



4th Quarter 2007

TRDA Launches New Business Incubator

Entrepreneurship in Central Florida took center stage in August with the grand opening of the TRDA's newest business incubation center in Melbourne, Fla. The new 30,998-square-foot TRDA Business Innovation Center will serve up to 30 new or expanding technology businesses in the area and create 70 to 100 jobs in the first four years of operation.



Located at 1050 W. NASA Blvd., the Center offers a supportive environment that breeds entrepreneurial success. On-site services include: mentoring; access to legal, tax, marketing and financial experts; sales and marketing planning; professional development and training and investor networking. The Center provides flexible office space, on-site administrative services, high-speed Internet and e-mail access, multi-media conference room, break room, mail room and auditorium. Clients pay one monthly fee for all of these services.

"Our goal is to help start-up technology firms in Central Florida grow into financially viable, freestanding, high-growth companies," said Chester Straub, Jr., executive director of the TRDA. "The Innovation Center brings a wide range of business resources under one roof, thereby reducing overhead expenses for these start-up companies and laying the foundation for success."

Four client companies currently reside in the Center: Adapt 4, Audigence, ColorSculpt and Sea-Watch. For tenancy consideration, each company completed the "Roadmap to Success" workshop, a six-week course designed to boost entrepreneurs' understanding of key aspects of business formation, growth and continuing profitability. At the workshop's conclusion, entrepreneurs pitched their business concepts to a panel of local business leaders, who recommended tenancy to those entrepreneurs that best demonstrated the ability to run a business and offer a dynamic product with market potential.

In addition, two other tenants provide services to Center clients and local businesses. These tenants include The Center for SupplyPoint® Integration of the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership and four departments within the Florida Institute of Technology (the Office of University Publications, the Office of Florida Tech Consulting, the Professional Development Programs of University College and the National Center for Small Business Information).

Straub estimates the Center to near full occupancy by the end of the year.

The TRDA officially opened the Center on Aug. 16 with approximately 250 guests touring the facility and mingling with clients and invitees. Special guests in attendance included the following: Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Sandy K. Baruah; State Senator Mike Haridopolos; State Representative Thad Altman; State Representative Ralph Poppel; Dinah Atkins, president of the National Business Incubation Association; and local elected officials.

Melbourne Airport Authority constructed the Center. The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, NASA, Brevard County and the city of Melbourne provided additional support.

Pictured left to right.

Rob Medina Commissioner Jackie Colon's Aide

Florida State Senator Mike Haridopolos

TRDA Board Member Dr. Pamela Luckett

TRDA Chairman of the Board Dan Adovasio

Sandy K. Baruah, US Assistant Secretary for Economic Development

TRDA Vice Chair Peter DiLavore (behind Baruah)

Florida State Representative Thad Altman

TRDA Secretary of the Board Henry Parrish (behind Altman)

TRDA Executive Director Chester J. Straub Jr.

Florida State Representative Ralph Poppel

NBIA President and CEO Dinah Atkins

TRDA Appoints Advisors for New Business Incubator

Thirteen business professionals will serve as national advisory board members, officers and committee chairs for the TRDA Business Innovation Center, Melbourne's new business incubation facility that opened Aug. 16.

"The success of the TRDA Business Innovation Center is heavily dependent on the quality of its leadership," said Dan Advasio, chairman of the board for the TRDA. "We have assembled an energetic and accomplished team of



professionals that will work hard for the Center's future and the welfare of our client companies."

National Advisory Board members include professionals with high-level experience in various aspects of high-growth business development, both in the private and public sectors. Members include: **John Cambier**, senior vice president and chief financial officer for North Carolina IDEA; **John Dexheimer**, investment professional with First Analysis; **Richard Fox**, principal of The Astralis Group, LLC; **Karen Kerr**, managing director of Agile Equities; **Robin Kovalski**, executive director of Florida Venture Forum; **Phillip Singerman**, Ph.D., managing director of Toucan Capital Corp.; **Chester J. Straub, Jr.**, executive director of the TRDA; and **Paul Suchoski**, an entrepreneur and angel investor.

This board, which will meet twice a year, will examine the Center's programs, policies, content and opportunities. Also, it will analyze the progress and opportunities of resident clients.

In addition, five appointees, along with one advisory board member, will lead the Emerging Business Network (EBN), which will mentor and consult with Center's clients. Members of the EBN will also identify candidate companies for tenancy and guide Center leadership on overall improvements to enhance its success.

The new EBN Board consists of: **John Igoe** (EBN chair), partner with Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge; **Mark Fleisher** (EBN vice chair), of counsel with Broad & Cassel; **Steve Loso** (EBN secretary), president of Regions Financial Corporation; **Hal Van Horn** (chair of review panel committee), managing director of Entrepreneurial Resources of Florida; **Terry Brennan** (chair of seminar committee), partner with Roetzel & Address; Suchoski (chair of mentoring committee).

EBN appointees will meet monthly with the TRDA staff.

