

10 Years of TECH

A look at six leading high tech companies that have flourished in the past 10 years.



In the 10 years since *florida. HIGH.TECH* was first published, the success stories of many Florida High Tech Corridor companies have appeared in its pages. This 10th anniversary issue looks back at some of those companies and the continuing success they have achieved.

Rini Technologies

There are countless success stories throughout the 23 counties of the Florida High Tech Corridor, but perhaps no company succinctly demonstrates the comprehensive nature of the Corridor's effective-

ness for fostering high tech growth better than Rini Technologies.

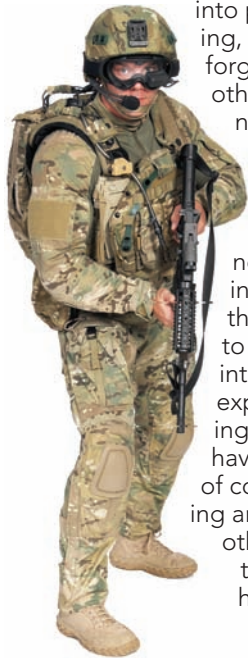
The 10-year-old company, located in an industrial park just a mile from the University of Central Florida (UCF), graduated from the UCF Technology Incubator program and now maintains a 12,000-square-foot research and manufacturing facility of its own. Rini Technologies got its start winning competitive contracts through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and has parlayed that success into several marketable products. In order to meet increasing demand,

the company is expected to double in size to 40 employees in the near future.

"The combination of a partnership with UCF and support from the Corridor Council really helped to launch the company in a way that ultimately has been a success," says President Dan Rini. "I don't know if we would have been as successful, or could have even kept up with our pace if it wasn't for the Corridor Council."

Rini Technologies produces thermal management products for military and other applications, the ideas for which can be traced to

Rini's research work as a graduate student at UCF. Rini says that he heavily leveraged Corridor Council programs, especially in the first five years, by doing a lot of collaborative research with UCF. And now that his company is transitioning



into product manufacturing, he is starting to forge partnerships with other Corridor companies to bring those products to market. "We still have some work going on with UCF, but now we're starting to interact more with the local marketplace to help us put things into production," Rini explains. "The matching grants programs have been great and, of course, the networking and leveraging of other companies in the area is now a huge asset as well."

Rini Technologies specializes in thermal management products. Its personal cooling system is the most advanced of its kind and is used widely by the military.

Pasteuria Bioscience

Also featured in 2006, Pasteuria Bioscience is part of the University of Florida's (UF) Sid Martin Biotechnology Development Incubator. The company was founded in 2003 to commercialize its revolutionary technology for nematode-control products.

Nematodes (parasitic worms) are estimated to cause \$100 billion in crop losses globally each year, making it agriculture's largest unmet pest control need. Pasteuria Bioscience was recently given Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration for the use of *Pasteuria usgae* liquid formulation against sting nematodes on both turf and strawberries. That came on the heels of EPA approval of Pasteuria's product, Econem, for turf grass.

The timing is good for Pasteuria Bioscience, as farmers and landscapers have been looking for a weapon with which to fight nematodes since the EPA called for the halt of production of the highly toxic broad-spectrum pesticide methyl bromide a few

years ago. The company also has products in development for nematode control in agronomic crops, such as soybean and cotton, as well as in select vegetables and bananas.

AuthenTec

Featured in *florida.HIGH.TECH* in 2006, AuthenTec is the world's number one provider of fingerprint sensors and identity management software. The microelectronics and nanotechnology company based in Melbourne was founded in 1998 with a single prototype and has since shipped more than 100 million sensors worldwide.

AuthenTec biometric sensors can be found in PCs, hand-held mobile devices, cloud servers and other electronic devices. The company recently merged with another industry giant, UPEK, to solidify its position as the industry leader with an increased customer footprint and broader market diversity. AuthenTec's patented TruePrint and TrueMatch systems allow fingerprints to be read below the surface of the skin to the live layer,

making them the only technologies capable of acquiring a fingerprint under virtually any condition.

The company manufactures its products in China and has sales offices in several countries, but still manages its operation from Florida, where the technology was first invented.

DNAPrint Genomics

DNAPrint Genomics in Sarasota is a cutting-edge company in a cutting-edge industry. It has grown rapidly since its founding in 1999 into one of the world's leading genomic-based technology companies. Originally featured in 2003, DNAPrint Genomics focuses on the development of novel products in the areas of pharmacogenomics, forensics, and genotyping, three vastly different applications of one important technology.

The company's DNAWitness line of products and services is at the forefront of forensic technologies utilizing DNA for identification. Its flagship genealogy product, AncestryByDNA, allows people to use DNA to track family



Debra Neill-Marec

Dr. Kelly Smith is chief technical officer and founder of Pasteuria Bioscience, a leader in EPA-approved products to control nematodes, parasitic worms that cause billions of dollars in crop losses each year.

history. The company is also developing ways to use DNA to predict how patients will respond to specific drugs, which has the potential to dramatically reduce the time and money normally needed to bring a new drug to market.

Productivity Apex

While many in the modeling, simulation and training industry set their sights on military or gaming applications, UCF engineering professor Dr. Mansooreh Mollaghasemi draws on her work as a researcher to focus on event and business-process simulation. Her company, Productivity Apex, was first covered in this magazine in 2005.

In 1999, Mollaghasemi was asked by NASA to study how it processes a space shuttle leading up to launch, which led her to develop a process simulation of the shuttle's ground operations. In 2001, she founded Productivity Apex as a way to help commercial enterprises and government agencies improve their productivity and maximize their efficiencies. Her company provides consulting services and has developed proprietary software to help in the areas of simulation modeling and analysis, supply-chain management, data mining and artificial intelligence, and process optimization.

In addition to her work with NASA, Mollaghasemi and her team have helped clients—including major airports, hotel chains and some of the biggest names in the theme-park industry—measure and increase capacity and manage traffic flow.

Ocean Optics

First featured in 2004, Ocean Optics has grown from a garage in Dunedin to six locations with distributors worldwide. The company can trace its roots to a 1989 project by University of South Florida (USF) researchers who developed a fiber-optic pH sensor as part of an instrument designed to study the role that oceans play in global warming.

Ocean Optics is one of the pioneers in the optics and photonics industry and gained acclaim for becoming the first to manufacture a miniature spectrometer, which



Ocean Optics

A researcher uses an Ocean Optics spectrometer to measure the bill color of penguins that are native to the Falkland Islands. The company is a pioneer in the optics and photonics industry.

is used to measure wavelengths of light. Since that breakthrough product hit the market in 1992, Ocean Optics has sold more than 150,000 spectrometers worldwide. The company recently released its next generation of miniature spectrometers.

Long known for recruiting engineers from USF, when it came time to expand its manufacturing capabilities, Ocean Optics opened a facility in Winter Park to capitalize on another Corridor institution's graduates. The company was attracted to the Orlando area by the pool of laser and optics technicians from UCF's Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers (CREOL).

"We work with CREOL extensively, so being close to UCF has been a tremendous help," explains Chief Technology Officer Jason Eichenholz. "The resources available at both UCF and USF have been very useful at times as we've developed new products and experimented with new ways of doing things."

These companies and thousands of others combine to make up the Florida High Tech Corridor. And if the 15-year history of FHTCC is any indicator, that fertile ground will continue to be a place of great growth and innovation for the high tech industry in the state of Florida. ●