

April 12, 2006

For Immediate Release:

Ben Franklin Announces Innovation Award Winners

The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania has announced the winners of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Innovation Awards. Winners will be honored at the Ben Franklin i xchange, scheduled for 5:30 PM on Tuesday, May 16th at the Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University.

Awards are presented in eight categories, to companies or individuals who have achieved business success through Ben Franklin funding and assistance, have helped others to achieve success, or have improved their business through innovation. Each award recipient represents a person or company that exemplifies achievement in that particular category.

The purposes of the innovation awards are to congratulate winners on their success and achievement, to highlight the effectiveness of the Ben Franklin program, and to inform entrepreneurs and established manufacturers about the resources that are available to them in northeast Pennsylvania.

The 2006 Northeastern Pennsylvania Innovation Awards winners are:

Entrepreneurial Achievement

The company that best exemplifies the quintessential entrepreneurial spirit: a combination of ingenuity, hard work, and innovation that has resulted in the creation of a successful and growing business venture.

Gregory J. Shemanski, President, Custom Processing Services, Inc., Reading

Custom Processing Services reduces larger particles into smaller ones while retaining the original physical properties of the materials, in a process called micronizing. A manufacturer of cosmetics, for example, might add micronized sunscreen to its product so the cosmetic could provide UV protection without changing its performance. Custom

Processing incorporated in 1998 with a strong management team and a sound business proposition. Ben Franklin provided seed capital to support marketing, to develop and refine the business plan, and for other functions. The investment also funded work with Penn State Berks to perform failure mode effects analysis and test the company's specialized process system, both of which are critical given the high precision standards in the particle reduction industry. The firm reached break-even after just six months of operations, and has enjoyed double-digit expansion of revenue every year since. Custom Processing now employs 30 people and has purchased two manufacturing facilities in Berks County.

Academic Partner

An organization affiliated with an institute of higher learning that has contributed its time and expertise to supporting the Ben Franklin program. This organization's contribution has clearly surpassed "normal" expectations for involvement with and support of the Ben Franklin Technology Partners.

Institute for Interactive Technologies, Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, Dr. Timothy Phillips, Director and Dr. Karl M. Kapp, Assistant Director

The Institute for Interactive Technologies (IIT) is a nationally acclaimed program for the preparation of instructional designers, eLearning designers, and interactive multimedia developers. Students are provided with hands-on and teamwork experiences with web authoring, development, and project management tools. Ben Franklin and many of its clients have benefited from the expertise of the students and staff of the Institute. The IIT has a proven track record of creating new companies based on the technology of the university, with students starting their own high-tech businesses. The IIT played a pivotal role in the creation of the Greater Susquehanna Keystone Innovation Zone, which encourages companies to locate near universities to their mutual benefit and to spur economic development. Further, the IIT has attracted high-tech companies to the area and helped existing companies use technology to be more globally competitive.

Incubator Graduate

The company that has best demonstrated successful Ben Franklin business incubation. The business has been operated skillfully and confidently, meeting all challenges from

the development of the product concept, execution of the business and technical plan, successful start-up and operation, to graduation from the incubator.

CDG Technology Inc., Bethlehem, Thomas E. McWhorter, President and CEO

Chlorine dioxide is used worldwide for the treatment of drinking water. Use of the chemical has historically been limited because it decomposes quickly and could not be shipped. CDG Technology addressed this problem by manufacturing generators that produce pure chlorine dioxide on-site. With Ben Franklin funding, the company is now commercializing a new process that significantly reduces the cost to produce chlorine dioxide, and uses a more desirable feedstock. More than 50 mid-size US communities treat their drinking water with CDG-produced chlorine dioxide. Recently, CDG invented and launched another new product: concentrated, storage-stable chlorine dioxide solution. This product opens numerous markets where onsite generators are not feasible. Using this technology, CDG has partnered with a major infection-control company to treat hospital drinking water systems with chlorine dioxide solution to control Legionnaire's disease and other water-borne diseases. In addition, CDG works with U.S. government agencies on systems for remediation of buildings contaminated with bio-warfare agents. CDG began in the Ben Franklin Business Incubator in 1999 with four employees. The company has since grown to three locations and 29 employees in the Lehigh Valley, and sales revenues have increased tenfold over the last five years.

