

The Accelerator

Quarterly Newsletter of the UCF Business Incubation Program
Showcasing News from Clients, Graduates and Partners

■ Volume 6 ■ Issue 11 ■ Winter 2013

UCFBIP Celebrates 13 Years

The University of Central Florida Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) celebrated its 13th anniversary in October.

Since its founding in 1999, the UCFBIP has expanded to nine sites across Central Florida covering Orlando, the UCF campus, two in the Central Florida Research Park and six others in Apopka, Daytona Beach International Airport, Kissimmee, St. Cloud and Winter Springs.

Central Florida's cooperative culture is unique, and according to *Entrepreneur Magazine*, the success of the UCFBIP can be credited to the

"intergovernmental and private sector's ability to cooperate and sidestep development turf wars that often hobble other metro areas." Dr. Tom O'Neal, founder of the UCFBIP, credits this city-county partnership and collaborative spirit as one of the most critical factors for the program's success.

Since its inception, the UCFBIP has helped more than 300 emerging growth companies (*including more than 120 current clients and more than 90 graduates *as of December 2012*) create over \$500 million in annual revenue and generate an average wage of more than 45% for the region.



Stands For Opportunity

OptiGrate Wins MACF Small Manufacturer of the Year Award

OptiGrate Corp., a graduate of the UCF Business Incubator (UCFBI) – Central Florida Research Park, was nominated as the "Small Manufacturer of the Year" at the Manufacturer's Association of Central Florida (MACF) Annual President's Award Dinner in November. Each year the Awards of Excellence are presented to MACF members in each manufacturing category: small, medium and large.

"MACF congratulates OptiGrate from their early years starting inside the UCFBI to now - sustaining business, doubling employees, offering high-paying salaries and planning for future job growth," said MACF Executive Director Sherry Reeves. She continued, "OptiGrate is a real example of advanced manufacturing and the type of business in which to help grow our economy."

Founded in 1999, OptiGrate is a spin-out of UCF's College of Optics and Photonics. The company pioneered and successfully brought to market the innovative technology of volume Bragg grating-based optical filters. The unique technology developed by OptiGrate enables significant performance



OptiGrate CEO/President Alexei Glebov (left) with Past MACF President, Tom Muller (right).

improvement of laser systems, vast miniaturization and cost reduction of analytical instruments, and ultra-fast lasers for medical, pharmaceutical, defense, nanotech and other applications.

"This award is a significant milestone for us," said Alexei Glebov, OptiGrate's CEO and president.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

IN THIS EDITION

- Pages 2-3 Message From Tom, Calendar, Small Business, Big Recovery
- Pages 4-5 Board Profiles, Founder of iEraser® Recognized, Leesburg Transfers Management
- Pages 6-7 Winter Springs Celebrates Five Years, Staff Update, Ninjaneer Studios to Create Interactive Exhibit
- Pages 8-13 Incubator Client Profiles
- Pages 15-16 Incubation Program Graduates

READ ONLINE

Use your smartphone QR reader and read this newsletter online!



OptiGrate Wins MACF Small Manufacturer of the Year Award

FROM PAGE 1

“Being recognized as Small Manufacturer of the Year clearly shows that we succeeded in transitioning advanced university research into commercial products.”

The optical components are manufactured at OptiGrate’s new 10,000-square-foot facility in Oviedo, Fla., and shipped to more than 300 customers worldwide. The new state-of-the-art facility is the only vertically integrated volume Bragg gratings production plant in the world. “With the increased capacity and streamlined production, we’ll be more



cost efficient and able to deliver better products faster, meeting an ever- growing demand and expectations from our customers,” said Glebov.

For more information about OptiGrate and the MACF, visit OptiGrate.com and macf.biz.

Founder of iEraser® Recognized as UCFBI – Daytona Beach International Airport Entrepreneur of the Year

Robert Skelton, founder and chief executive officer of Best **iProducts™.com™** LLC, was recognized as “Entrepreneur of the Year” at the one-year anniversary celebration of the UCF Business Incubator -Daytona Beach International Airport.

Skelton created **The iEraser®**, a pocketsize screen cleaning device for tablets, laptops, monitors and other devices. He received rave reviews when he introduced his product at the 2012 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

“I’m honored to be named Entrepreneur of the Year for this UCF Business incubator. It could not have happened without the help of many, especially our team of iPeople and the grace of God,” said Skelton.

Best iProducts has a manufacturing facility in Edgewater, Fla., and operates its design studio at UCFBI -Daytona Beach International Airport. Site manager, Connie Bernal said, “Rob is an entrepreneur who works hard to make his city, his county, his country and the world a better place. He has the potential for creating a successful high-growth



TheiEraser.com



Tom O’Neal presents Robert Skelton, founder and CEO of Best iProducts, with an award for his nomination as “Entrepreneur of the Year”

company in Volusia County.”

“The incubator is a partnership between UCF, Volusia County and the Florida High Tech Corridor Council. It is designed to help start-up companies as well as established businesses that may need assistance getting to the next level of their operations,” Bernal said.

For more details, visit BestiProducts.com.

UCFBI – Leesburg Transfers Management to Lake County Economic Development and Tourism

Beginning in January 2013, the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) will transfer management of its Leesburg site to the Economic Development Group of Lake County.

UCFBI-Leesburg has been managed by the UCFBIP with the help of the city of Leesburg and



Lake County since early 2010. UCFBIP Director Gordon Hogan stated that UCF will serve as an advisor if needed.

Lake County Economic Development and Tourism is an office of the Lake County Board of County Commissioners. The group operates two additional Business Opportunity Centers. “The entrepreneurial community in Lake County will be better served with a more consistent offering at all three locations,” Hogan said.



Did you know?

- There are 59,767 total students enrolled at UCF.
- In 2012 the university surpassed the \$100 million dollar mark in external funding for the eighth straight year with \$129 million.
- The UCF Business Incubation Program has helped more than 300 client companies and generated an average wage of more than 45% for the region.
- UCF was ranked 39th among the “Best Values in Public Colleges” in the U.S. by *Kiplinger*.