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In other words, manufacturing in the San Diego region is vibrant, dynamic and brimming with great stories.

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Our great appreciation goes to our judging panel — Chris Bryant, San Diego Employers Association; Frederick (Ric) Ladt, Ladt Consulting Services Inc.; Diane Law, Parachute Marketing; Dale Robinette, Vistage, and Thomas Roemer, Leaders for Global Operations, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

We would like to thank our elite sponsors who have supported us in this effort including presenting sponsor RSM US LLP; title sponsor Cox Business; gold sponsor Union Bank; and bronze sponsor Manpower-West.

Congratulations to all of the nominees. Their innovations and growth are an important part of the fabric of our local economy.

From The Publisher

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San Diego Employers Association

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Elie Yehezkel
Senior Vice President, Manufacturing Aircraft Systems General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

Elie Yehezkel not only saw the launch of a new era in aeronautics, he was an integral part of it. In 1991 Yehezkel came to San Diego to work for the General Atomics. The company was experiencing a quantum shift in its product development and an affiliate company, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. was formed. Yehezkel was an essential part of it. In 1991 Yehezkel came to San Diego to work for General Atomics. The company was experiencing a quantum shift in its product development and an affiliate company, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. was formed. Yehezkel was an essential part of this major transition.

Today the company is known worldwide as the company of choice for these highly sophisticated planes with names like Predator, Avenger, and Gray Eagle. Yehezkel currently is senior vice president of manufacturing for the Aircraft Systems business unit which produces these remotely piloted aircraft systems for defense and commercial applications, with clients that include the military and law enforcement in the U.S. and numerous countries including the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and, recently, Poland.

Yehezkel has established and managed the electronic, mechanical and composite systems manufacturing for these highly sophisticated flying machines. In the last 25 years he has built more than 765 aircraft and 23 variants of Predator-series RPA which cumulatively have amassed more than 3.9 million flight hours.

Emigrating from Israel to Canada in 1975, Yehezkel holds a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Concordia University in Montreal. Prior to his tenure at General Atomics he served as manufacturing manager for Leading Systems, Inc., where he established and led the manufacturing team for the successful delivery of the Amber RPA to the U.S. government.

Yehezkel also served as executive vice president for Triple Crown Electronics Inc., where he was responsible for engineering and manufacturing activities related to the design fabrication and delivery of diversified products for the satellite communications and cable television industries. Additionally, he served as vice president of operations for Gensat Communication, where he established the management of all operation activities related to the engineering and manufacturing of products for the satellite communications and computer industries.

Aside from his responsibilities at General Atomics, Yehezkel enjoys sailing, tennis and soccer.

Perfect Bar LLC

In 2005, local Perfect Bar carved out a completely new category in the grocery space. The family-owned enterprise created a line of refrigerated, nut butter-based, high-protein nutrition bars that are organic, non-GMO, gluten-free and kosher. Today, Perfect Bar is sold online and in more than 5,000 retailers nationwide. Growth has been methodical, building the product offerings from one item to seven, adding three more to the mix this September, while still maintaining a light-industrial, small-batch process to manufacture an artisan, handcrafted product.

As a San Diego business, Perfect Bar operates as a unified workforce, with manufacturing and headquarters under one roof. Employing 85 local employees, Perfect Bar produces 100,000 bars out of the local factory every day. Over the last year, the company has increased capacity by 40 percent without incurring additional costs, by upgrading equipment to improve efficiency, reliability and consistency. These improvements, utilizing a mix of human and state-of-the-art production processes has increased production capabilities 100 percent year over year. With the increase came the demand for additional materials, storage and equipment which prompted the expansion of Perfect Bar’s footprint in the same facility, from 16,000 sq. ft. to 24,000 sq. ft. Several strategic partnerships built this year have boosted efficiencies as well. Working with their freight broker, and logistics resources, inventory storage and freight partner, the company leveraged equipment and resources to more effectively transport and deliver product by pooling less than full truckloads per order. Sustainable practices are constantly being assessed and implemented. As a business that utilizes a large volume of pallets, Perfect Bar has employed a pooled rental pallet program to reduce waste.

