

Murrysville Web cam named one of world's best

By Paul Paterra
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Bill Powers finds himself in the company of Vatican City and Times Square.

His PixController Wildlife Web cam was touted as one of the 25 Most Interesting Webcams for 2007 by [EarthCam](#), a Web cam network based in Hackensack, N.J. More than 5,000 web cams were judged.

Powers, who says he has always loved wildlife, is president/CEO of PixController Inc., a company that markets motion-activated cameras.

So the Murrysville man combined the two to provide a window to wildlife for himself and others. He and his wife, Donna, placed two wireless cameras in the woods behind their home. They capture the activities of deer, raccoons, wild turkeys, foxes and whatever else might wander by.

"We would go out in the woods and take pictures of deer. We'd see a lot of animals, so we put a little feeder up and started getting a lot of turkey and deer," Powers said. "One day I took a wireless camera, put it outside and kind of watched the stuff on TV."

He uses a video server to take the signal, digitize the pictures and put them onto a network. "It allows me to take a snapshot every so often and send it to the Web page," Powers said.

The pictures are updated every few seconds to give viewers a picture of wildlife activity in the Westmoreland County woods. At night, the cameras switch to infrared, allowing 24 hours of wilderness viewing.

Powers said the site averages 1 million hits daily. It's an attentive audience, too. Powers took the camera down for five minutes one day and received e-mails from as far away as Scotland and Australia from viewers wondering what happened.

"Anytime there's any little hiccup, we get an e-mail," he said. "But we get a lot of nice e-mails from people all over the world saying they really enjoy watching it."

EarthCam producers searched through more than 5,000 Web cams throughout the year to select 125 semifinalists. The 25 finalists were chosen by a panel of judges that included Michael Bay, director of the movie "Transformers"; Barry Josephson, producer of the movie "Enchanted"; and 1998 Olympic silver medalist Gordy Sheer, director of marketing and sponsorship for USA Luge.

Others in the top 25 include the Vatican City Web cam, Times Square Cam, Tokyo Diner Cam and a Penguin Cam at the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga.

Justin Camerlengo, EarthCam's director of marketing, said the finalists were judged on technology, concept creativity, visual quality and design. He said the PixController Wildlife Web cam has all those qualities.

"It gives people an opportunity to go someplace they otherwise couldn't be," Camerlengo said. "That's probably what caught the fancy of the producers, using it in a unique fashion."



Bill Powers poses for a portrait Thursday with one of the Web cams that are trained on the wildlife around his home in Murrysville.

Eric Schmadel/Tribune-Review



Grazing turkeys are captured on Bill Powers' Web cam.

Bill Powers



Deer and raccoons feeds in front of Bill Powers' Web cam.

Bill Powers