

Despite bad economy, Keene enterprise continues to grow

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MEREDITH — A Keene company which has grown into a \$16 million a year business over the last decade was named Company of the Year at the annual New Hampshire Economic Development Summit yesterday.

Moore Nanotechnology Systems was lauded by Department of Resources and Economic Development Commissioner George Bald for its innovative spirit which have made it the fastest growing company in the precision machining field.

Leonard Chaloux, president and co-founder of the company, said that it had a workforce of one when it started in 1997. It now employs 50 workers, sells half of its output of ultra-precision machining systems overseas, and is growing at an annual rate of 25 percent.

Moore Nanotechnology produces highly advanced equipment and manufacturing processes capable of achieving nanometer level surface accuracies on advanced optical components. Its lathe style machining systems, with onboard metrology, are widely used in defense, aerospace, consumer electronics and ophthalmics industries.

“We developed the company with local talent,” said Chaloux, noting that seven of the 10 people seated at the firm's table were natives of southwestern New Hampshire and that in the process of growing the company the firm is now able to attract talent from all over the world.

He said that the people he works with “share a passion and a vision,” and that the company recently broke ground on a new 36,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Swanzey which will open next year.

Other awards were also presented for economic development excellence:

- Builder Award: Meadowbrook Musical Arts Center of Gilford, a modern concert venue which attracts 150,000 guests per year and has been honored for its green business practices;
- Teamwork Award: The New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority;
- Media Excellence Award: Laura Knoy, host of New Hampshire Public Radio's "Exchange" program;
- Exemplary Effort Award: Office of Citizen Services in Governor Lynch's office.
- Partnership Award: UNH Chancellor's office for its 55 Percent Initiative, which seeks to retain college graduates in New Hampshire.

The theme of the conference, which was held at the Inns and Spa at Mills Falls, was “Innovation Invasion” and it featured morning interviews of Dean Kamen of DEKA Research about his firm's recent efforts creating a robotic arm, a new hybrid car and a water purifier that can save millions of lives, and Dr. Richard Greenwald, founder and president of Simbex, LLC, regarding his company's expertise in developing cutting edge biomechanical feedback systems.