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## E.J. Ward has its finger on pulse of fleet-vehicle fuel use

San Antonio Business Journal - by [Catherine Dominguez](#)

Most motorists across the nation have felt the pinch of rising fuel costs. For companies that operate with large fleets of vehicles, fuel costs are hitting their operating budgets even harder.

But one San Antonio-based company has developed technology to ease the burden.

**E.J. Ward Inc.**, which provides fleet-asset management solutions, is helping its government and large commercial customers manage their fleets and track fuel usage.

“The price of fuel has drastically changed the operating budgets for our customers,” says Troy Goldhammer, executive vice president and chief operating officer of E.J. Ward. “Historically, the No. 1 expense has been labor; often times fuel was No. 2. We are now seeing fuel become the No. 1 expense.”

With fuel a hot commodity, Goldhammer says fuel management has become an important aspect of business with the ever-present risk of abuse and theft.

E.J. Ward’s technology targets fleet fueling stations owned by government agencies and large companies.

Many of the pumps typically found at these fueling stations are not digital and operate with the older rotary numbers, Goldhammer says.

“The foundation (of our technology) is control of that fuel,” he adds. “These fueling islands are uncontrolled. By integrating this technology, the fuel island can be controlled.”

The system, the most basic starting at \$20,000, includes both hardware and software that allows customers to closely monitor many different activity reports each time a vehicle fuels up.

Important data, such as odometer reading, engine time, fuel mileage and engine oil levels, is



ROBERTA BARNES / SAN ANTONIO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Eddie J. Ward, Mike Wade and Troy Goldhammer of E. J. Ward say their fleet-management system is more in demand than ever as the price of fuel continues to rise.

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transferred from a device installed on the vehicle to a control terminal on the pump and then downloaded to the customer's network. That data can then be accessed from a computer.

"The No. 1 thing a fleet needs to operate is fuel," Goldhammer says. "We are the guys that give them the ability to monitor and control that fuel for those vehicles."

### **Fill 'r up**

Eddie J. Ward, CEO for the company, founded E.J. Ward in 1974. While working with Wisconsin-based **Johnson Controls Inc.**, Ward learned that the City of San Antonio was buying 1 million gallons of fuel each month but really had no way of tracking it.

That intrigued Ward and he, along with several others, began developing a system to help city and county governments, along with commercial businesses, track fuel usage.

The City of San Antonio was Ward's first customer.

"We put a system in and they used a card (to activate the pump)," Ward says. "It took odometer readings and helped schedule maintenance and made sure the fuel went into a vehicle with a code on it."

Before long the company expanded into Ohio, Wisconsin and California. The company today, says Mike Wade, marketing director of E.J. Ward, does business worldwide; however, most of its focus is within the United States.

Most of E.J. Ward's customers are government entities along with some large commercial companies.

Today the company has more than 1,000 customers, including the New York City Police Department and the City of Los Angeles. Those customers have fleets that range between 500 vehicles to almost 20,000.

"The common feature all our customers have is they all have their own fueling islands," Goldhammer says. "They own their own fuel and they want to control it — who is getting the fuel and how much fuel is going out."

Ward declined to release revenue figures for the company.

According to information published by Government Fleet, a California-based magazine that covers news, products and trends in the government fleet industry, fleet managers must account for all of their fuel to help manage costs and to continue evaluating their fleet and its overall efficiency.

Systems like those developed by E.J. Ward can be customized for each fleet, and can eliminate hours of paperwork, streamlining fleet costs and billing.

While tracking fuel is a key focus of the E.J. Ward system, the technology also offers customers the opportunity to track other operations, including vehicle maintenance.

As Goldhammer points out, it can be challenging to keep track of maintenance records on thousands of vehicles.

“When you have a fleet of 1,000 vehicles or more, getting that information is very difficult,” he says. “Our customers have historically had major problems gathering that odometer or engine hour information for preventative maintenance scheduling.”

E.J. Ward’s system can automate that information, and send it to the customer’s network where it can be downloaded into a program to help track the health of each vehicle. “It’s a very powerful piece of equipment,” Goldhammer says.

### **Full throttle**

While E.J. Ward has offices in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Dallas, the company is committed to San Antonio, where its team of engineers continue to develop the latest in fleet tracking technology.

Goldhammer says his company, unlike some of its competitors, does all its research, development and manufacturing right here in the Alamo City.

That capability, he adds, is giving E.J. Ward an edge over its competitors.

“We are very flexible in our ability to introduce new products and services,” Goldhammer says. “It’s really a hallmark in the industry for us that no one else has that in-house capability.”

E.J. Ward also has introduced a Global Positioning System (GPS) for tracking fleet vehicles, offering customers both a real-time option and a passive solution. The real-time option allows a company to track a vehicle while it’s in motion; the passive solution stores data from a vehicle that can be uploaded on a computer and viewed at a later time.

According to Goldhammer, there are about 20 million fleet vehicles in the U.S. and only about 10 percent of those are equipped with GPS tracking. He says E.J. Ward’s passive solution is a less costly alternative for companies.

“We believe that the reason (more companies) have not adopted (GPS) is because of the operating costs associated with it,” Goldhammer says. “If you have 1,000 vehicles, costs start to add up and it’s hard to justify that.”

Customers who have purchased E.J. Ward’s tracking-technology system already have in place most of the software and hardware needed for GPS tracking, with a smaller fee involved to attach the actual GPS component.

“We are getting significant demand for this,” Goldhammer says.

### **E.J. Ward Inc.**

What: San Antonio-based company specializing in fleet management technology.

Where: 8801 Tradeway

Tel.: 210-824-7383

Founder: Eddie J. Ward

No. of customers: 1,000

Employees: 100 companywide, including 44 in San Antonio

Other offices: Los Angeles, Dallas, New York and Chicago

Web site: [www.ejward.com](http://www.ejward.com)

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