

Opto Communications News

Southampton Photonics start-up attracts US\$55m in funding



Pictured: (from L-R) Professor David Payne (Chairman), Don Spalinger (Acting President) and Dr Peter Ballantyne (Senior VP, Operations and Engineering) of Southampton Photonics.

A new start-up - Southampton Photonics (spun out of the Optoelectronics Research Centre at the University of Southampton) - has attracted first-round funding of £37m (US\$55m, a record for the UK) to design and make fibre-optic telecoms components.

The company intends to create 200 jobs over the next 18 months at a new 2250 m² facility in the Chilworth Science Park in the UK and establish design, production and sales facilities in

California employing 250 staff by end-2002.

Initial products will be based on technology licensed from the University of Southampton, much of it developed and patented by the founders and employees while working at the ORC, with which the company will have an on-going alliance.

Founder and Chairman is Professor David Payne FRS, head of the ORC, leader of the team that invented the optical amplifier (en-

abling DWDM) in 1986, and jointly awarded the Benjamin Franklin Medal for developing the erbium-doped fibre amplifier in 1998.

Products will include:

- DFB fibre laser arrays for closely packed channels for DWDM;
- optical filters with enhanced performance allowing more channels per fibre; and
- broadband optical amplifiers.

Southampton Photonics

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Corning to invest US\$270m

Corning Inc is investing US\$270m to increase capacity of Corning Lasertron products six-fold over the next two years, involving construction of a new factory and creation of about 1150 jobs:

* US\$225m in expanding Corning Lasertron to increase capacity for amplification and transmission products, including pump lasers, transmission lasers and receivers, enabling the broadening of manu-

facturing from wafer fabrication through packaging;

* Corning also invested US\$45m to double capacity at Corning Lasertron's Oak Park facility in Bedford, MA, USA.

JDSU and SDL in US\$41bn merger

The largest fibre-optics component manufacturer JDS Uniphase Corp (Nepean, Toronto, Canada and San Jose, CA, USA) has acquired number 2 supplier and MOCVD-based high-power laser manufacturer SDL Inc for about US\$41bn in stock. SDL has about 1,700 staff and JDSU over 17,000. SDL makes 980 nm chips but - unlike JDSU - also packages them into modules. SDL will operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary.

In the past year, a total of 14 acquisitions have been undertaken either by JDSU or by companies it later purchased. Including Epitaxx Inc, Sifam Ltd, Optical Coating Laboratory Inc, Cronos Integrated Microsystems Inc, and Fujian Casix Laser Inc (acquired between November '99 and May 2000), JDSU's year-2000 sales were US\$1.43bn (up 143% on '99 for JDS FITEL Inc and Uniphase Corp combined). Including merger-related charges etc, net loss was US\$419m (US\$905m for fiscal 2000).

The combined company - JDSU, SDL and E-TEK Dynamics (acquired for US\$15bn in June) - has annual sales of about US\$2.7bn.

JDS Uniphase Corp

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