



Florida Photonics Update

The Florida Photonics Cluster Newsletter

In This Issue

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Company Spotlight:
Block Engineering

RSVP NOW! Next FPC
meeting

Florida - for
Entrepreneurs &
Startups

WELCOME NEW FPC
MEMBERS

FPC Member Supplier
Companies

DON'T MISS OUT!!!
ENJOY THE BENEFITS
OF FPC MEMBERSHIP

Join Our List

Join Our Mailing List!

November 2013

FROM THE PRESIDENT - Alex Fong



Can we rise above petty politics? On the basis of the latest round of posturing and convulsions in DC, 'told by idiots, full of sound and fury and signifying absolutely nothing except wasted time', the answer must surely be yes.

That is not to say government does and should not play an important role in not only our industry but many others in terms of supporting research and business development. As Jim Pearson noted when I discussed the topic with him, "government has a vital role in certain aspects of business, particularly funding for R&D, start-up and early company funding (SBIR, STTR), and regulations (when very carefully crafted and enforced properly) to avoid monopolies, and financial sector problems like what caused the recent recession". I think that too much government can become an obstacle to growth, no one can disagree with Jim that there is a role in our complex, large, and international society and economy for government in selected business topics.

However few could argue that at present, partisan politics are having a corrosive effect on our economic well being. The conclusion has to be that owing to the polarization in our political class, fomented by the media and resulting lack of any progress for the foreseeable future. There is clearly too much emotion and a lack of imagination and rational thinking. Yet imagination and rational thinking are attributes that engineers and scientists embody.

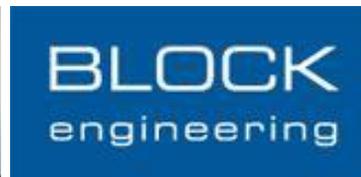
Technology businesses in America must at the same time find a way to both positively influence the political process and also evolve to grow independent of the volatility. Our nation's enterprises have innovated before changing the dynamic of commerce globally and most do so again. It won't be easy. Consider defense programs: government will always be by definition central to that activity but given the whimsy of the politicians we need to accept that one cannot count on the timing of things if they work in that arena. Thus we need to adapt and

develop contingency strategies such as hedging with counter-cyclical investments. It is my hope that once we do this that perhaps eventually our leaders will find that their dangerous charades hold no currency with us and begin to act like responsible adults or the public will demand leadership from those of us who are.

For now the question is how does a business remain a going-concern in such an environment until we get there? I don't know but I do know that we must and will find a way together. Perhaps we can consider this the start of that discussion. Setting aside "party brand" rhetoric, finger pointing and the blame game, can we agree to at least work together to get things done in spite of that? One way we can work together to start a dialogue is for each of us, both as individuals and by getting our company involved to support the National Photonics Initiative. Let's let them know we can help.

See www.lightourfuture.org for current information. I welcome your comments.

Member Company Spotlight: Block Engineering



This month we are fortunate to present a spotlight on one of our newer members, Block Engineering. Scott Riggi is Vice-President for Sales for Block Engineering, which is headquartered in Marlborough, MA.

Block Engineering has pioneered revolutionary instruments for chemical imaging and detection of gases, liquids, and solids for a variety of applications.

Mr. Riggi comes to Block Engineering after having served as Director of Sales for the Americas at Princeton Instruments, where he was instrumental in growing sales for a complete line of optical imaging scientific equipment including spectrometers, optics and CCD-based detectors. Prior to Princeton Instruments, Mr. Riggi was Director of Sales at Thermo Fisher's Scientific Air Quality Instruments Group. An electrical engineer by education, Mr. Riggi received his bachelors degree in electrical engineering from Wentworth Institute of Technology and worked as an RF semiconductor design engineer for ten years

FPC: Can you tell us about your company background

and history?

SR: Since 1956, Block Engineering has been developing and selling high performance FTIR spectrometers to military, government, and commercial and industrial customers. Our products are installed in and around Washington DC to protect critical infrastructure from chemical terrorist attacks. They are also used by government agencies to remotely survey areas and protect personnel from chemical warfare agents.

In 2004, the company leveraged its expertise in spectroscopy to develop next generation Quantum Cascade Laser (QCL) spectrometers and low cost, miniaturized MEMS-based FTIRs. Following several government development contracts exceeding \$16 million dollars, Block developed a family of QCL-based spectrometers and continues to advance its MEMS-based FTIR.