The company is a regular donor to many local, national and international nonprofits. In tribute to his late father, CEO Bill Keith and Perfect Bar teamed up with the Skin Cancer Foundation as a corporate partner to help raise awareness for skin cancer prevention. In recent months, Perfect Bar has donated company resources to support the Whole Planet Foundation in their mission to alleviate global poverty and also contributed to the Whole Kids

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Foundation’s School Garden Grants Program. Employees also are encouraged to do during-work community service, most recently with the San Diego Food Bank and beach clean-up efforts with San Diego Coastkeeper. Other recent notable charitable donations include those made to Susan G. Komen’s Race for the Cure, the Burn Institute’s San Diego Chapter, Ogar Strong Trust, Canary Foundation, Inma Family Services, Operation Snowflake, Make-A-Wish® San Diego, Conner’s Cause for Children, and Pickup Soccer Youth Outreach.

D&K Engineering is an international product design and contract manufacturing services company. Its capabilities span the entire product development life cycle including requirements definition, engineering analysis, concept creation, design, prototyping, production and field support. The company’s unique advantage is that it houses product design and contract manufacturing all under one roof. Over the last year, D&K Engineering has produced a broad range of products including a secure cell phone charging and recycling kiosk, a rotating stadium camera, industrial printers and consumables, DNA synthesizers, an underway replenishment system for cargo transfer, and compact vending machines. The company handled the manufacturing for TruMed Systems’ AccuVax, the first fully automated vaccine storage and handling system that manages inventory, reporting, and ordering. This product is a smart refrigerator for vaccine storage, handling and dispensing and was a gold winner for the MedDesign Excellence Award 2015.

Two years ago, D&K Engineering implemented ARAS as a product lifecycle management system. During this past year, numerous customizations were installed yielding considerable savings in time and labor. The company has taken proactive steps to lessen its impact on the environment. Energy efficient lighting is installed throughout 70 percent of the office space and updating of the computerized HVAC systems in all buildings resulted in a savings of 20 to 25 percent of the power usage.

D&K supports community involvement on a corporate level in a number of areas. Nonprofit organizations supported include Toys for Tots, San Diego food drives and three blood drives a year for the San Diego Blood Bank. Over the last three years, employees have been involved in volunteer efforts for Ronald McDonald House; Surfrider Foundation; I Love a Clean San Diego; Philippines disaster relief following the tsunami devastation; the San Diego STEM Festival Event at Petco Park and an American Cancer Society head shaving challenge.

Headquartered in San Diego, Solar Turbines’ products play an important role in the development of oil, natural gas and power generation projects around the world. Solar’s products include gas turbine engines, gas compressors, gas turbine-powered compressor sets, mechanical-drive packages and generator sets. An important requirement for market success is providing the necessary after-sales service and support in any global location. Because gas turbine installations operate for decades, service for the life of the product, overhaul, and refurbishment are critical components of market success. Solar products are marketed and serviced from 50 locations around the world.

A subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc., Solar is comprised of a workforce of more than 7,000 employees with decades of experience working as a global team including Solar’s Turbo Tecnologia de Reparaciones S.A. De C.V, or Turbotec, located in Tijuana, that employs more than 1,000 people producing new and remanufactured components. All of Solar’s facilities place a high priority on environmental health and safety performance that prioritizes pollution prevention and waste reduction. Many of Solar’s facilities have received awards for safety and environmental management. Emission standards are becoming increasingly more stringent worldwide and are a core customer requirement.

Offering low-emissions products provides a competitive advantage. Solar maintains a leadership position with its SoLoNOx™ dry-emission technology that significantly reduces nitrogen oxide emissions, a contributor to smog. Additionally, Solar has been a committed and active stakeholder in the development of Climate Action Plans for the City of San Diego and the San Diego Unified Port.

Solar Turbines places a strong focus on quality and continuous improvement. Using a methodology called “Built In Quality,” Solar systematically identifies where processes fall short of expectations and what needs to be done to permanently improve the process. As a result, there has been a 50 percent reduction in the number of defects found in products at the final inspection step just prior to delivering to the customer.

Solar Turbines’ newest technology is an application called Insight. Since this technology has been launched, customers are now able to see real-time machine data and events on their mobile devices. The results from the installation of Insight include more than 460,000 hours of avoided downtime for customers and 98.7 percent reliability across the entire Solar connected fleet in 2015.

