and steers like a bicycle, rather than with the body motions of the Segway.

The vehicle's cost to operate "translates into approximately 600 miles per gallon," T3 President Neil Brooker said.

The T3 "gives us the ability to move around without being exhausted at the end of the day," said Carey Drayton, USC Department of Public Safety chief.

USC's compact central campus is perfectly suited to the small, one-person vehicle, according to Drayton.

Students were drawn to it, he said.

"It passed the cool test," said T3 Chief Executive Ki Nam.

One weakness, Reynolds of Huntington Beach said, is that the T3 can't go over curbs.

"T3 is working on that," Reynolds said.

### Former Powerwave Exec

T3 Motion is the brainchild of Nam—formerly of Santa Ana-based Powerwave Tech-

nologies Inc.—and Brooker, whose background is in auto design, most recently with BMW Design Works.

National sales manager Gerry White is a former police officer. Director of sales and marketing Brian Buccella also came from Powerwave.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles classifies the T3 as a motorized bicycle, Brooker said. That designation may vary from state to state, he said.

The vehicles, designed in Irvine and assembled in Costa Mesa, have been in development since 2003.

Together, the founders invested about \$3 million and raised private equity money to develop the product. They hope to sell 3,000 units at about \$6,000 each in the first year—strictly to law enforcement and security teams.

Segways sell for about \$5,500.

T3 executives said they could turn their attention to everyday folks, particularly if gas prices rise again.

The company is designing a line of accessories that include another storage box where riders can put wireless phones, water and other items. It also could add an optional trailer.