Block's headquarters are located in Marlborough, Massachusetts, and the company has additional facilities at Boston University's Photonics Center. Block is privately owned

FPC: What are some challenges you face today? How are you coping with the current economic conditions?

SR: As a manufacturer supplying instrumentation that helps protect critical infrastructure, we are continually faced with budget cuts and delays associated with Washington. Overall, research budgets both at the national labs and government agencies continue to be strained resulting in business challenges for all analytical instrument manufacturers. Yes despite this, Block Engineering continues to see growth and expansion on the industrial side of our business with expansion into commercial vertical spaces that are highly profitable.

FPC: What distinguishes your company/organization from your competitors or other, similar organizations?

SR: Building upon over 50 years of experience in the design and manufacture of IR solutions, Block Engineering continues to deliver novel solutions while pushing the performance limits of the technology. Our recent research and product development in the area of broadly tunable quantum cascade lasers (QCL) demonstrates the company's ability to introduce analytical solutions that help extend the capabilities of key researchers in the areas of clean environment, cancer research, optical science and many other applications that benefit humans.

FPC: Do you seek to partner/collaborate with other organizations: universities, companies, other? If so, is it for research, marketing, manufacturing, other?

SR: As part of our strategic marketing focus, Block Engineering is continually looking to strategic partners for alliances that both further the technology as well as help to proliferate the message of how QCL technology can expand Mid-IR research in many ways. To date, our collaboration partners include academic research centers as well as industrial partnerships and industry networks. It is our long term strategic direction to continue to invest in these collaborative efforts.

FPC: Future Plans?

SR: As a technology innovator and leader in the market of QCL spectroscopy, Block Engineering will continue to develop robust products to expand research into applications currently challenged by conventional analytical methods today. Our products are quickly becoming of interest into vertical industrial segments not previously explored and with those new applications the need for higher performing spectroscopic solutions is becoming evident. Our expertise in delivering cost effective solutions will continue to serve as the foundation for new and exciting products.

Florida is THE place to go for entrepreneurs and startup companies

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council ranked Florida among the nation's Top 5 most entrepreneur-friendly states. [Read more >>](#)

The Pew Center on the States "Avoiding Blank Checks" report praised the State of Florida for incentives best practices. [Read more >>](#)

According to the U.S. Census, Florida ranks third in the nation for population growth and is among the top 10 fastest growing states.

Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center (FLVEC). Since the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, a Silver Patron member of the FPC, first launched its online database of business resources - the Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center (FLVEC) - the web portal has grown by leaps and bounds to serve those looking to start, grow or relocate a business in any of Florida's 67 counties. Currently the FLVEC website draws more than 25,000 visitors each month that search through its library of entrepreneurial resources. In 2013 alone, the site has logged more than 230,000 visits, with September seeing a 25 percent increase over January's monthly total visits. In addition to helping Florida-based companies, the site's expansion services provide businesses outside of the state the tools they need to set up offices in Florida. Since January, nearly 50,000 out-of-state visitors have searched

through www.flvec.com, equaling 20 percent of the total website traffic.

Florida's Education Resources are National leaders

The State of Florida is a national leader in education reform policy, according to a report by Students First. [Read more >>](#)

The University of Central Florida and five other public Florida universities have been rated among the best values in the nation by Kiplinger's Personal Finance in its 2013 ranking of Top 100 public colleges and universities. [Read more >>](#)

According to the National Science Foundation, Florida universities earned top national rankings for doctorate degree graduates in fields like Life Sciences (#3), Engineering (#5), Social Sciences (#7), and Education (#9). [Read more >>](#)

CREOL, The College of Optics & Photonics is a world-renowned graduate college for optical science and engineering education and research. The College offers interdisciplinary [graduate programs](#) leading to MS and Ph.D. degrees in Optics, as well as a specialization in Photonics within the BSEE degree. [CREOL](#) (Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers), [FPCE](#) (Florida Photonics Center of Excellence), and the [Townes Laser Institute](#) are research centers within the College. [Read more >>](#)

RSVP Now! FPC Annual Meeting, Wednesday 11 December.

The next FPC meeting will be held December 11 at the National Center for Forensic Science, 12354 Research Pkwy in Orlando next to the UCF campus. The program agenda and RSVP information is below.