Solar Turbines is committed to giving back to the local communities. Last year, Solar donated to more than 50 San Diego nonprofit organizations. Annually Solar hosts a community relations campaign in partnership with United Way. For more than 30 years, Solar’s Holiday Fund has served families and individuals in need throughout San Diego.

From molten glass, Oceanside Glasstile’s artisans create amazing shapes and patterns which their mosaic artists fashion into the most cutting edge designs in the industry. From reflective pools to inspirational baths, the company, celebrating its 11 year anniversary, has established itself as the best resource for art glass tiles. The company is proud of its core value that company values reflect a dedication to environmental stewardship. From the use of recycled glass to sustainable production processes to its green headquarters, Oceanside Glasstile is a committed corporate citizen. And, equally important to the company is its support of the local community.

The company encourages team members to volunteer with local nonprofit organizations by offering a paid time off match, asking everyone to contribute at least 24 hours a year. Many employees exceed that threshold. Some of the events are during normal work hours and Oceanside Glasstile makes sure that everyone is allowed the opportunity to participate in those events that have included Padres Pedal the Cause; SuperGirl Pro Surf competition; Susan G. Komen 3-Day; The Boys and Girls Club of Carlsbad; Hand Up Youth Food Pantry; California Surf Museum; and the Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation. For Pedal the Cause in 2014 and 2015, the entire staff participated in the ride as either a station volunteer or participant rider, generating more than $28,000 in donations and finishing in the top 10 of all donors, along with much larger companies such as Qualcomm and PIRCH.

The company also encourages its staff to suggest organizations to support through volunteering. This keeps the ideas fresh and helps the company work with a number of organizations that teammates have a personal connection with. Oceanside Glasstile averages around 400 to 500 hours of volunteering with its U.S. team each year. Its Mexico facility also engages with a number of volunteer organizations including children with HIV, displaced immigrants, retirement homes, orphanages, and abused women’s shelters. Volunteers donate their time cleaning, cooking and serving, repairing furniture and building beds, walls and bathrooms. The number of hours volunteered in Mexico typically averages between 1,500-2,000 hours per year.
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Inova Diagnostics is dedicated exclusively to the autoimmune arena with a portfolio of IVD systems and reagents that support diagnosis, stratification and monitoring of complex disorders such as connective tissue disease, rheumatoid arthritis, antiphospholipid syndrome, vasculitis and celiac disease. For more than 25 years the company, with more than 360 staff worldwide, has collaborated with clinical researchers to develop biomarkers that help advance the care of autoimmune disease patients.

Innovation has been at the heart of the company’s growing production capabilities. Noteworthy improvements include an initiative in early 2016 to improve the quality of microscope slides that serve as the foundation of the Nova Lite products.

Through a partnership with the raw material slide vendor, and despite the companies located on opposite coasts, each worked in parallel to set experiments and review results. Using DOE and statistical tools, the vendor was able to make validated process improvements that have resulted in higher quality raw material. After this change was implemented, Inova saw dramatically reduced patient results.

Innovation continued with BioFlash, a rapidly growing product with a growth rate of 42 percent year to date. Each kit has three reagent tubes that have to be sealed with foil and leak tested manually. Challenges were present in designing and integrating some existing equipment, but the vendor was able to deliver the automation solution in a few months. This new machine can cut foil, seal, crimp and leak test a tube in less than 12 seconds — a 51 percent decrease in process time. In addition, it required only one operator to man the machine instead of the two. Quality greatly improved by eliminating the operator to operator variation since specification could be tightly controlled.

**Winner - Best Collaboration**

**Stone Brewing**

The company constantly reaches out for new ways to engage its dedicated customers. The company has been operating for 41 years making high quality banjos exclusively in the U.S. The family-owned company’s competitive advantage is its staff with a combined 275 years of banjo knowledge. Their advantage is its staff with a combined 275 years of banjo knowledge. Their well-known banjos can be found on stages all over the world, from Mumford & Sons to other artists including Elle King, Steve Martin, American Authors and Avett Brothers.

