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Industry targets scope maker for success

By: Dan Heath

KEESEVILLE - Success is in their sights at Adirondack Optics.

The Keeseville-based company is receiving rave reviews for SmartScope, a combination riflescope and digital camera. The product captures a digital image at the moment of recoil, but can also be operated manually to capture an image of the target.

"We introduced the technology to industry folks back in May at the 700 Springs Ranch in Texas. We've been receiving rave reviews in all the leading publications," said Adirondack Optics Chief Executive Officer Terry Gordon.

One example is a seven-page story in the September issue of Rifle Sporting Firearms Journal Magazine, including a mention on the cover.

The company expects SmartScope to be covered in more than 25 leading publications by the end of the year.

"Our publicity campaign is expected to result in more than \$1 million worth of column space in these publications," Gordon said. "Industry pundits are predicting a very bright future for us."

Adirondack Optics has established a distribution system in North America and Europe. The SmartScope is now available in more than 56 countries, he said.

"We're global in scope, right here in Keeseville," Gordon said. "This shows you can have high-tech industry here in the Adirondacks."

Adirondack Optics is renovating the 24,000-square-foot building it acquired last winter to allow production of SmartScopes in house, hopefully by next summer, Gordon said.

The company presently uses Keeseville as an administration, shipping, receiving and marketing center. The scopes are presently manufactured in Europe under a partnership with Meopta Prerov A. S., an optics company based in the Czech Republic.

Adirondack Optics not only invented the product, but developed the production process and tooling for its manufacture. Meopta, with more than 50 years experience in the optics field, sent engineers to Keeseville to help design the new facility.

"We are in an Empire Zone and our facility is adjacent to the new Town of Chesterfield Industrial Park," Gordon said. "The efforts of our public officials including Gov. Pataki, have allowed us to keep this industry here."



The company received a \$2 million appropriation to “develop our technology to aid in the war on tourism.” Gordon wanted to thank the efforts of Rep. John Sweeney in including it in the 2005 defense appropriations bill, which passed the Defense Appropriation Committee in mid-June.

It took five years and several million dollars to develop this technology, Gordon said, noting there are a lot of products that never make it to market.

“We didn’t realize it, but getting a patent is the easy part. Getting that product to market is the highest hurdle,” Gordon said.

He wanted to thank more than 200 local investors who enabled the company to stay in Keeseville, despite offers to sell their idea.

“I was very humbled they would show such faith in this company and our people,” Gordon said.

The product will be available locally once the new Gander Mountain outdoor goods store opens at Champlain Centre North.

“They will be stocking out product, as will many other major retailers,” Gordon said.

The SmartScope starts at \$1,695, which includes a memory card, card reader, imaging software and two AA batteries, which provide up to six hours continuous use.