



SPACE ALLIANCE TECHNOLOGY OUTREACH PROGRAM

News release

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BAHEP's leadership speaks to Congress

BAY AREA HOUSTON, Texas – Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP), recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak to Congress on the economic vitality that the Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (SATOP) brings to the region – a program that is providing solutions for small businesses locally and nationally.

Both Mitchell and Congressman Nick Lampson whose district includes Johnson Space Center, addressed the Appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science and Related Agencies to discuss the importance of NASA maintaining a healthy budget. Lampson called on the committee to spearhead an initiative to increase the space agency's budget by \$2 billion.

Mitchell was able to attest to the infinite possibilities and economic benefits of SATOP, which is funded by NASA and the State of Texas.

“SATOP helps small businesses who cannot afford to have a rocket scientist or engineer on staff to use their expertise and NASA technology to grow, create and retain jobs, and contribute to our economy,” Lampson said.

SATOP was created 10 years ago to help the small business community surrounding the NASA Johnson Space Center and has grown into a nationwide program.

In 2001, Federal funding was provided to establish a four-state consortium -- Texas, Florida, New Mexico and New York -- to help small businesses across the United States that were faced with a technical challenge.

Since 2003, SATOP has assisted more than 400 Texas businesses, helping create or retain 683 jobs with an economic impact of more than \$30 million.

“SATOP's funding base is in jeopardy and Bob passionately delivered a compelling argument for the program's continuance to Congress,” said Dr. Bernard A. Milstein, president of The Eye Clinic of Texas and chairman of BAHEP. “It was quite an honor for BAHEP that Bob was

asked to testify before the Subcommittee. The experience was yet another example of the positive influence that BAHEP, and its members, can put forth by working together.”

The program can provide up to 40 hours of free technical assistance for qualified requests. Businesses are paired with an Alliance Partner engineer who accepts the challenge and provides a technical solution.

“Our organization has been able to harness space technology in a way that has profound results and can assist small business owners in the development of everything from medical devices, to construction tools, water purification devices and oxygen transport containers,” Mitchell said.

Bob Payne, SATOP program manager said that one of the most recent and rewarding request, came from the Texas Children’s Hospital, which contacted SATOP for assistance in identifying a method to measure vibration levels on a neonatal transport incubator.

“The transport incubator was outfitted by NASA JSC with accelerometers that are used by NASA to detect and measure vibration on the space shuttle,” said Payne. “It is amazing that the same technology and expertise that allows astronauts safe passage in space can be used to get these babies on their way to a healthier future.”

The primary goals of SATOP are to speed the transfer of U.S. Space Program knowledge to the private sector, to raise public awareness of the Space Program and to provide economic benefits to the community.

“While SATOP has been successful in its original mission, we never imagined how this program could be such an incredible economic development tool,” said Mitchell. “Most importantly, for every \$1 invested, \$23 is returned in positive economic impact and job creation – a fantastic return.”

The economic impact of SATOP’s free technical assistance is manifested through product sales, contract acquisition, improved revenues, increased employment and capital investment, and growth for the primary business recipient.

For more information, contact Stephanie Wilcox at 281.486.5535 or stephanie@bayareahouston.com

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Additional Success Stories for consideration

AM Biotechnologies:

The AptaMed company, a spin-off from the University of Texas Medical Branch, was producing very small batches of short strand sulfur modified DNA for advanced pharmaceutical purposes. MEI Technologies engineers made recommendations to automate the extremely slow and laborious manual process. Upon completion of SATOP's assistance, AptaMed and MEI Technologies formed a joint venture (AM Biotechnologies) to further develop the product. The recommendations were implemented and AM Biotechnologies now produces the product in 8 hours compared to the 3 months it used to take.

Mission Technologies:

Mission Technologies, Inc. is a small business developing a compact, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) system for the U.S. Army. The company needed help in reducing the product's overall weight to meet the Army's requirements. Engineers at NASA Johnson Space Center provided design modifications that reduced the weight of the launcher from 37pounds to less than10 pounds, thereby meeting the specified weight requirements. Because of SATOP's assistance, Mission Technologies successfully delivered 36 UAVs to the Army.

HydroGreen Energy:

HydroGreen Energy, LLC is creating a new wave in renewable energy technology. By placing hydro-turbines in the flow of tidal currents, the company can produce energy at a higher capacity than with traditional methods. To validate the energy output and to determine the best turbine design, HydroGreen contacted SATOP for expertise and advice. They needed to know which of their several turbine design concepts would be the most efficient. HydroGreen was assisted by the University of Central Florida that completed a study using their computational fluid dynamics laboratory. Based on the findings, HydroGreen was then able to determine which hydro-turbine produced the optimal performance. HydroGreen is now building hydro-turbines for use at four US Army Corps of Engineers' sites in Mississippi.

ZENO:

Tyrell Inc., a start up medical technology company, needed an improved heating element for a newly developed product that treats individual acne blemishes. Through SATOP, Tyrell gained access to The Boeing Company's engineering expertise that provided a heating element design that met their requirements for resistance to oil and acids, low power consumption and low cost to produce, at less than \$1 per unit. Using SATOP's recommendation, Tyrell was able to reduce their manufacturing cost by 40 percent. The product received FDA approval, is being utilized in dermatologist's offices worldwide, and sold in Walgreens stores across the country. Tyrell went from \$0 in sales before SATOP's assistance to over \$3,000,000 a month. In 2005, ZENO was chosen by "Popular Science Magazine" to receive the "Best of What's New" award.

Bay Area Houston is an economically and internationally diversified, high-tech region that is home to NASA Johnson Space Center and numerous industries including aerospace and specialty chemical, and a rapidly growing health care industry.

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership is a nonprofit organization that promotes the growth of the Bay Area Houston region through the retention, expansion and recruitment of target industries. Visit www.bayareahouston.com.

Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program is funded by the State of Texas and NASA. The program provides technical assistance to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit www.spacetechnologies.com

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