

# SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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SERVING SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

## House Calls

*Kosma Mobile X-Ray Co. takes its radiology services to the field*

by Jan Peterson · Contributing Writer

When Dr. J. Patrick Berrigan and wife Tracy bought Kosma Mobile X-Ray Co. about two years ago, he had plenty of experience handling X-rays, but very little in running a business.

"I don't have a significant amount of formal business background or education, so that definitely is a challenge," Berrigan says.

Still, since buying the business from founder Dale Kosma, Berrigan has grown the company to 20 employees from eight and expanded the service area from almost strictly in Springfield to a 150-mile radius. In that time, revenues have grown by 40 percent, according to Berrigan, who declined to disclose specifics.

While the growth is rapid, Berrigan says he takes a cautious approach to hiring technicians, looking for someone with the right combination of skill and patience.

Clients include home health agencies, coroners and jails, but skilled nursing facilities place the majority of calls.

### Military approved

Radiology technologists use mobile equipment to X-ray patients on site. Developed and used by the military, the equipment includes a portable digital X-ray machine that weighs about 70 pounds and computers in a van.

Technicians take the X-ray, transmit the data from the van to servers at Kosma, where radiologists who work on a contract basis read the X-rays and create a report. The information is then delivered to the client and a decision is made about a patient's further treatment.

Results are often returned to the client in as little as an hour.

With a fleet of eight vans stationed in Nixa, Kosma's service is offered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

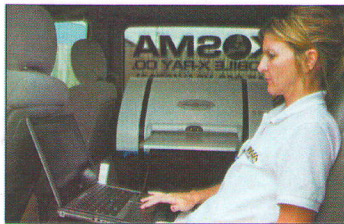
Mobile service is vital for skilled nursing facilities, says Arlen Davidson, administrator at west Springfield's Jordan Creek Nursing Facility, a Kosma client.

"It would be impossible or difficult to provide transportation to everyone ... and on the other hand, sometimes people shouldn't be moved or transported until they have an X-ray," Davidson says.

Many times, residents are X-rayed for fractures or as part of follow-up care for pneumonia or other illnesses.

Berrigan says his technologists sometimes arrive to highly charged situations, where family members may be worried about the health of their loved one. And sometimes technologists need to know how to calm a resident who may be suffering from dementia or have difficulty communicating.

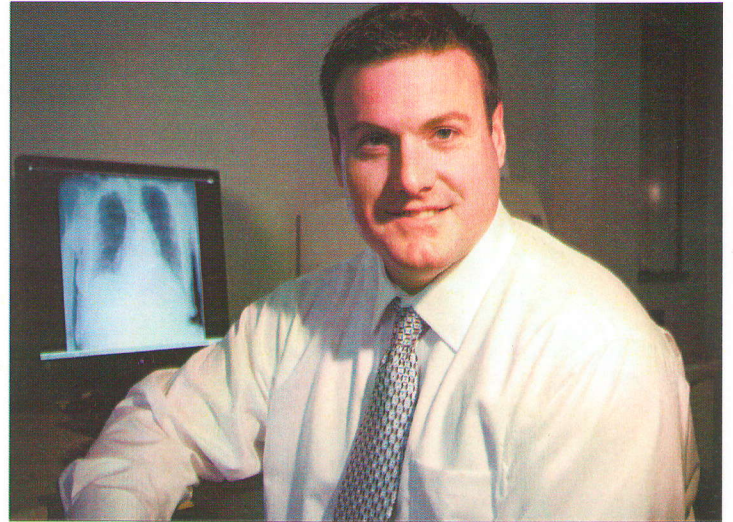
For this reason, Berrigan says he's very careful about the technologists he hires.



Employee Leslee Scheibal demonstrates on-site imaging technology used by Kosma Mobile X-Ray Co., which serves skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies and county jails.

Quick results are needed, but care must be taken with patients, too.

"They're fragile patients psychologically and physically. You've got to know when to slow down, to take your time," Berrigan says.



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Dr. J. Patrick Berrigan and wife Tracy bought Kosma Mobile X-Ray about two years ago from founder Dale Kosma. Since the sale, the Berrigans have grown the company to 20 employees who serve a 150-mile radius from Springfield.

Technologist candidates are observed in the field before a job is offered, and new hires receive six to eight weeks of one-on-one training, Berrigan adds.

### Business patriots

Earlier this month, Kosma received a Patriot Award from the Department of Defense for the support its owners give employees who serve in the Missouri National Guard and reserves.

Technologist Patrick Henry, a specialist in the National Guard, nominated Kosma for the award.

"He hadn't said anything to us about it," Berrigan notes. "We got a call out of the blue about it, so it was really special."

Henry says he nominated his employers because of the way they accommodate employees who serve in the military; there are currently two employees serving.

"It's a big deal," says Henry, who has missed four weeks of work this year for military training. That's in addition to the weekend every month he's gone for Guard duty and the two-week vacation Henry took when he got married.

Another staff member was deployed for more than a year, Henry recalls, and the same job was waiting for him when he returned.

"That says a lot, too. Yes, it's

illegal to fire him, but in the state of Missouri you can let someone go for a multitude of reasons," Henry adds.

Berrigan, who previously worked for Olathe Health System near Kansas City, says having military employees is a natural for his company, since the equipment was developed by the military. Some employees, including Henry, received radiology technologist training while on active duty.

"We have a certain predisposition for looking at military-trained personnel," Berrigan says. "We don't target our search in that manner, but we do like military applicants."

### Kosma Mobile X-Ray Co.

Owners: Dr. J. Patrick Berrigan, and wife Tracy

Founded: 1984

Address: 3825 S. Campbell Ave., Springfield, MO 65807

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Services: On-site digital X-rays and readings by radiologists

Employees: 20