

Shop 'Bytes' into Technological Repairs

NEWS > BUSINESS

By LYNN WEBB/The Valley Chronicle

Published: Friday, July 11, 2008

After Jerry Bonanno - co-founder and operations manager of a 20-employee, multimillion-dollar PC service business called North Shore Computer Outlet, in Long Island, N.Y. - sold the business to his partners in 2004, he moved to sunny Southern California. Bonanno said he moved to be closer to his fiancée, who lived in Hemet. He also wanted to get out of New York after 9/11 - a day he'll never forget. "I had an appointment on 9/11 on the 78th floor in Tower 2 at 9 a.m., and my partner changed the appointment to 3 p.m.," Bonanno said. Bonanno believes that had it not been for the appointment being moved to a later time, he would not be here today.



DOCTOR OF COMPUTERS: Mike Bonanno, co-owner of Advanced Computer Group in Hemet, solders a laptop circuit board at the shop at 301 East Florida Avenue, Suite G.

Courtesy Photo

When Bonanno came to California, he moved to Anza and lived there for a year. Then he moved to Hemet, where he has lived the past three years. For a while, he worked on computers as a side business, which, said Bonanno, who had planned to retire, kept him busy. Then, at the urging of some of his customers, he decided to open a high-tech computer store.

On June 1, he and his brother, Mike Bonanno, who also moved here from Long Island, opened Advanced Computer Group, at 301 E. Florida Ave., Suite G. The shop, which Bonanno said is much like the business he owned in New York, sells new and used computer equipment, including the Mac brand. It also sells peripherals, such as external modems, external hard drives, and printers - "anything that's connected to a computer," said Bonanno. Bonanno says networking - or connecting computers to servers - and service - including on laptop computers, laser printers, and iPods - are two of the business's strengths. "The major part is our strength in networking," Bonanno said. Advanced Computer Group offers on-site repairs at customers' homes or businesses. They also do repairs at the shop, at Florida Avenue and Carmalita Street.

Both Jerry and Mike have taken computer training classes from name-brand computer companies, such as Hewlett-Packard, for example. Instead of charging by the hour, Advanced Computer Group charges a flat rate. "Everything we do we base it on a flat rate," Bonanno said. The shop's rates range from \$29 to install a single software program to \$154.95 for a labor-intensive hardware installation that involves repairing or replacing a laptop or laser printer parts. The shop also makes sure to save customers' data stored on a computer that is being repaired. "We care about their data, especially in a restoration of an operating system," Bonanno said. "It's not the computer that's priceless. It's the photos, music - the memories and media." They also offer free diagnostic testing for carry-in service and 10 percent discounts to senior citizens and members of the Hemet/San Jacinto Valley Chamber of Commerce. Bonanno says they offer quality work at reasonable prices. "That's how I operated my business in New York," he said. He said they also treat their customers well. "We just want to treat people like we want to be treated," Bonanno said. "You're not a number here," added Mike.

The Bonanno brothers say they love Hemet, especially its mild winters. "We don't have to shovel snow or pick ice!" they said.

THE BASICS

Name: Advanced Computer Group.

Owners: Jerry and Mike Bananno.

Address: 301 E. Florida Ave., Suite G, Hemet.

Phone: 658-9200.

Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday.