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At the opening of the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center are, from left to right, Dr. Roy Miller, director of the center, Tracey Dodenhoff, founder of Predictive Technology Inc., and Michael Sullivan, director of marketing and conferences for the center.

UMass Dartmouth helps grow tech on the border

06/10/2002 09:00 AM

By [Patricia Resende](#)

Individuals who may be suffering from sleep apnea, a disorder caused by a blockage of the airway and linked to high blood pressure, heart disease and several other cardiac problems, will no longer have to be hooked up to dozens of wires and stay overnight at a sleep lab to test the severity of the disorder.

Predictive Technologies Inc., an early-stage company in Fall River, has licensed technology developed at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, R.I., to commercialize methods of diagnosing respiratory disorders, including sleep apnea.

The startup, which is completing the first testing of its technology and is seeking angel funding for additional tests, is one of the three companies that was introduced last week as

and Maryland)

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2001 ALL-STARS

CyberCitizenship

the new tenants of the Venture Technology Center, an incubator space at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth's Advanced Technology Manufacturing Center.

With \$1.6 million in state funding and additional private grants, UMass launched the ATMC, which partners with leaders in the high tech industry, government agencies and universities, to foster new manufacturing technologies in the state.

The seven-month-old center, based in Fall River, provides an incubator space for between 12 and 20 early stage companies and a research wing equipped with software, textile and environmental laboratories.

The research labs are led by UMass's engineering faculty, who test and research new applications.

Tracey Dodenhoff, founder of Predictive Technologies and the former director of Slater Design and Innovation, a R.I.-based incubator, said she chose to locate her startup at the center because of its great location and resources, including several labs, a conference center and advisers.

John Miller, president of Micro Magnetics, another startup housed in the ATMC Venture Technology Center, said he searched around and looked at other incubator spaces, including the Slater Centers in Rhode Island, but that ATMC was the best choice.

Micro Magnetics needed enough space — and the appropriate kind of space — to build the alpha version of its first product, a scanning magnetic microscope that has the capability to see the flow of electricity inside an integrated circuit computer chip.

"For us this facility offered a unique combination," Miller said. "It has an on-site support lab for hardware development."

International Compliance Systems Inc., a provider of applications designed to help business comply with environmental and health regulations and the third of the new tenants, is in the process of moving its 10 employees into the new space at ATMC.

The entrepreneurs at the Venture Technology Center said they also chose the ATMC because it is staffed by people who have experience in the high tech industry.

Roy Miller, an aerospace engineer who worked at NASA's Lewis Research Center and Polaroid, is now an adviser and director at the ATMC. Michael Sullivan, marketing and conferences director for ATMC, has also spent several years in the high tech industry. Sullivan is a former executive of Bolt Beranek and Newman (BBN) and Pfizer.

"It's industry-focused folks who want to help this region from a technological standpoint to create jobs," Sullivan said.

Already the center is creating jobs for the faculty members assigned to each of the 10 labs at the ATMC to lead research at the center, and to interns and students at UMass.

Finding interested companies to move into the spaces and faculty to manage the labs is an easy feat for the center, but receiving funding to continue operating the center will be a challenge, according to Miller.

The community and local politicians fought for \$1.7 million in funding from the state and got \$1.6 million. But local representatives say the appropriated funding, which must be voted on annually, must continue to flow.

"We are not funded at an appropriate level here," said Bob Karam, a Fall River businessman and UMass trustee. "They know it and we know it. We have to put pressure on them to keep the money flowing."

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