

DJO Chattanooga, Adaptive Methods Honored at Chamber Innovation Luncheon

The Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce rewarded business innovation on April 29 with honors for creative area companies and a keynote speech by Volkswagen Group of America President and CEO Stefan Jacoby.

DJO Chattanooga received the Kruesi Award for Innovation during the annual Spirit of Innovation Awards Luncheon.

The celebration included announcement of Adaptive Methods as the Early Innovator Award recipient.

Jacoby said that despite the economic downturn and hard times for the automobile industry, Volkswagen "is not backing away one inch" from its commitment to build a \$1 billion assembly plant at Enterprise South Industrial Park. "We believe it will pay off for our company and for Chattanooga," he said.

He said VW plans to be manufacturing 150,000 mid-sized sedans in Chattanooga in a couple of years. He said the company hopes to increase that number to 300,000 a year as it aims for its goal of producing a million VWs and Audis a year in the U.S. by 2018.

Jacoby laced his remarks with references to Thomas Edison who worked with John Kruesi, ancestor of five distinguished Chattanooga families and himself an inventor for whom the Chamber's annual award is named. Jacoby recalled Edison's saying that many people don't recognize innovation "because it wears overalls and looks like work."

He told the 1,200 guests at the Convention Center that Chattanooga is a "cradle of creative innovation" and that its standing as "a forward-looking region" was one of the main reasons VW decided to build its facility here.

Chamber President and CEO Tom Edd Wilson presented the Kruesi Award to Lee Cross, DJO Chattanooga CEO, for developing the Moveo XP, an exercise platform for the medically complex patient.

The platform combines the benefits of traditional tilt table standing with active exercise. This combination allows patients who are incapable of supporting full body weight to participate in graded, weight-bearing activity at an earlier state in their rehabilitation than normal.

DJO Chattanooga was selected from six Kruesi Award finalists, including Airnet Group, Inc., Andersen Flaps, Inc., Collier Construction Company, Thermal Transfer Composites, LLC and UtiliFlex, LLC. All of the finalists exhibited their innovations at the Convention Center event.

The Kruesi Award recognizes companies for innovative products, services and business practices that have been created and implemented by businesses in the Chattanooga area.

John Kruesi, who was Swiss, immigrated to America and later, working with Edison, made the first phonograph in 1877 and was the principal mechanic on countless other patented innovations, including the incandescent light bulb. His son, Paul Kruesi, settled in Chattanooga, founded the American Lava Company in 1902, and served as president of the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce. The award honors Kruesi's descendants.

"The Chamber originated the Spirit of Innovation event in 2001 to identify, promote and nurture local innovation as a critical component of competition in the 21st Century economy," Wilson said. "It was America's first community-based innovation award and to this day remains one of only a few in the country."

Wilson announced that this year the Kruesi Award winner will receive, in addition to a statue symbolizing creativity, an all-expenses-paid trip for two to Switzerland to visit with peers in that country.

“This gift is made possible by the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce (SACC), Southeast Chapter, in cooperation with Swiss International Air Lines and with assistance from the Swiss Trade Commission,” he said. “This additional reward is appropriate since the Kruesi family is of Swiss origin, and Switzerland is a country which prizes creativity and ingenuity.”

Wilson recognized several Swiss officials in the audience and Wendell J.W. O’Reilly, chair of the Swiss-American Chamber and an attorney at McCoon, Williams and Haun.

The Chattanooga Technology Council’s (CTC) Early Innovator Award honors emerging, technology-based companies that have produced a groundbreaking prototype product or software application with the potential for success in the marketplace.

Matt Jannerbo, CTC president, presented the award to Keith Buckner, vice president of manufacturing for Adaptive Methods.

Adaptive Methods developed the Rapid Deployment Shelter System (RDSS), a portable shelter system ideal for humanitarian, military and disaster relief efforts. In transport, the RDSS is the size of a conventional shipping container. When expanded, the unit provides 400 square feet of rigid-walled shelter. The RDSS can be deployed by one person in fewer than two minutes. The technology behind the RDSS was licensed by Adaptive Methods from the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge.

Other Early Innovator Award finalists for 2009 were PictureRx and Rubber Recovery Solutions.

The Kruesi Finalists

Airnet Group, Inc. -- Airnet has developed a comprehensive broadcast messaging suite of products and back-end support technology. Using data enrichment as the hub of all activity, a client may choose from subscribed emailing, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calling, Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging, direct to preferred printing equipment, or traditional land line calling to communicate a message. Jeffrey Averbeck is CEO and owner.

Andersen Flaps, Inc. -- Andersen Flaps is a contender for designing the Eco-Flap, a patented mud flap for trucks with a 75 percent open surface area which allows water and air to flow through the flap. The flaps reduce the spray from trucks in the rain to make roads safer and also reduce the drag effect, resulting in a fuel savings to the trucking industry of about three percent, depending on conditions. Barry Andersen is inventor of the Eco-Flap and president of the company.

Collier Construction Company -- Collier Construction pioneered the "Whole Systems Approach" to construction. This approach combines off-the-shelf products and sustainable building practices. The benefits of a Whole Systems Approach include a minimal environmental impact; improved home quality, interior air quality and home longevity; and reduced energy consumption and maintenance costs. Ethan Collier is president and CEO.

Thermal Transfer Composites, LLC -- In 2005 Thermal Transfer Composites began a program to develop a new line of aluminum-silicon carbide (Al/SiC) composites with the goal of increasing the thermal conductivity by a minimum of 20%, while reducing the manufacturing costs by a minimum of 25% over their then current product offerings. Two and a half years later the company surpassed its goals with the introduction of the Primex Ultra line of Al/SiC composites. Thermal performance has now increased by 42% and production costs are reduced by more than 30%. Dan White is president and CEO.

UtiliFlex, LLC -- UtiliFlex, based in Chattanooga, has developed the Juice software platform that enables

electric utilities to use smart-meters to allow customers to monitor, manage and purchase electricity as they need it, via the web, text message, phone and in person. Juice promotes energy conservation by providing consumers with real time usage, balance and pricing information. Utilities use Juice to manage their grid and smart meters as well as allowing flexible payment solutions for their customers. Joe Gordon and Mike Harrison are partners in the company.

Early Innovator Award Finalists

PictureRx -- PictureRx provides a solution to the problem of medication adherence and literacy by providing patients with a Pill Card which combines a patient-centered medication list that contains illustrated medication instructions. In order to assist patients in using medications as prescribed, the Pill Card charts key pieces of information, including quantity of medication per dose, when the medication should be taken, and the condition being treated. PictureRx also provides a wallet-sized card for patients to carry. Dr. Dane and Sheila Boyington are co-owners of the company.

Rubber Recovery Solutions -- Rubber Recovery Solutions' innovative machine and method for recycling used tires saves energy, reduces operational costs, and results in a high quality strip of tread rubber, free of metal. The process economically removes the tread, making it ready for grinding into high-value crumb rubber that can be used for rubberized asphalt, sports fields, landscaping mulch and more. Smaller processing plants located in small- to medium-sized communities reduce the need for large landfills and transportation costs to distant recycling plants and create a local supply of crumb rubber. The company is co-owned by Dr. Ed McMahon and Uwe Zitzow.

To see a video of Volkswagen CEO Stefan Jacoby fielding questions from local news media, visit <http://goldtogleentv.com/?p=102>.