More than one process improvement has brought more efficiencies and even higher quality to the company’s signature instruments. The SMILE Bridge was launched at the end of May and has made dramatic results in banjo tone for what appears to be a very simple design. The bridge of a banjo, the link between the strings and the surface of the skin transfers energy from the strings and on to the playing surface of the head giving the banjo its familiar sound. Traditionally, banjo bridges have always had a flat bottom. Once under tension from the strings, the sides of the bridge become restricted, limiting the transfer of energy to the head and body of the instrument. The SMILE Bridge alleviates all of this at the bottom is purposely curved so when under pressure, the bridge fits perfectly into the curved indentation of the skin. No more stress, no more restriction, no more loss of energy from the strings — just a fuller, purer tone.

**Winner - Best Process Improvement (Tie)**

**Quality Controlled Manufacturing Inc.**

Since 1978 Santee-based Quality Controlled Manufacturing Inc. (QCMI) has established itself as one of the nation’s leaders in the precision machining of all metals, including exotic alloys using the Six Sigma methodology and Lean Manufacturing principles. The company’s clients are industries that require the highest level of precision in the machining of general to very complex components and assemblies including aerospace, power generation industry, Department of Defense, oil and gas, marine, and heavy equipment.

QCMI has dedicated extensive resources to its process improvement in training over the past year. The company has had a comprehensive Education/Training Competitive Workforce Initiative, but in order to improve that process, QCMI developed a mentoring program which later converted into a lead employee program. All of these efforts have culminated in an internal/external QCMI Machinist Training program, opened in November 2014, which has been a dream of CEO Bob Grande, and Rick Urban, COO/CFO who spearheaded the creation, planning and development.

The effort became a joint program between QCMI, the San Diego Workforce Partnership, East County Career Center, San Diego County Community Colleges and the East County Economic Development Council. Employees, as well as the general public including veterans, are provided education in machining, Six Sigma, and related Lean Manufacturing principles. Students receive curriculum on shop theory, blueprint reading, safety practices, CNC machining, quality, inspection and are certified Six Sigma Green Belt upon graduation. This is provided at no cost to the student. QCMI partnered with the San Diego Workforce Partnership in a customized training contract for the initial training of 13 outside individuals with QCMI contributing more than $105,000 to fund this training. In 2015, QCMI successfully placed into employment in the manufacturing industry all individuals that graduated from this training program.

In 2016, QCMI has successfully transferred the final phase of the progression of the training program under a related nonprofit organization — The Grande Foundation. This nonprofit will eventually manufacture its own product outside of QCMI in order to develop a self-sustaining training model, which will help the industry and the local economy in general.

**Winner - Best Innovation**

**Inova Diagnostics**

Inova Diagnostics has been on the forefront in the craft beer movement since its inception. As the 10th largest craft brewery in the U.S., Stone’s success has sparked a thriving industry, but instead of keeping its products proprietary, the brewery has reached out to its community and encouraged partnerships by creating “collaboration” beers. With these special release beers, Stone partners with two other breweries, and works together to formulate the recipe, brew the beer, and bring it to market. Needless to say, it is a challenge trying to incorporate various ingredients with each brewer picking one, to the label design, even naming the beer — all which takes teamwork and patience.

Stone has partnered and collaborated with many local breweries such as Alesmith, Green Flash, Bagby Beer, Port Brewing, and Lost Abbey, along with dozens of other breweries around the United States and the world including Brewhog from Scotland and Ishii Brewing in Guam. And the beers themselves have been a huge success, though the logistics of the process can be a challenge.

Stone’s relationship with its customers also is a collaborative effort. The company has been operating for 41 years making high quality banjos exclusively in the U.S. The family-owned company’s competitive advantage is its staff with a combined 275 years of banjo knowledge. Their well-known banjos can be found on stages all over the world, from Mumford & Sons to other artists including Elle King, Steve Martin, American Authors and Avett Brothers.

