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Top 'nestlings' range from medical imaging to solar power providers

Leading incubator companies honored

by Lindsey Robbins and Chris Huntemann | Staff Writers

Barton Medical Imaging could hit \$7 million in annual revenues this year if its plans for manufacturing its picture-archiving technology fall into place.

The Largo business was among several companies receiving this year's state Incubator of the Year Awards on Thursday in Baltimore from the Department of Business and Economic Development, Maryland Technology Corp., RSM McGladrey and Saul Ewing. Many of the winners are achieving success through recent product approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"We were big-time surprised. We had no idea we would get it," said Fitz Walker, founder and CEO of Barton.

Barton, which has grown to eight employees from its launch in 2000 and is expected to soon reach 20, was named Technology Transfer Company of the Year. The company developed its imaging software, called Med-Seg, through technology licensed from the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt. Med-Seg receives medical images and data from sources such as mammograms, allowing the user to select the level of viewing detail. The FDA approved the technology for market last summer; Barton has been working to raise capital for manufacturing.

"We already met interested people at the [awards] event," Walker said.

Barton is looking to expand from Prince George's County's Technology Assistance Center incubator in Largo into the VentureAccelerator program at the University of Maryland, College Park, and hopes to develop a mobile application soon.

Walker said Barton could hit \$70 million in annual revenues by 2015.

"The 2011 Incubator Company of the Year Award honorees [represent] the finest group of technology innovators in the state and region," Rob Rosenbaum, president and executive director of Tedco, said in a statement.

"From cybersecurity solutions to medical devices using technologies licensed by NASA, these companies are changing the way the world operates and communicates," Brian S. Merrit, a managing director with RSM McGladrey, said in a statement.

Mary Shields said she was "thrilled" just to have her company, UR Solar Power in Frederick, selected as a finalist for the Green Company of the Year award that her company eventually won Thursday.

"It's truly a honor. ... It feels really good for a startup," said Shields, one of the company's principals. "It makes you feel like you're on the right track."

UR Solar Power — with 12 employees in Maryland, Delaware, New York and Texas — offers sales, marketing, design, installation and after-sales services of solar panels for homeowners, Shields said. She started the company in 2009 and UR Solar Power is currently a tenant at the Frederick Innovative Technology Center Inc. incubator.

Shields declined to disclose her company's startup costs and revenues, but said it has installed more than 800 solar panels on homes in states including Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Texas.

"We want make the homeowner understand what solar is and how they can get it," Shields said.

CosmosID, which is incubating in the Technology Advancement Program at the University of Maryland, College Park, was named Life Sciences Company of the Year for its Cloud Sequencing process, which delivers pathogen identification in a single, rapid test. At the core of the process is CosmosID's Genome Identification Universal System, which uses genomics and mathematical algorithms to perform the identification.

So far, test results show 92 percent to 100 percent accuracy, "expected to be achieved in less than 24 hours," according to company information.

WellDoc in Baltimore represented the graduate sector of the incubator companies, as it continues to grow its FDA-approved cell phone application for monitoring diabetes care plans.

"We're trying to fill the gap in care by helping support patients between office visits with their physicians," said Chris Bergstrom, chief strategy and commercial officer for WellDoc.

WellDoc, a graduate of the Emerging Technology Center in Baltimore, was founded in 2005 and has 100 employees. The company has grown revenues 100 percent annually for the last three years, Bergstrom said, though he did not disclose specifics.

The company is focusing on developing its relationship with AT&T in the self-insured employer market, matching its technology with physicians for recommendation and expanding internationally. A representative is now in China as part of Gov. Martin O'Malley's (D) trade mission to Asia.

Other award winners were Unatek of Largo, Homeland Security Company of the Year; kloudtrack of Annapolis, Information Technology Company of the Year; StraighterLine of Baltimore, New Company of the Year; and Sitec Consulting of Columbia, Technology Service Company of the Year.