

Ceramics Corridor®

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The Ceramics Corridor® runs along I-86 in the Western and Central Southern Tier of New York State

CCIC Recognized Nationally As a Top-Performing Program

According to a new study conducted by the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers is one of the top-performing technology incubation programs in the country on the basis of average sales growth registered by client companies. In that study, a research team was organized by NBIA to find out what makes certain programs more successful than others.

The year-long effort, which was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Technology Policy, put 79 programs under the microscope. After all of the facts and figures were collected and carefully studied, CCIC emerged as a top-10 program, according to NBIA.

"The ultimate goal of an incubation program is to facilitate the business success of its companies," explains Dinah Adkins, president and CEO of NBIA. "CCIC has created a program that provides entrepreneurs with the resources they need to create high-growth enterprises. That has benefited both the entrepreneurs themselves, and the business community as a whole."

"Since opening in 1992, CCIC has helped over 19 businesses," points out Jon Wilder, executive director of CCIC. "Eleven of those businesses have graduated and moved to their own facilities."

For CCIC, its high ranking is in the numbers. According to its most recent impact study, the program's two business incubators in Alfred and Corning, NY saw incubating businesses generate nearly \$2.75 million in domestic and international sales. Graduated businesses, meanwhile, reported combined domestic and international sales of \$400.5 million.

In terms of sales, incubating businesses in the same report paid out annual wages of \$3.6 million. Graduate firms, through the three-year post-graduation period, paid out \$38 million in wages.

"We are very optimistic for the future of the ceramics and advanced materials industry in New York and look forward to continuing our role in the growth of the region's economy," Wilder says, reflecting on the past success and how it sets the stage for the future. "Over the next year, we will focus on new ways to make our program even better, including strengthening our already-solid academic ties to Alfred University."

On the Critical List

What business assistance services provided by incubators are considered most important? NBIA recently completed a benchmarking study on technology-based incubators in the U.S., funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Technology Policy; the study polled 79 participating incubators. The 10 most-utilized business assistance services, according to the study:

- 1) Networking assistance
- 2) Access to Internet/IT Services
- 3) Mentoring
- 4) Linkage to strategic partners
- 5) Business plan assistance
- 6) Assistance obtaining angel/VC investments
- 7) Marketing assistance
- 8) Linkage to university R&D services
- 9) Help in securing both interns and employees
- 10) Management team development

Profile: Dante Design

"Ceramics, as an industry doesn't have a lot of research and development facilities in Australia. It has far greater visibility in the U.S and far more resources."

The speaker is Eric Cossich of Dante LLC. Eric Cossich and Katrina Kenny have come halfway around the world to set up shop in the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers' Alfred facility. Dante is the first overseas company to come into the CCIC.

With a background in importing, wholesaling and manufacturing, Cossich is the business half of the partnership. Kenny, a former art teacher with a degree in fine art, and a sculptor of many years experience, is the creative muse. Both have experience in production and process control. Neither principal has a ceramic engineering background, which makes the enterprise all the more unusual.

Executive Director's Message

If you've gotten this far, you've already read our Page One story outlining Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers' high standing in a recent study done by the National Business Incubator Association. And there's more good news from NBIA: In the association's recent "State of the Business Incubation Industry" (SOI) report, the association concluded that the industry is in fact alive and well, the woes of the dot-com business notwithstanding.

Along the way, "dot-com company" and "business incubation" somehow became synonymous. Never mind that business incubation as a concept is much older than the dot-com business and will long outlive a shakeout of that or any other emerging industry.

For example, NBIA's SOI for 2002 showed that North American incubation programs were assisting over 35,000 start-up companies, providing almost 82,000 full-time jobs. Moreover, clients of North American incubation programs were generating annual earnings of more than \$39 billion. As a top-level program, CCIC is certainly in some heady company!

As an industry, we've proven that business incubation works. It's also a proven fact that collectively speaking, small businesses—not *Fortune 500* companies—are the prime engine for economic growth in this country. If history repeats itself, as it usually does, it will be small business that will lead us out of the current economic malaise.

The national business incubation success rate is a very solid 87%, while CCIC's own success rate is even higher—94%. Those are the kind of numbers that show where the technology and jobs of the future are going to be coming from.

—Jon M. Wilder



Jon M. Wilder

Cossich and Kenny are here to further research an unusual ceramic body they have developed and used for the past seven years. In Australia, the material was used to create tile, borders, giftware, heritage restoration pieces and promotional pieces for the wine industry.

The material is unusual for several reasons, primarily its shrinkage, only 1%, its make to fire cycle (one to two hours), and its capability in the area of what they term "large slab technology." The material can be made into large flat slabs (for example tabletops) up to a yard square or round.

"We have also developed a rapid tooling system that reduces costs substantially," Cossich explains. "The whole process is actually very simple and cost effective, and can be ramped up for mass production without major infrastructure."

The duo had heard about Alfred University and the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers through various industry publications, and after they made contact with Vasanthi Amarakoon, professor of ceramic and electrical engineering and director of the NYS

Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology at Alfred University, the decision was made to move to the U.S.

Initially, the company plans to set up a small manufacturing facility in the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers' Alfred facility, using available expertise and resources to analyze properties of the material, and then addressing the possible uses. Production will initially be on a small scale with a mini-range of giftware slated for market entry in late March or early April.

Possible uses for the material are numerous and varied, from facade cladding (metal fastenings can be fired into the body), to large format architectural moldings, and perhaps some interesting technical ceramic applications.