More than one process improvement has brought more efficiencies and even higher quality to the company’s signature instruments. The SMILE Bridge was launched at the end of May and has made dramatic results in banjo tone for what appears to be a very simple design. The bridge of a banjo, the link between the strings and the surface of the skin transfers energy from the strings and on to the playing surface of the head giving the banjo its familiar sound. Traditionally, banjo bridges have always had a flat bottom. Once under tension from the strings, the sides of the bridge become restricted, limiting the transfer of energy to the head and body of the instrument. The SMILE Bridge alleviates all of this at the bottom is purposely curved so when under pressure, the bridge fits perfectly into the curved indentation of the skin. No more stress, no more restriction, no more loss of energy from the strings — just a fuller, purer tone.
Deering’s biggest environmental achievement in process improvement comes in the form of a new source product. In the wake of over-harvesting of exotic woods like ebony, commonly used for fingerboards, Deering developed Midnight Maple, after more than four years of research and development; a high quality fingerboard that is durable, ethically sustainable, readily available in the U.S. and could be developed and manufactured in-house. Unlike stained maple boards commonly found on instruments of the past, Deering has developed technology to penetrate the incredibly tight, dense grain of the rock maple species, which is needed because fingerboards must be resistant to string wear. The result is a board completely dyed all the way through the wood and made in the U.S. from readily available material. No raw wood shows through from string wear on the fingerboard and the stain does not come off on a player’s hands. The environment impact is lessened as this reduces the amount of ebony used while offering a very cool product to the customer.

Winner - Best Sustainability

Envision Solar International Inc.

Envision Solar International, begun a decade ago, today provides a unique electric vehicle charging concept, allowing charging to be independent of the electrical grid. A San Diego-based technology and innovation company, Envision has developed state-of-the-art solar electric vehicle charging stations that provide clean, green and renewable energy. As of last year, the State of California awarded Envision a statewide contract that has been renewed to supply its stations to Caltrans, The Department of General Services, The Office of the Governor General and the state university system. The company produces two main products, the EV ARC™, and Solar Tree®. The EV ARC™ is an exclusive fully transportable solar charging station, which fits in the space of one parking spot. It generates enough clean, solar electricity to power up to 150 miles of electric vehicle driving each day. The station’s solar electrical generation is enhanced by a system that causes the solar panel array to follow the sun, generating 18 to 25 percent more electricity than a fixed system. Along with the environmental advantages of this product, placement does not involve trenching, grid connection and permitting which drive up the cost of installation. The Solar Tree® Array allows for up to eight vehicles to charge simultaneously. This prominent structure can additionally be utilized as a shading facility.

Envision Solar has undergone significant improvements to the EV ARC™ in the past year. The most prominent is a structural advancement so the unit can now fit into a transportable container for overseas shipping and deployment. Advertising opportunities are now offered on the different charging stations. ARC™ Mobility has undergone recent improvements as well, making the EV ARC™ deployment extremely fast by pressing a button to put the unit in a parking spot or other location.

EV ARC™ products are manufactured in the company’s San Diego facility by combat veterans, the disabled, minorities and other highly talented, mission-driven team members. Recently EV ARC was named Best Product of the Year in the 8th Annual Golden Bridge Awards in the Energy Industry Innovations category. The awards ceremony took place in San Francisco on September 12, 2016.
The company also is notably different in the way it approaches product development. Safety is a priority with it bamboo products containing some of the lowest levels of detectable formaldehyde in the flooring industry.

Cali Bamboo LLC

Cali Bamboo was founded in 2003 by Dr. Bronner’s, the maker of the world’s first liquid soap. The company has committed to source all major raw material from certified fair trade projects around the world that ensure fair prices, living wages and community benefits for farmers, workers and their families. Packaging material is also sourced from recycled material and a zero waste initiative has been developed to reduce waste during the manufacturing process. The company is committed to supporting a wide range of social and community causes. In 2015 alone, Dr. Bronner’s gave more than $6.5 million to local and global organizations.

Biological & Popular Culture Inc.

Biological & Popular Culture, known as BioPop, is the largest producer of bioluminescent algae in the world. With all production performed in its Carlsbad facility, BioPop has developed a semi-automated culturing system that allow growth of large cultures (photosynthetic plankton, also known as dinoflagellates) beyond the standard volumes. The company is dedicated to creating “living art” concepts. Its signature product, the Dino Pet, is a living toy filled with dinoflagellates that glows a brilliant blue at night when you interact with them. The company’s product can be seen in the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History.

Cubic Corporation

Cubic Corporation designs, integrates and operates systems, products and services focused in the transportation, defense training and secure communications markets. The company provides ground training products for the U.S. and allied militaries allowing them to simulate complex infantry and armor training exercises. Cubic also specializes in public transport ticketing systems hardware that has been used for the London underground, Sydney Metro, Chicago Transit Authority, Vancouver transit and a long list of other transit suppliers.