Product Innovation

The company that best demonstrates the commercialization of a unique, innovative product that creatively and effectively meets a market need.

Apogee Photonics, Inc., Allentown, Mike Decelle, President and CEO

As optical network bandwidth demands increase, the system requirements for attractive solutions grow. Apogee Photonics is helping to enable the next generation of optical networks with devices that reduce size, cut power consumption, and lower overall systems costs by using higher-density packaging and optoelectronic integration.

Apogee has positioned itself as a world leader by offering the broadest set of 10 Gigabit per second transmission solutions in the market. Ben Franklin invested in Apogee in 2001 and 2002, utilizing Lehigh University's Enterprise Systems Center to help the company develop and implement a strategic information system, including business

processes, information systems architecture, and information system solutions. Apogee, a 2000 startup, now employs 75 Pennsylvanians, doubling its employment since last year.

Innovative Application of Technology

The company that best demonstrates a “break the mold” approach to integrating new or existing technology into a manufacturing environment.

Tobyhanna Army Depot, Tobyhanna, Tracy L. Ellis, Commander

Tobyhanna Army Depot is a U.S. military depot specializing in the repair, overhaul, and integration of communications-electronics systems. Employing more than 4,400 in Monroe County and with an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$1.8 billion in Pennsylvania, Tobyhanna is a crucial economic driver. The depot has realized significant job growth since 2001 by consistently applying advanced technologies to its industrial manufacturing and repair operations. Since 1986, Ben Franklin has partnered Tobyhanna with regional colleges and universities to implement applied research in its processes. Ben Franklin assisted Tobyhanna with several projects, including work in artificial intelligence applications, expert systems, surface mount technologies, and pollution prevention controls, all of which significantly enhanced the depot's competitive position within the U.S. military. The depot is the Army's designated Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence for communications-electronics, radar, and missile guidance and control. It is also a key maintenance center for the Air Force and other branches of the Armed Forces. Tobyhanna credits Ben Franklin with the creation of 552 jobs and the retention of another 481 jobs, rendering it one of Ben Franklin's top job successes in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Manufacturing Achievement

The company that best exemplifies achievement in the manufacturing arena, showing a proven track record of success and an unbending commitment to achieving and maintaining excellence in manufacturing.

B. Braun Medical, Inc., Allentown, Al Kiani, Vice President and General Manager

B. Braun Medical, a worldwide medical device supplier, maintains two Lehigh Valley manufacturing sites. The Allentown facility extrudes tubes, thermoforms trays,

assembles devices, and sterilizes and packages. The Bethlehem facility injection molds 90% of B. Braun product parts. B. Braun's local manufacturing operation leveraged its Ben Franklin-funded work with Lehigh University's Enterprise Systems Center to become the injection molding center of excellence for the worldwide corporation. This transformational effort involved the implementation of an Economic Order Quantity Model, Cellular Manufacturing, Kanban manufacturing techniques, and fully automated scheduling. As a result of the 2001 project which created the B. Braun injection molding center of excellence, corporate management returned substantial offshore production to Pennsylvania. Local facilities began 24/7 manufacturing operations in 2002 with 40 new employees to accommodate the additional production needs.

Entrepreneurial Advocate

An individual from the community who has contributed his or her leadership, time, and expertise to helping entrepreneurs and the Ben Franklin Technology Partners accomplish their goals. This person demonstrates a sincere and selfless desire to see the region thrive, and backs up his or her commitment with appropriate action.

