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By Jon Chesto
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QUINCY

Granite Telecommunications' rock-solid employment growth doesn't show any sign of weakening in the near future, as the company currently has nearly 80 openings for new jobs that it is trying to fill.

Granite CEO Rob Hale said he is looking to add 80 jobs in North Quincy by early next year, partly to

accommodate the company's recent entrance into the alarm market. That would bring Granite's overall employment up to nearly 880 people, including nearly 830 in Quincy.

Granite, which primarily acts as a reseller for local phone service to companies with multiple locations, has been on a solid growth trajectory since it was founded in 2002.

The growth continued unabated, even during the recent economic downturn, Hale said. That's because companies were increasingly looking for ways to save money, and Granite's bulk purchasing of local phone services represents one way to accomplish that goal.

"In this economy, people want to save money, so we're somewhat countercyclical in our success," Hale said. "We focus on analog lines. (But) in Wall Street vernacular, that's yesterday's news. ... We're strong in an area where others are not focusing."

About 30 of the 80 positions that Hale wants to fill would be allocated for Granite's new venture into the alarm business. Granite is pitching its services to potential clients with multiple commercial properties, arguing that its national approach is more efficient than dealing with a number of regional players in the alarm industry.

Hale said Granite deals with the back-office support, billing and relationship building for its Granite-branded alarm systems. Meanwhile, alarm calls are outsourced by Granite to a separately-run operations center.

The company launched its alarm business earlier this year, and already supports alarms at nearly 700 locations, Hale said.

But the alarm business will still represent only a small fraction of the roughly \$510 million in revenues that Granite expects to generate this year, Hale said. That would be a roughly 17 percent increase from last year's revenues of \$435 million.

Because of its growth, Granite recently had to start leasing space in a building next to its headquarters, Hale said. Hale owns the 150,000-square-foot headquarters building at 100

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Newport Avenue Extension, but about a sixth of the building is leased to two tenants.

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