- 3:00pm - Welcome & Introductions - FPC Members, Guests, & Host
- 3:10pm -- FPC business - 2014 board election, 2013 activities & results, 2014 plans; Alex Fong, Dennis Pape
- 3:40pm - "Update on National Photonics Initiative", Steve Anderson, SPIE Industry and Market Strategist
- 4:10pm - "Establishing an Efficient Supply Chain With a Regional Focus", George Gordon, President, Anthem Ventures
- 4:45pm - Overview of NCFS, Dr. Michael Sigman, NCFS Director and Professor of Chemistry
- 5:15pm - Tour of NCFS facilities; Dr. Michael Sigman
- 6:00pm -- Reception & networking; hosted by NCFS and FPC
- 6:45pm -- Adjourn. Go to no-host dinner at local restaurant: Smoky Bones Fire & Bar Grill; 303 N. Alafaya Trail (Waterford Lakes shopping center), (407)249-2009

To RSVP, send an email to jpearson@mail.ucf.edu indicating the following:

- [] I will attend the FPC meeting on 11 Dec
- [] I will stay for the reception
- [] I will attend the no-host dinner

Check out Florida as THE place to go for Entrepreneurs and Startup Companies!

Whether it is photonics companies or other industry companies, there are great resources available in Florida:

- o The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council ranked Florida among the nation's Top 5 most entrepreneur-friendly states. [Read more >>](#)
- o The Pew Center on the States "Avoiding Blank Checks" report praised the State of Florida for incentives best practices. [Read more >>](#)
- o According to the U.S. Census, Florida ranks third in the nation for population growth and is among the top 10 fastest growing states.
- o Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center (FLVEC)
For full information, see www.flvec.com
In addition to helping Florida-based companies, the FLVEC expansion services provide businesses outside of the state the tools they need to set up offices in Florida.
- o Enterprise Florida - www.eflorida.com
Enterprise Florida, Inc. helps innovative, high growth businesses start up, locate or expand in Florida.
- o Florida High Tech Corridor Council - www.floridahightech.com
The Florida High Tech Corridor Council's numerous entrepreneurial initiatives support small businesses and growing companies alike.

WELCOME NEW FPC MEMBERS!

The FPC is delighted that several companies have joined the FPC during 2013:

- o **Block Engineering**, headquartered in Marlborough, Mass with a sales manager for the Southeast region that includes Florida
- o **Open Photonics**, headquartered in Winter Park, FL
- o **Salem Precision**, headquartered in Winston-Salem, NC
- o **Semplastics**, headquartered in Oviedo, FL

Information on these and all FPC members is on the web at <http://www.floridaphotonicscluster.org/florida-photonics-members/index.php>.

Utilize the services and discounts provided by FPC

member supplier companies!

One of the advantages of FPC membership is the network of suppliers to our industry, and particularly the suppliers who have joined the FPC and some of whom offer discounts to FPC members. Here is a brief list; further information is on the FPC website under the Members listing.

- [**Bond, Schoeneck, & King, PLLC Attorneys**](#). Provides a full range of Intellectual Property services
- [**Diamond Level Service**](#). Event Design and Management services for trade shows, special events, conferences, and business presentations. Discounts are provided to FPC members.
- [**Laser Focus World & BioOptics World**](#). Discounts provided to FPC members for ads in the magazines: 20% for print media, 15% for digital media.
- [**Laser Institute of America**](#). Discounts provided on LIA membership when joining for the first time, on ads in LIA media, and exhibit space at LIA meeting events.
- [**OnTarget Web Solutions**](#). Provider of internet marketing and web design services, including FPC web design and hosting.
- [**Optics Professionals, LLC**](#). Professional recruiting services, representing companies and individuals in optics and imaging technologies and related industries.
- [**Williams & Associates**](#). Provides wide range of promotional products and marketing services. 10% discount to FPC members.