The company maintains a culture of continuous improvement in manufacturing that has produced hundreds of productivity improvements over the past year. Currently it is moving from five separate systems, of early 80’s vintage, to one modern central system and is coordinating and combining dozens of separate ISO certifications, ultimately to one worldwide system.

Delta Group Electronics Inc.

Delta Group Electronics is a full service electronics manufacturing company that creates products for major originating equipment manufacturers, mid-size technology companies, and small businesses. Its products support a wide range of industries including instrumentation, commercial, aerospace, medical, military, industrial, and marine. Delta’s facility is designed as a closed loop system and all waste from manufacturing processes including solder, metal, circuit board edges, and chemicals are recycled by its service suppliers.

DJ Global Inc.

Headquartered in Vista, DJO Global is one of the leading orthopedic and largest orthopedic rehabilitation companies, producing more than 1,000 medical devices that can help people throughout the entire continuum of care — from injury prevention to rehabilitation. In 2016, DJO Global launched its MotionMD Software Solution, an intuitive, web-based point-of-care software designed to streamline claims management and inventory dispensing. The paperless system has been deployed to more than 200 clinics and offices since it was launched, assisting in billing and dispensing of durable medical equipment and has the ability to provide real time inventory visibility and reporting capabilities. MotionMD enables physicians and administrators to create and implement diagnosis driven protocols for optimal patient outcomes.

Federal Heath

Federal Heath Visual Communications, headquartered in Oceanside, manufactures custom electric signage (interior and exterior), canopy and fascia products, LED price signs, digital signage, and custom graphics. Federal Heath is currently the only company that provides this full array of brand imaging services. Con-
Feetz Inc.

In 2016 Feetz relocated its headquarters and next generation manufacturing facility to San Diego. It is the only company in the world making custom shoes using 3-D printers. The printers use recycled and recyclable materials to produce an entirely custom shoe that is then assembled and finished by employees. Because Feetz uses additive manufacturing and only makes shoes when orders are received, there is no waste. The whole shoe, not just the in-sole, is customized. Feetz soon will be part of a national retailer to sell custom shoes using 3-D printers. The company also co-packs for various grocery brands and roasters around the world who want to enter the “k-cup” market, all using recyclable plastics. Recent developments have included improving the cup by using better recyclable plastics, enhanced filter papers, improved lidding and a more efficient process in roasting and grinding, overseen by an in-house 5th generation roast master.

Microtek Inc.

In just one year, Microtek has opened its offices in Rancho Bernardo and installed an ISO certified clean-room and state-of-the-art equipment. The company’s focus is on providing a blend of expertise in advanced microelectronics solutions to clients at the R&D and prototype stage. Microtek works at the bare chip level while integrating microelectronics, manufacturing, bioscience or therapeutics to provide highly miniaturized applications. Microtek has established a customer base covering medical, defense, wireless and the photonics industries. In addition, Microtek is working closely with UC San Diego on small business innovation research and also with the University of Colorado to develop their own intellectual property, all with the focus on improving human health.

NEO Tech

NEO Tech is an electronics technology solutions company that focuses on low-medium volume and high-mix, high-complexity products primarily in the medical, defense, aerospace and industrial markets. NEO Tech offers engineering services, manufacturing and testing of microelectronics, cable and harness interconnect products, printed circuit board assemblies, full box build services and aftermarket repair and fulfillment services. The company has several manufacturing sites in the greater San Diego area with an electronics manufacturing services business in San Marcos along with local manufacturing operations in Carlsbad. This location builds high reliability ceramic substrates that are used to build high frequency circuit assemblies that mainly serve the defense industry.

Pharmatek Laboratories Inc.

Despite significant efforts in drug discovery to design molecules with acceptable properties, it is estimated that as much as 80 percent of new drugs present poor solubility, which are difficult to develop using conventional formulation techniques. Pharmatek Laboratories’ spray drying technology has been shown to improve the bioavailability of poorly soluble compounds. As a contract development and manufacturing company providing dosage form development and manufacturing of oral, injectable and topical products. The company has more than 300 clients globally, ranging from virtual to large pharmaceutical companies. Pharmatek currently employs more than 150 people and is planning on growing an additional 20 percent in the next three years.

continous improvement is ingrained in its culture and in lean training with employees to ensure they are able to identify waste in processes as well as have the tools needed to know how to reduce or eliminate waste. Each location has a continuous improvement task sheet which tracks what the improvements were, who is the owner, anticipated completion date, actual completion date, as well as the savings that result from the improvement.

