



Tuesday, December 4, 2007

in association with

X-ray product to take lead in terrorism fight

By Andrew Mernin

THE fight against international terrorism is being boosted by a North-East company which says its ground-breaking X-ray product may eventually be used by every airport in the world.

Durham Scientific Crystals (DSC), based in NETpark, near Sedgfield, has won £350,000 of investment from the Home Office to develop scanning devices which detect explosive and dangerous materials in baggage and small items at airports.

The company, which aims to have both devices market ready within 18 months at a total cost of £1.5m, believes its new technology will be adopted by airports across the world as part of the global fight against terrorism.

Once the development stage is complete the company plans to manufacture the devices in the North-East which is expected to help increase its workforce from 21 to over 100 within 18 months.

The firm is developing a device to detect dangerous materials – including liquids – in small objects such as bottles, laptops and shoes which can identify flammable or explosive liquids from sight.

It is also working on a large baggage scanner which uses similar technology and allows security staff to rotate their view of luggage in different directions.

DSC managing director Dr Arnab Basu said: "There's nothing like it in the scanning market at the moment and it's a relatively new market because liquids were not classed as threat items in the past and the nature of things are changing.

"When fully trialled, these machines could replace all existing airport x-ray machines throughout the world.

"The whole aviation market for explosives detection is worth well over US\$1bn a year and DSC's product will have a high degree of differentiation within the sector."

A spokesperson for the Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB) said: "Implementation of the technology would be a major step forward in the development of automated explosives detection.

"In addition to the funding, HOSDB and its project partners will be providing technical advice and assistance to ensure that the implementation of the technique meets operational requirements."



GROUND-BREAKING EQUIPMENT: Airports worldwide, including Newcastle International, may eventually use the new X-ray product. Bottom, left, Dr Arnab Basu, managing director of Durham Scientific Crystals, based near Sedgfield, County Durham.

Meanwhile, Dr Basu said the four-year-old Durham University spin-out remained in the "pre-revenue phase" but is on target to become a £50m-a-year company within five years. He also said the company planned to increase its workforce from 21 to 30 by next April.

Last August DSC raised £3.5m of shareholder capital – doubling its market value to £22.16m – to support plans to launch its new products.

The company developed a process for manufacturing large cadmium telluride crystals used in the production of digital images from an X-ray, gamma or infrared beam. It has since targeted various commercial applications in medicine, defence and security.

£5m park boosting high-tech industry

WORK has begun on the £5m expansion of a science and technology park which is expected to help nurture the growth of the region's high-tech firms.

Property developer Helios Properties has invested £5m in its Innovation Village project – a research and development facility on NETpark, near Sedgfield.

The cluster of business units built specifically for high-tech companies will allow firms based on NETpark to expand and establish larger operations on the site. NETpark is currently home to a research institute run by Durham University, X-ray specialists Durham

Scientific Crystals and air-monitoring technology group Analytical Nano Technologies (ANT).

Alongside the current development of a multi-million pound plastic electronics centre, Innovation Village is part of Durham County Council's strategy to build a stronger economy and attract high-quality jobs to the area. Stewart Watkins, managing director of County Durham Development Company, which runs NETpark, said it was important to see the positive effect the development would have on the region's economy as a whole, including creating new jobs.



Alexandra minds her language to build a career

– Page 26

CONTENTS

- Business News **24, 25, 35**
- Liz Smith **24**
- Small Business **26**
- Stocks and Shares **36&37**
- Farming **38**

COMPANIES INDEX

- Alexandra & Co **26**
- Edmund Robson & Co **25**
- healthclubtv.com **26**
- John Lewis **25**
- North Yorkshire Timber Nuffield **35**
- Th_nk **25**
- SCS **24**

In association with



REDUCING PERSONAL & BUSINESS TAXES PROPERTY TAX EXPERTISE
 HANDLING YOUR TAX INVESTIGATION TRUST & INHERITANCE TAX ADVICE
 COMPLETING ALL YOUR TAX FORMS FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

For further information please contact Graham Purvis
 T 0191 281 8191 F 0191 281 6279 gpurvis@robson-laidler.co.uk www.robson-laidler.co.uk

ROBSON LAIDLER

