

# Datasonix launches data-storage device

■ Stellar entrepreneurs launch yet another high-tech start-up in the wake of success with Exabyte Corp.

By VICKY GITS  
Camera Business Editor

Two years ago, they billed themselves unofficially as the "Dream Team," departed the booming start-up known as Exabyte Corp., and went to work on yet another long shot proposition under the name of Datasonix Corp.

The Dream Team players are:

■ Juan Rodriguez, 53, founder of Storage Technology Corp. and founder and former chairman of Exabyte Corp.

■ Jim Greenup, 46, former senior vice president of sales and marketing for Exabyte Corp.

■ Kelly Beavers, 42, the engineering genius behind the super high-capacity Exabyte tape drive that catapulted Exabyte to fame and fortune.

## Blasting off

After two years in development and about \$5 million in venture capital money, Datasonix has produced its first product, the Pereos (roughly pronounced stereos), a handheld computer data storage device that plugs into a notebook computer. The name comes from a Greek word meaning "to carry."

The Pereos, which uses a postage-stamp-sized tape cartridge, is about as big as a compact tape recorder. The Pereos' ancestry goes back to a Sony-made compact tape recorder called the Scoopman. The units

The Pereos has an edge on similar devices because it weighs only 10 ounces, is said to last for four months using two AA batteries and comes with Windows-based companion software that creates an index of all files created and revised.

## DATASONIX CORP.

Headquarters: 5700 Flatiron Parkway, Boulder

Employment: 42

Founded: July 1992

1995 Sales (projected): 100,000 units at \$595 retail

Owners/investors: Juan Rodriguez, Jim Greenup, Kelly Beavers, AT&T Ventures, Grace Horn Ventures, Hill Carman Ventures, Newtek Ventures, Vanguard Venture Partners

Chairman Juan Rodriguez

President James Greenup

Executive VP of engineering: Kelly Beavers

VP of marketing: Steven Koschmann

Product: Pereos is a hand-held, tape-based computer data storage device that works on two AA batteries and plugs into a notebook or portable computer. Pereos uses a postage-stamp-sized tape cartridge with a capacity of one gigabyte. One gigabyte is the equivalent of 1,000 megabytes, or 400,000 double-spaced, typewritten pages.

Companion software keeps track of files and file revisions.

Market: Traveling notebook computer users, salespeople, accountants, editors, lawyers, insurance agents and graphic designers who use massive amounts of archived information, such as spreadsheets, graphic images, data bases, reference books and multimedia presentations.

Phone: 545-9500



DATASONIX

will be made by Sony in Japan. But the software belongs to Datasonix.

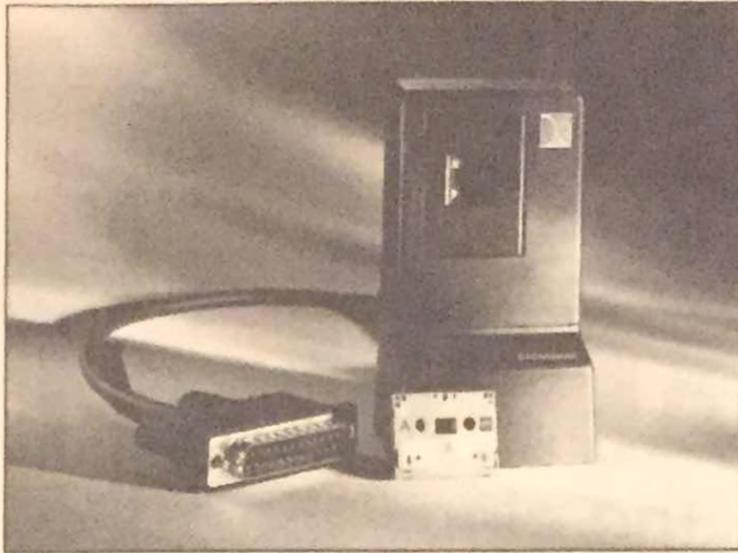
Why would Juan Rodriguez, who is happily employed as a part-time professor of engineering at the University of Colorado, want to launch a third start-up company, when he could retire stylishly for the rest of his life?

Why would anyone want to go to another trade show, in New York, in the middle of July?

