

# Stratford's Redco Audio diversifies with home attic lifts

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Redco President Dave Berliner, left, with sales manager Chris Stubbs. Photo by Kevin Zimmerman

An audio hardware specialist may not be the first place many think of when considering where to buy attic lifts — but that's just what Stratford's Redco Audio is doing.

"It's an offshoot to help us diversify into other industries," explained Redco President Dave Berliner at the company's 1701 Stratford Ave. location. "We've been doing some work with motors for a while — we make the control systems for Xedit's Servoreelers line, which involves motorized microphone lines. This seemed like another way of diversifying ourselves."

The idea for the attic lift came from Berliner's brother Brian, a patent attorney. "It took us about seven years to finally complete the design, at a final cost of about \$25,000," Berliner said. "Motorized lifts have been around for a while, but it was a lengthy process to get this one to work the right way with the specs we were after and with the safety features that we had to have."

Manufactured at Redco, the SpaceLift Attic Lift is a platform lift system for the home, easily installed in a garage or other appropriate area. Designed to be easily mounted between floor joists, the firm's attic lifts have a weight capacity of 200 pounds and can carry payloads up to 15 feet at 3 inches per second. Redco offers two options in slightly different configurations, priced at \$1,895 and \$1,995.

Berliner said sales have "been pretty good so far. It's an unusual market for us, but we found that it's something that consumers want."

In addition to selling the attic lifts on its website, Berliner said Redco is selling them through its network of 30 nationwide vendors.

Located across the street from Two Roads Brewing Co., Redco's 6,500-square-foot building houses 23 employees, including Berliner's wife, Ruth, and mother, Terri.

Make no mistake, however: Redco's bread-and-butter remains supplying recording studios and the general public with pro audio/video cables, connectors, panels and accessories.

Berliner's late father, Bob, "was always" in the wiring recording studio business, he said, working for several topline companies, including Ampex, before founding New York City's Audio Techniques.

The younger Berliner grew up as a musician — playing, as did his parents, the piano — becoming familiar with the technical end of recording and "pretty easily" segueing into his father's world of wiring, connections and other devices necessary to produce professional music.

Redco was formed in 1991 after Audio Techniques was acquired by Mannys Music. Originally located in Bridgeport, Redco moved to its Stratford digs in 2004 to meet growing demand and its diversifying customer base, including a number of industrial clients. "A lot of what we do is similar stuff," he said, "but as it got bigger it went beyond just recording studios."

Berliner has, as a matter of course, kept abreast of the music industry's ups and downs throughout his career. "Everyone's been saying the recording industry is dying for years now," the Trumbull resident remarked. "But you wouldn't know it from what you see at some of these studios. The technology is always improving and the need for additional technology to do the stuff they want to do is always growing."

The company's annual sales are typically in the \$4-5 million range, he said, with nearly 5 percent coming from Europe. Redco also does "quite a bit" of business in Canada, as well as in Australia and New Zealand and Southeast Asia. All of its international sales come through the company's website, Berliner added.