

## **Texas Company Battles 'Vulnerability' Of U.S. Surgical Mask Supply**

When the swine flu pandemic hit in 2009, a small surgical mask company in North Richland Hills suddenly found itself in high demand.

Prestige Ameritech has one of very few plants still making masks in the U.S. Says Company vice-president Mike Bowen, "We had a lot of desperate hospitals calling us saying if we don't have a pallet of fresh face masks by next Wednesday we're going to shut down the E-R or the O-R."

It wasn't just hospitals calling.

The Federal Aviation Administration, Veterans Administration, Transportation Security Administration and other agencies bought millions of masks. Then the threat went away, and company executives say most customers returned to foreign made masks.

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