



UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

120 David L. Boren Blvd

Norman, OK 73072

Phone: (405) 325-1819

Fax: (405) 325-1108

www.weathersphere.org

Courtesy of The Journal Record—Aug. 4, 2009

Oklahoma's Base Velocity owners: RadarScope holding own

By: Brian Brus/Journal Record

Although Base Velocity's growing market for portable, updated weather data doesn't look to slow down any time soon, it's uncertain that the company will grow much beyond its original iPhone application, Justin Greenfield said.

"We're still doing much better than we expected when we first started out. ... Our sales trend seems to be upward as more people get iPhones, they're buying our app," said Greenfield, one of the company's co-founders. But as for the company's profits, he said, "We've got some ideas for other things we'd like to do, so we're just socking it away until we decide what we want to pursue when we get the chance."

Last year when the company introduced its product - the RadarScope application for Apple's iPhone, its sales quickly reached the upper iTunes sales tier in the weather category. The app, which sells for \$9.99, provides active NEXRAD weather radar readouts from more than 140 different radar sites. A radar beam that users are accustomed to seeing on television weather forecasts gives a high-resolution, colorful report of the wide coverage area, which can be refined according to the user's needs.

Additional product development for RadarScope is a simple matter, Greenfield said, because the program is self-explanatory, it already provides what customers need, and the iTunes online storefront eliminates most customer interaction. New features can be uploaded without fanfare or fuss. So Greenfield doesn't expect the company's work force needs to increase.

Several potential angel investors have asked if Base Velocity needs funding for growth, he said. The co-founders have turned them down.

"It's a very simple business. It doesn't require a lot of manpower to keep running," he said.

Base Velocity's staff directory has three people: co-founders Mike Wolfenbarger, Stdrovia Blackburn and Greenfield, all of whom work at the Oklahoma Climate Survey, one of the many agencies at the Weather Sphere in Norman, a hub of meteorological education, research and industry at the University of Oklahoma.

"I wouldn't quit my day job to do this full time," Greenfield said.

"It's very unpredictable. The best thing you can hope for is to be lucky," he said. "There's the issues with dealing with Apple, and whether they're going to let your app and its updates go through, and that kind of stuff that makes it too risky to consider it a full-time occupation."

Base Velocity has one small advantage over other apps fighting for online store screen space, though, he said: "It's different from what most app developers go through, trying to create the next big game that's going to sell a million copies. There aren't people trying to do that with the weather category - at least not yet."

That's another reason Greenfield would suggest others stay out of iTunes app development as a full-time business.

"I know there are some other weather companies in Norman that are dipping their toes into the water. We were kind of lucky to be one of the first. ... But other companies will probably have some nice little products of their own and the expertise to put them into the iPhone. So they might be able to get a revenue stream out of it."