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## Altronic Research – A True Arkansas Gem Stone



# Cover Story

## Altronic Research A True Arkansas Gem Stone

by Ernie Belanger

You may have wondered how Altronic Research ended up in Yellville, Arkansas. Frankly, I did as well. But after hearing the Altronic story, the answer became as clear as the waters of the many rivers and streams that run through the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas.

Many of us know that Arkansas is known for its hot springs, as well as the home to several famous politicians. The massive retailer, Wal-Mart, has located their corporate headquarters there, and, oh yes, a surprising and well-kept secret is that Arkansas is also famous for diamonds, as in the actual gem stones. But this story is about a different type of diamond, and the quest for that crown jewel – an excellent quality of life – that began nearly forty years ago.



John Dyess

Nearly four decades ago, in 1975, when John Dyess moved his family from his native Texas to Arkansas, he was in search of that elusive gem – a slower pace and a better way of life for his young family. He felt that this was the place to where God was calling him to settle.

The quest for quality was in John's blood and it translated directly into the products manufactured by Altronic Research. Over the years, Altronic has developed a reputation for excellence and integrity that is supported by the numerous honors it has received. They've been awarded the Presidential E-Star Award for Excellence in Exporting, and annually, the company garners Quality awards from the State of Arkansas.

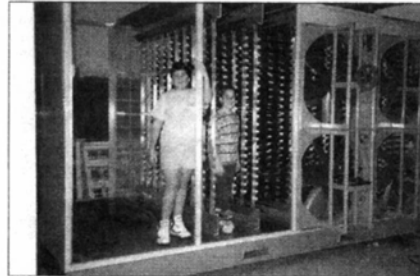
### Texas Born and Raised

John was raised in the Dallas, Texas area, and studied electronics at the University of Texas in Arlington. John worked in the vacuum plating industry, automotive HVAC systems, and Navy high and low speed wind tunnels. He even operated a successful auto body shop.

Lest one think that John enjoyed only the successes in life and business, it is important to note that he was a part of two companies that eventually failed. Both of these companies were resistor manufacturers.

Like many other successful entrepreneurs before him, he was able to turn his stumbling blocks into stepping-

stones for his future. Though bittersweet, his involvement in those companies gave him the foundation upon which to build his own successful resistor company in Arkansas.



Chris and Dave, John's two sons,  
in a 1.5 Mega Watt load being built in 1991.

Shortly after his move, John re-entered the resistor business in 1975 when a former customer contacted him to build resistors that were a key component of a national defense project. So John started Power Film System (PFS), and grew the business by selling non-reactive resistors to the military, and the broadcast industry for dummy loads. He would even beg for guest passes to the National Association of Broadcasters show to find new customers.

### The Purchase of Altronic

When Bob Federico (inventor of the water-cooled high-power RF dummy load) decided he wanted to sell Altronic Research located in Cleveland, he contacted John and asked him if he wanted to be in the load business. John said "Yes," and then began to try to find out how to pay for it. Needless to say, the Lord provided – Altronic produced its first dummy load in Yellville, Arkansas in 1983.

Initially, Altronic had only produced water-cooled loads, and John continued in this tradition. Over time, John found that there were a surprising large number of technically talented people that had been drawn to this part of Arkansas for the same reason that he was – quality of life. As Altronic grew under John's stewardship, it added personnel that enabled it to begin major innovations in the load business. First added to the product line were air-cooled dummy and self-contained heat-exchanger loads.

### Continued Growth and Advances

But that was just the beginning. Altronic designed and built the first 1.5 million Watt air-cooled dummy load for AM in 1991, and delivered it to Harris Broadcast. That load is still in operation today. As impressive as that was, Altronic's list of firsts includes designing and building the first calorimeter for air-cooled dummy loads, the first 250,000 Watt water-cooled dummy load, the first 1.5 million Watt air-cooled load for AM radio that required no tuning – and a 200,000 Watt air-cooled load for short wave as well as high power outdoor static air-cooled loads.

Altronic's quality has garnered it some major projects over the years. Included in the list are, high power dummy loads for Voice of America, the Pacific Missile Range in

Hawaii, and components for the Air Force's F-111 fighter when it was in production.

They have also provided braking resistors for test submarine motors, non-standard impedance loads for the Brookhaven National Laboratories particle collider, and products for scientific applications with several National Laboratories.

Altronic contracts grew in both size and scope, as did numerous projects with transmitter manufacturers in the United States and around the world.

### Right Sized for Quality

Today, Altronic continues to maintain a track record that is to be envied by any manufacturer. That record is made possible by the quality of workmanship that can be found in each of Altronic's loads. All manufacturing is done in house. Its 28 employees, in the company's 15,000 square foot ISO 9001 compliant facility, manufacture products to exacting standards – John and his team wouldn't have it any other way. From raw material to finished loads, every step of the process is monitored to ensure that excellence of quality is maintained.

Painstaking adherence to its established quality standards has more than paid off. Altronic's unsurpassed reputation for quality, reliability and innovative cutting-edge designs keeps customers returning with their new projects that require even more innovation in design. As always, John and his team are ready to step up to meet new challenges that push the envelope of creativity.



Tony Ramey programming the CNC Machine.

### Meeting Customer's Needs

Recent customer needs motivated Altronic to develop a line of digitally-controlled soda/water RF loads. This product line includes one load capable of handling 1.1 Megawatts. There is also a load designed to take 3 Megawatts as a pulsed signal. The soda/water RF loads have opened the door into a new market, giving the company a strong position for future applications around the world.

One of the keys to Altronic's success is the attention it pays to its customers. Customers who need a load that is a standard product get the same attention as those who come to Altronic with special projects. The ability to listen to customer needs and translate their "wish list" into viable products is a key to the company's success.

From this unexpected location, a stone's throw from a National Park, who would have thought we'd find a company making some of the quietest and best performing air-cooled loads in the world. On second thought, perhaps you *might* expect that. After all, the last thing you would want is to have a noisy cooling fan that would interrupt the peaceful sounds of nature in an area with an excellent quality of life.

For more information on Altronic loads visit [www.altronic.com](http://www.altronic.com) or call Altronic at 870-449-4093.