Intelligent Blends LP

Intelligent Blends LP manufactures single serve “k-cup” style and “Nespresso” single serve coffee and tea, along with its own brand of coffee and tea — Maud’s Righteous Blends — to consumers, businesses, and the hospitality industry. The signature line now offers 24 different types of coffee, teas and seasonal items. The company also co-packs for various grocery brands and roasters around the world who want to enter the “k-cup” market, all using recyclable plastics. Recent developments have included improving the cup by using better recyclable plastics, enhanced filter papers, improved lidding and a more efficient process in roasting and grinding, overseen by an in-house 5th generation roast master.

VantageID

As a sponsor of the 2016 Manufacturing Awards, VantageID congratulates our long-time partner, Zebra Technologies, on becoming a finalist. Zebra Technologies is a $4.6 billion technology innovator with a 27,000 square foot manufacturing plant in Otay Mesa.

VantageID has supported local manufacturers, warehouses and distribution centers for 25 years with barcode and RFID technologies. Our local team’s expertise is augmented through our long-time alliances with industry innovators. For example, we are a top provider of T5KLYNX, the barcode and RFID label design software leader with 650,000 worldwide installations. We share a special bond with Zebra after having sold our label manufacturing facility to them in 2005, and more than two decades of Zebra Premier Partnership status.

However, VantageID offers much more than barcode labels, software, printers, and service.
Quantum Design Inc.

Since its inception in 1982, Quantum Design International has developed and manufactured automated temperature and magnetic field testing platforms for materials characterization. These systems offer a variety of measurement capabilities and are in widespread use in the fields of physics, chemistry, biotechnology, materials science and nanotechnology. Quantum Design Inc. is the manufacturing arm of Quantum Design International and located in San Diego. This year the company introduced a new line of helium recovery plants which help low temperature researchers around the world to recover gaseous and liquid helium used in their research. Helium, a strategic non-renewable source, is historically vented in the atmosphere and lost. Quantum’s instrument allows universities, manufacturing plants and hospitals with MRIs to recover and reuse helium used in them.

RCP Block & Brick Inc.

Since 1947, RCP has been manufacturing masonry and hardwood products. With two manufacturing plants located in Santee (soon to be phased out) and Otay, RCP is the only block manufacturer in San Diego County. The company produces a variety of standard, specialty, and architectural concrete masonry units; as well as a full line of hardwood products. RCP can produce up to 2.5 million units per month, and keeps a running inventory of almost 5,000 different products. Its concrete products can be seen around San Diego in libraries, schools, airports, commercial buildings, and residential homes. RCP does everything possible to reduce the impact to the environment including implementing a horizontal impact crusher to recycle and incorporate old concrete waste units into new ones. As a result RCP has taken nothing to the landfill since 1992.

Rhino Linings Corporation

San Diego-based Rhino Linings offers a number of product lines, all supported by three main manufacturing plants. Its local operation produces the Expo Stucco line of traditional and synthetic stucco products as well as a Concrete Solutions line of decorative concrete and resurfacing products; while the well-known spray-on truck bed liner, as well as its industrial coating products are manufactured in Texas and a line of spray polyurethane foams for walls and roofs are produced in Missouri. Many of Rhino’s products help customers take significant steps in saving energy and protecting the environment. The spray polyurethane foams reduce energy consumption in structures by controlling the movement of air through thermal envelopes. Rhino’s spray coatings prevent harsh chemicals from contaminating ground water by providing protective barriers in various application settings. Rhino also works with local quarries and suppliers to minimize the travel of raw materials, further reducing its carbon footprint.

Sheffield Platers Inc.

Sheffield Platers is a third generation family-owned business located in San Diego. The company offers electroless nickel, gold, silver, tin, and cadmium, along with many other metal finishing processes. Sheffield’s electroless nickel plating is widely used for engineering applications and the company’s client list currently includes the electronic, semiconductor, medical, and connector sectors as well as many areas of commercial, military, and aerospace manufacturing. Sustainning an environmental stewardship is a focal point and has enabled Sheffield to become an environmental leader locally, nationally, and internationally.