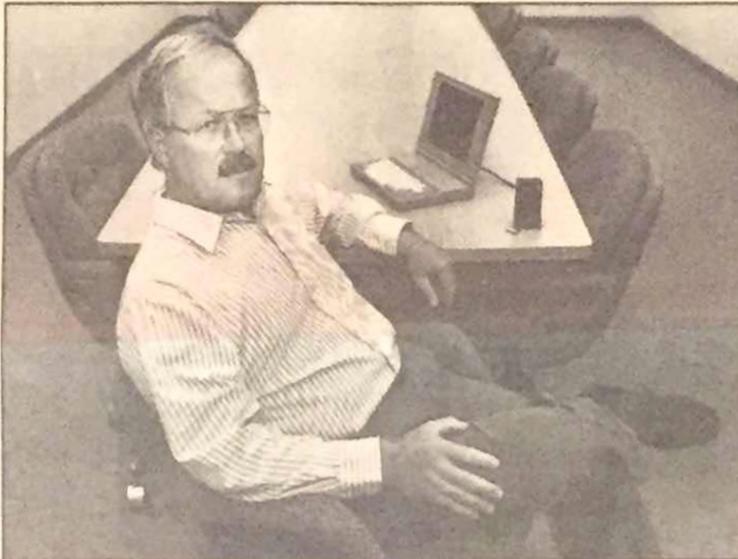
"It's just that people keep coming up with all these ideas and I can't help getting sucked in by the cleverness," Rodriguez said.

The difference between Exabyte and Datasonix is that Jim Greenup is the chief executive officer. That means Rodriguez can work half-time and concentrate on the "long-range strategic things."

Greenup is responsible for "day-to-day strategic things."



**CARRYING ON:** The Pereos is a portable, hand-held computer data storage device designed to be used with notebook computers as a backup device or to store reference works and multimedia presentations.



DAVID P. GILKEY / Daily Camera

**PROFESSOR START-UP:** Juan Rodriguez, chairman of Datasonix Corp. and a University of Colorado professor, is launching his third start-up company after Exabyte Corp. and Storage Technology Corp. He was named entrepreneur of the year in 1989 by the Boulder Chamber of Commerce. Rodriguez started Exabyte Corp. in 1985 with his current business partner Kelly Beavers and engineer Harry Hinz.

## Needed a rest

"I truly needed the rest," Rodriguez said of his decision to leave Exabyte in January 1992, after running the company for seven years. "As a CEO you worry about a lot of people's jobs and getting sued. It's just awful in many ways."

As chairman of Datasonix, Rodriguez seems relaxed and comfortable. He alternates between the classroom and the office and stays close to home. "I worry about one (job) and then I worry about the other one," he said.

You would think that getting money to finance Datasonix would be easy.

"The difficulty is you are really opening a new product category. Nobody wanted one before, so no one has one. Ergo, there's no need," Rodriguez said.

Still, the fledgling firm managed to collect \$7 million in its first pass at venture-capital sources. Hill Carman Ventures of Boulder, which helped finance Exabyte Corp., is a big investor, among others. Another round of financing is due to close within days, Rodriguez said.

Jim Greenup, president of Datasonix, said he got the idea for the Pereos when he was in Japan on a business trip for Exabyte. Someone at Sony gave him a \$1,000 Scoopman as a gift. He showed it to Kelly Beavers. Later he found out that Rodriguez had already seen the Scoopman and was thinking about possible applications.

## 75 percent pay cut

Greenup said he told Exabyte about the Scoopman, but Exabyte wasn't interested. So he



**MASTER OF MINIATURE:** Kelly Beavers, vice president of engineering, is responsible for engineering the tiny Pereos tape drive introduced by Datasonix.



**BRIGHT IDEA:** Jim Greenup, president, got the idea for the Pereos from seeing Sony's Scoopman, a tiny tape recorder.

and Beavers decided to go out on their own, taking about a 75 percent cut in pay. They departed amicably, Greenup said.

"I just had to do it," Greenup said. "I knew the product was a winner."

The Pereos has an edge on similar devices because it weighs only 10 ounces, is said to last for four months using two AA batteries and comes with Windows-based companion software that creates an index of all files created and revised.

Using Pereos, pack rats can be confident they have everything they need to work away from home.

"Invariably, you leave behind the one thing you need. This way you can carry with you the whole desktop computer," Rodriguez said. ■