

Innovators meet potential buyers at state forum

Patent-holders and small companies with defense innovations are making their pitches to the U.S. armed forces and the state of Michigan while products are still early in the development stage.

A series of tech company briefings set up through an offshoot of the **Michigan Economic Development Corp.** have provided the forum.

Representatives of eight Michigan businesses met with officials in the state **Defense Contract Coordination Center** in late January for a tech company briefings conference, the third such event that's been organized. Patent-holders at the Lansing meeting discussed possible military contracts to purchase their products in exchange for creating or retaining Michigan jobs.

The center plans to schedule the briefings every other month, with the next one likely in March.

Kyle Schwulst, founder and CEO of **ElectroJet Inc.**, which has six employees in Brighton and designs electronic fuel-injector and sensor systems that can replace conventional carburetors in small engines, hopes the pitch to the state will help.

The company has been delivering prototype models to **The Insitu Group** and **Boeing Co.** for testing on the ScanEagle, an unmanned aerial vehicle that the U.S. Navy has con-



PHOTO FROM TRANSLUME INC.

Ann Arbor-based Translume makes fluid sensor chips that are carved out of glass by lasers.

tracted and used for reconnaissance and security missions in the Persian Gulf. But its fuel-injection systems can also retrofit in a variety of nonautomotive engines with "less than four cylinders," such as ATVs, outboard motors, some boat engines and several scooters.

"We would like to be in full production by sometime in July or August," Schwulst said. "For now, we're currently still testing prototypes with Insitu and Boeing."

Bradley Lott, director of the DC3 and a retired Marine major general, reviewed Elec-

troJet's products at the briefing and said the chief selling point was its ability to retrofit conventional engines and switch them easily to using such flex-fuels as alcohol or ethanol.

"You don't know how much expense and how much danger is involved just in moving around gasoline for our equipment in the field," he said. "There are people in the Marine Corps who would get out of doing that part of the mission by noon if they had a way to discontinue it."

Lott planned to visit Washington Jan. 28-30 to meet with lawmakers and to present documents and sample products from the briefings to federal agencies and military departments.

"The military applications are probably closest to landing contracts right now," Schwulst said. "But we're in the process of lining up a lot of things."

ElectroJet has two utility patents and one design patent issued from the **U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.**

Also appearing for the most recent briefing was Tom Haddock, vice president of product development at Ann Arbor-based **Translume Inc.**, which manufactures a patented line of optical fluid sensor chips. The sensors, mechanisms that are carved

out of palm-sized pieces of glass by lasers, can monitor the collection of soot in oil and some other fluids.



Haddock

Several patents already have been issued for Translume's "base processes" of creating the chips, Haddock said, and several more are either issued or pending for specific sensor products.

"We're also working on products for hydraulics systems and biodetection," Haddock said.

"We're not there yet, but on hydraulics, it's something that could happen maybe within a matter of six months."

Other Detroit-area companies at the Jan. 23 briefing included:

■ **SAM Systems Inc.**, Troy, which has a product for streaming and recording video on high-compression technology for real-time surveillance.

■ **SFP Works Inc.**, Washington Township, which has a partnership with TechTown incubator business **SpaceForm Inc.** in Detroit to further develop and market a patent-pending steel microstructure. (See above story.)