John A. Chaya, Co-founder and Senior Partner, Alignment Consulting International, LLC, Allentown

John Chaya has been a key resource in the Ben Franklin Solutions Network for several years, both as a volunteer business plan reviewer and as an astute company advisor. He has served 13 clients in the Ben Franklin portfolio through various efforts, from helping companies identify ways to increase productivity and capacity through innovation, to creating a process to monitor key sales indicators. Chaya has developed several business plans and marketing plans for clients, and has catalyzed beneficial partnerships among clients. His excellent interpersonal skills allow him to interact effectively with both management teams and hourly workforces. John Chaya's conviction and commitment to help Ben Franklin clients is outstanding. He consistently searches for ways to support clients, and is therefore developing and growing the region's technology economy as a whole.

Special Achievement

Individuals whose strong vision, dedication and commitment to the program have helped to bring about a better business environment for Ben Franklin clients.

The Great Valley Technology Alliance, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton/Hazleton

Stephen M. Barrouk, President/CEO, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, Wilkes-Barre

Austin J. Burke, President, Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Scranton

W. Kevin O'Donnell, President, CAN-DO, Hazleton

Stephen Barrouk, Austin Burke, and Kevin O'Donnell formed the initial economic development team that created the Great Valley Technology Alliance (GVTA). Together with board co-chairs Robert Ciaruffoli, Phillip Santarelli, and William Scranton, III., these individuals created an initiative that led to the emergence of an organized and supportive network of business incubators, mentoring, and financing programs for entrepreneurs throughout the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton/Hazleton area. Ben Franklin participated during the formation of the GVTA five years ago and has continued investing in the development of supporting programs. These programs included the formation of business incubators in Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazleton; establishment of the Work & Play in Northeast PA program; Entrepreneurship and Business Plan programs; formation of the NEPA Angel Network; the development of Keystone Innovation Zones in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties; and the formation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Technology Institute. These activities represent a significant personal and community resource, as well as a significant financial commitment to enhancing the entrepreneurial culture in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties. Catalyzing change of this magnitude requires vision, and Barrouk, Burke, and O'Donnell have demonstrated tremendous creative and collaborative skills in leading the charge.

The i xchange has become the premier business networking opportunity in northeastern Pennsylvania. Last year, more than 600 technology entrepreneurs, business people, economic developers, venture capitalists, regional influencers, political leaders, educators, students, bankers, lawyers, and accountants from Ben Franklin's 19-county service area attended, and even more are expected this year.

The i xchange will combine the presentation of Ben Franklin's twelfth annual Innovation Awards with a keynote address by Daniel Burrus. As one of the world's leading technology forecasters and strategists, Burrus specializes in the creative application and

future impact of global innovations in science and technology. His predictions are based on a unique and proven methodology that he developed more than two decades ago. His predictions and strategies are utilized by many Fortune 500 companies, including GE, IBM, Microsoft, Motorola, DuPont, Merrill Lynch, Bell Atlantic, Toshiba, Bank One, and Exxon. Over the past two decades, Burrus has established an exceptional record of accurately predicting the future of technological change.

In addition to running a successful research and consulting firm, Burrus is the author of the highly acclaimed book *Technotrends*. He has appeared on numerous television programs and has been quoted by major publications. Burrus founded and managed four businesses in the aircraft industry, and created Burrus Research Associates, Inc. in 1983.

The entrance fee for the i xchange is \$45 in advance or \$50 the day of the event. To learn more or register, go to www.nep.benfranklin.org, e-mail ixchange@nep.benfranklin.org, or call 610-758-5200.

About the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania:

The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania links companies with experts, universities, funding, and other resources to help them prosper through innovation. The Center strategy encompasses three key areas: developing early-stage, technology-based companies; helping established manufacturers creatively apply new technologies and business practices; and promoting an innovative community-wide infrastructure that fosters a favorable business environment for high-growth companies. The northeastern center, headquartered on the campus of Lehigh University with regional offices in Lewisburg, Reading, and Wilkes-Barre, is part of a four-center, state-funded economic development initiative.

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