In addition, if not yet a member, please urge your company to become a member of our partner associations:

- [**Florida League of Defense Contractors**](#). A statewide, state-focused advocacy and networking group with the mission to promote the business interests of Florida defense contractors and defense economic stakeholders.
- [**Laser Institute of America**](#). Corporate Members receive quantity discounts on all LIA products and services, reduced advertising rates in LIA's Journal of Laser Applications®, Membership Directory and LIA TODAY, a free web link from LIA's website to the web address, and a complimentary fifty word listing with company logo in LIA's annual Membership Directory.
- [**Manufacturers Assoc. of Central Florida**](#). A non-profit organization enhancing the manufacturing industry in Central Florida.
- [**Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission**](#). The EDC provides key services and support, which range from relocation and expansion expertise to export counsel to long-term planning with our community partners.
- [**Optoelectronics Industry Development Assoc.**](#) OIDA provides a wide range of programs and services including: workshops, industry/roadmap reports, policy and funding advocacy, idea exchange sessions, professional networking activities, a multi-media publication and presentation archive, and exclusive member benefits.
- [**SPIE Corporate Membership**](#). The SPIE Corporate

Membership program provides exhibition booth "priority points", discounts, brand exposure, business networking opportunities, as well as access to information, education, government relations, student outreach, and more.

- **CREOL Industrial Affiliates**. The Industrial Affiliates program provides to industrial corporations, organizations, and individuals many benefits.

JOIN THE FPC TODAY!



[Enjoy the benefits of FPC membership!](#)

[Why Join FPC? To Make Money!](#)

Benefits of FPC Membership:

- Identify common needs and interests
- Leverage to develop opportunities through joint efforts, pooled resources and knowledge
- Regional, Statewide, National and International Reach
Small, Medium, Large Corporations, Academe, and Government all Benefit!

FPC Membership Benefits Include:

The strength of a unified industry voice for:

- Marketing and increased visibility of the photonics industry and FPC members through strategic marketing efforts
- Developing local and state executive and legislative support
- Interaction with economic development groups
- Workforce development, and advancement and improvement of educational infrastructure
- Obtaining group discounts
- Opportunities to participate in state and national sales and marketing efforts

And even more:

- Visibility for and ready access to your company through links from FPC's website, marketing literature, and trade show displays.
- An expansive resource network that includes partnerships with Enterprise Florida, area economic development organizations, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, and UCF's CREOL - The College of Optics & Photonics to provide

access to incentives, business development programs, research, and education.

- Annual and regional meetings of membership for networking
- Participation in optics/photonics-focused data collection with an annual survey monitoring the pulse of the industry
- Opportunities designed to develop Florida photonics companies into worldwide market participants
- Opportunities to participate in curriculum development at state universities and colleges
- Facilitated access to Florida's best and brightest students and the additional ability to recruit nationwide through the FPC website
- Membership Directory
- Visibility to potential customers
- Access to service providers that can assist your company and provide discounts
- Spotlight on member companies and products through periodic newsletter
- Several FPC member discount opportunities from photonics professional organizations, publishers, and service providers.

[Join FPC today and enjoy the benefits of membership!](http://www.floridaphotonicscluster.org)
[For more information, visit](http://www.floridaphotonicscluster.org)
[http://www.floridaphotonicscluster.org.](http://www.floridaphotonicscluster.org)



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[The Florida Photonics Cluster \(FPC\) Website now accepts donations, member dues, and other payments through Card Systems, Inc. \(http://www.cardsystems.com\)](http://www.cardsystems.com)

Card Systems is a fast, convenient and safe way to make online purchases and transactions via credit card. Note that submission of a membership application is still required for new applicants joining the FPC, and for updating renewing memberships. A link is provided from the new FPC website.

Greetings FPC Members and Friends,

The Florida Photonics Cluster is designed to support the growth and profitability of the Florida photonics industry through the strength of a unified voice to make Florida the place to go for photonics solutions.

The FPC is dedicated to enhancing the industry through effective collaboration by bringing

together the knowledge, expertise, and service that each of its members organizations has to offer.

FPC Goals

- Foster the expansion and growth of Florida's optics and photonics industry by partnering with economic development organizations, the state universities, and community colleges, and local and state governments.
- Market Florida's optics and photonics companies worldwide.
- Facilitate and provide a means of communication within the business community.
- Partner with the Florida education community to enhance and develop a competent statewide optics and photonics-based workforce.
- The FPC is a 501c(6) not-for-profit corporation, registered with the Florida State Division of Corporations.

For more information, visit www.floridaphotonicsclust.org

Sincerely,

Alexandre Fong, President
Florida Photonics Cluster

Jim Pearson, Executive Director