"We're hoping this process/material can be diversified into many industries," Cossich concludes. "We're using the Ceramics Corridor and its resources to help realize the potential of this unusual material that has consumed our lives for the past seven years."

Legal Corner

Congress Clarifies U.S. Patent Law

By Stephen P. Burr and Nicole J. Buckner

One would be hard-pressed to accuse the U.S. Congress of not protecting the interests of American companies and inventors, at least in terms of patents. First, it was the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999, in which Congress presumably amended the "old" patent laws and enacted some new ones.

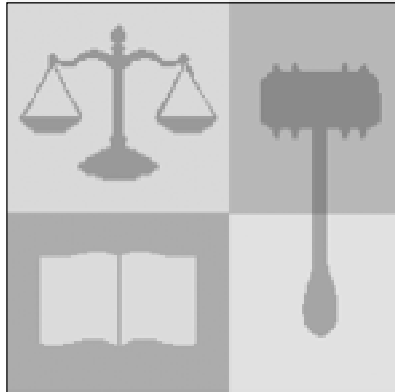
Then came the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002, in which Congress had to "fix" some of the laws it had amended or enacted just three years earlier. Section 102(e) of the U.S. Patent Laws is one such law.

Section 102(e) was revised to clarify how prior art U.S. patents and patent publications (U.S. and international) that originate from international patent applications can be used to reject patent applications filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). Under the old law, the PTO could have rejected a U.S. patent application based on another U.S. patent that originated from an international patent application filed in a foreign country, even if the international patent was originally published in a language other than English. It was argued that this law was unfair because the patent application would often be faced with the additional expense of translating the international patent application before he or she could analyze the validity of the PTO's rejection.

Under the new law, the PTO can use a prior art U.S. patent or publication (U.S. or international) that originated from an international patent application to reject a pending U.S. patent application only if the international patent application was published in English. The new law applies to all pending U.S. patent applications (and patents) regardless of when they were filed in the PTO. The new law does not include any prior art U.S. patents that originated from international patent applications that were filed prior to November 29, 2000 (even Congress has some limit on its ability to enact laws retroactively).

Important: the next time you meet with your patent attorney to discuss a PTO rejection, be sure to check whether any of the prior art U.S. patents or publications (U.S. or international) that the PTO applied against your patent application originated from an international patent application filed after November 29, 2000. If so, ask your attorney to find out if the international patent application was published in English – he or she will either be thoroughly impressed with your knowledge of U.S. patent law, or will have no idea why you are asking the question. If it's the latter case, perhaps you need to ask yourself some obvious questions.

Mr. Burr is a partner and Ms. Buckner is an associate in the law firm of Burr & Brown, Syracuse, NY. Both are registered patent attorneys, and both hold BS degrees in ceramic engineering from Alfred University.



Tech Corner...



Tired of those annoying online advertising pop-ups? Petra Technology Group, Corning,

suggests one answer. It's called Ad-aware, and it's a multi-spyware removal utility that scans your memory, registry and hard drives for known spyware and scumware components. It also lets you remove them safely.

Updated frequently, Ad-aware is designed for Windows 98 / 98SE / ME / NT40 / 2000 / XP Home / XP Pro. Petra can be reached at 607-962-5055. The company's Web site is www.petragroup.com.

CCIC CD-ROM

Have you gotten your Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers' interactive CD-ROM yet? To put a ton of information about the CCIC program and how business incubation can help bring your ideas to commercial fruition at your fingertips, call Laura Quick at 607-587-9444. You can also place your request via e-mail to lquick@ceramicscorridor.org.

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For additional copies of this newsletter, or to add your company to the mailing list, please call (607) 587-9444, or e-mail us at corridor@ceramicscorridor.org

Welcome to...

...Janette Smith, who has joined the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Centers team as accounting agent. She has 20 years of experience in all accounting functions and has worked with such companies as ABB AirPreheater, Cunningham & Cardinale Accountants and E.L.K. Office Services. In her new position, Janette will be involved in everything from billing to general accounting practices and procedures, as well as daily activities related to the Painted Post incubator facility.



Industry Notes...

- Alfred University is combining all of its engineering programs. The School of Engineering, which will be in place this Fall, will tie together the ceramics, biomedical materials, engineering science, glass and materials science, electrical and mechanical engineering programs. In a related development, Dr. Ronald S. Gordon is stepping down as Dean of the School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science, effective at the end of June. University officials have launched a national search to fill the position of Dean of the School of Engineering.
- Saxon Glass Technologies, Inc., which is located in CCIC's Alfred facility, is close to marketing several new applications for chemically strengthened glass, including such uses as transparent armor for battlefield vehicles and soldiers' headgear. Another new application on the way is a lightweight glass container specifically designed for carbonated beverages. A long-term goal of the company is to develop mid-infrared transmitting chalcogenide glass fibers for carbon dioxide laser-assisted invasive ablation of atherosclerotic plaque from coronary arteries.
- SUNY has awarded Dr. L. David Pye, professor of glass science at the NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred University, its 2002 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. The new award honors faculty members "who consistently engage in and have established a solid record of scholarship and cooperative productivity in addition to their teaching responsibilities," according to university officials.
- Looking for job security? According to a new study by The Raymond Family Business Institute, Alfred, and MassMutual, you belong in a family business. After canvassing more than 1,140 family businesses nationwide, the study found that median employment is holding steady at 50 employees, a stat that runs counter to the waves of downsizing that have hit Corporate America. What's more, more than half of companies surveyed said they expect to add employees this year (an average of 5%), and almost half expect their sales to rise (by an average of 6%). Almost two-thirds said they were "very optimistic" about their companies' futures.


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