2007 Teacher Quest Program Participants Honored

The TRDA hosted its first Teacher Quest Recognition Luncheon on Aug. 3 to honor participants in the 2007 teacher professional development program. Sponsored by the TRDA, the Teacher Quest program gives K-12 teachers the chance to become paid summer employees at select science- and technology-based businesses in Florida. Teachers gain valuable industry knowledge and take it back to the classroom to make math, science and technology studies more exciting and challenging for students.



"Shaping the workforce of tomorrow begins today in our classrooms...with our teachers," said Diane Matthews, TRDA's director of education. "Teacher Quest continues to make great strides in giving teachers the edge they need to truly inspire students and better prepare them for their future careers. We're very pleased to honor the people who help make this program a success year after year."

During the event, which was held at the Fairwinds Alumni Center at the University of Central Florida, Matthews recognized eight employers who served as financial sponsors of the 2007 program. Recognized

sponsor employers included: gold sponsors American Systems Corp. and Workforce Central (in conjunction with .Decimal, Inc.); Progress Energy (silver sponsor) bronze sponsors ConMed Linvatec, Delaware North, Florida Institute for Phosphate Research, GWIZ Science Museum and Sun Hydraulics Corp. Each received a special award from the TRDA.

Paul Beyers, an engineer with Sun Hydraulics Corp., said his company participates in Teacher Quest because it is a long-term investment in the future work force. "Our labor pool is dwindling; fewer people see manufacturing as an interesting career," he said. "As a result, there are fewer people coming out of school and fewer people with manufacturing experience for us to draw from. If a teacher can bring back knowledge of modern manufacturing technology and create an interest in students, hopefully their interest will bring them through our doors."

The 2007 Teacher Quest program was one of the most successful to date. Eighty-four teachers from 14 Florida counties, including many rural areas, went to work for 24 companies and institutions throughout the state from June through the end of July. Matthews said the 2007 program had a 20 percent increase in employer participation.

For more information on Teacher Quest or to participate in the 2008 program, either as a teacher or an employer, visit <http://www.trda.org/> or call (866) 263-9564.

Pictured above from Left to Right: Amanda Miles and Greg Burkett of Progress Energy Florida and Chester J. Straub, Jr., Executive Director of TRDA.

FNBIC Client Secures Robotics Contract with M.I.T.

Congratulations to Bhargav Gajjar, president of Space Robotics Corp. and tenant at the Florida/NASA Business Incubation Center (FNBIC). Gajjar secured a contract with renowned robotics expert Dr. Hugh Herr at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Media Lab to develop a revolutionary robotic ankle. This intelligent robotic prosthesis behaves like a human ankle, and the motor on it switches at precise times in the gait cycle adding energy and reducing the metabolic cost of walking which makes walking much easier and less tiresome for amputees. This pioneering advancement in prosthetics was recently featured on the *NBC Nightly News*.

An engineer by trade, Gajjar loves the world of robotics. He joined the FNBIC in 2004 to launch a "glove scale," a sensor-laced glove that can weigh an object when it is picked up. During his time at the incubator, he also worked for the NASA-Kennedy Space Center to develop an insect-like robot that will be used to explore Mars.

In January 2007, Gajjar left his Florida office to take a course at M.I.T. "I was looking to do more robotics work," he said. "I met Professor Herr and started electromechanical design work in the biomechanics lab, which is a part of the world-famous MIT Media Lab. When Professor Herr learned of my previous experience with NASA, he hired me to work on the mechanical design."

Gajjar's contract began in May. He analyzed the current design specifications and is helping Herr design the

next, smaller generation of the foot. He is also currently assisting in Herr's next generation project - the intelligent robotic knee.

Gajjar's contributions to arguably one of the most successful MIT robots will continue when the first active ankle becomes commercially available within a year.

Upcoming TRDA Business Innovation Center Seminars

Oct. 17

"Essential Strategies for Marketing Technology Products and Services"

Hosted by Susan Evander, founder of Technology Insights. 1-4 p.m. Free and open to the public. Advance registration required.

Oct. 23

"Intellectual Property"

A seminar on patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets and more. Hosted by Brian Steinberger, patent attorney. 6-8 p.m. Free and open to the public. Advanced registration required.



Nov. 6

"Big Things Every Small Business Should Know"

Featuring speakers from CECU, DDM Payroll Systems, Natwick Insurance, HSA Florida and the College of Business at Florida Tech. 8:30 a.m. - Noon. By invitation only.

Nov. 7

"Roadmap to Success"

Workshop series begins. 7-9 p.m., Wednesdays. Hosted by the TRDA Business Innovation Center. Open to the public. \$395 for the six-week series. Advance registration required.

Nov. 8-9

"Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Boot Camp"

Hosted by Jim and Gail Greenwood, nationally renowned SBIR trainers. \$75. Open to the public. Advance registration required.

All seminars are held at the TRDA Business Innovation Center, located at 1050 W. NASA Blvd. For more information, visit <http://www.trda.org/> or contact Bonnie O'Regan at (321) 872-1050, ext. 107 or via e-mail at boregan@trda.org.

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