Shirts Unlimited LLC

Shirts Unlimited has been serving the San Diego community since 1994. It has been a uniforms provider for a large local client list that includes Rubio’s, Ace Parking, Qualcomm Stadium, Barona and Sycuan casinos, along with multiple school districts and nonprofits. Shirts Unlimited’s original office was in Kearny Mesa for 20 years before relocating to National City. The company expanded its line, seeing a local need for specialty aprons that are custom made in limited quantities. Today it produces aprons for trendy restaurants such as Puesto, along with customized chef’s wear.

SIDUS Solutions LLC

SIDUS Solutions manufactures deep sea cameras, lights, and pan and tilt platforms for the oil and gas industry, along with research and government agencies which are used on remote observation vehicles or submarines. SIDUS has grown from designing primarily subsea pan and tilts and rotators to providing an extensive product line of underwater positioners, cameras, lights, lasers, and inspection systems, as well as an array of engineering services. While the SIDUS-designed and manufactured product line focuses on subsea applications, its engineering team provides topside design and installation for industrial and hazardous areas. The cameras and lights SIDUS has developed can descend to 6000 meters (19,865 feet) deep in the ocean—deeper than Mt. Kilimanjaro is tall (19,591 feet).

Space Micro Inc.

Space Micro Inc. is an engineering driven small business that focuses on technology advancement and product implementation for high reliability satellite electronics. Space Micro has successfully collaborated with the University of Florida to license and commercialize a new technology called the CubeSat Space Processor. Space Micro recently delivered an engineering unit of their processor single board computer to Arizona State University. The spacecraft, called the Lunar Polar Hydrogen Mapper, will map the distribution of water deposits in permanently shadowed regions of the Moon’s south pole, unveiling new details about the origins and evolution of ice that has been tentatively identified from previous missions. Confirming and mapping those deposits in detail will help NASA understand how much water might be available and inform strategies for sending humans farther into the solar system.
Transportation Power USA Inc.

Poway-based Transportation Power USA, or TransPower, manufacturers the ElecTruck™ system — an industry-leading high power electric drive system developed for locally-driven, short-duty-cycle trucks and buses garaged each night or day at the same location. ElecTruck™ components are designed to work together in a variety of configurations, meeting the power needs of a tremendous array of vehicle types under most operating conditions. The foundation for ElecTruck™ is an integrated battery-electric drive system, which enables the largest vehicles to operate as battery-electric vehicles using no fuel and producing zero emissions.

VetPowered LLC

VetPowered is an advanced manufacturing company, founded in 2009, to service the intersection of a highly qualified veteran manufacturing workforce with industry needs. The company is committed to supporting transitioning service members and is the primary supporter and donor to Workshops for Warriors, a nonprofit with a mission to provide quality training, educational programs, and opportunities to earn third party nationally recognized credentials to enable veterans, transitioning service members, and other students to be successfully trained and placed in their chosen advanced manufacturing career field. VetPowered was commissioned to produce a dive tank tub for the U.S. Coast Guard and offered several product improvement recommendations that were added.

Vista Industrial Products Inc.

Vista Industrial Products has been in business for 60 years and specializes in precision metal fabrication, sheet metal fabrication, machining, welding fabrication, engineering, metal finishing, and mechanical assembly. The company caters to the defense, medical, commercial, and high technology industries. Vista recently worked with a local defense contractor in designing and manufacturing cargo and vehicle inspection systems which are used at the border to ensure national security. Although the contractor specializes in the software and x-ray technology, Vista provided engineering expertise to design and manufacture various housings for the x-ray technology to be used to scan trucks, cargo containers, cars, and other vehicles for weapons, nuclear material, narcotics, undeclared goods and other contraband at cargo terminals, border crossings, military facilities and other checkpoints. The company also designed the housings of the x-ray scanners to be used out in the field as well.

White Labs Inc.

What began as home brewers searching for higher quality yeast; quickly grew into a team of dedicated biochemists exploring new ways to advance brewing altogether. Today, White Labs stands at the intersection of science, education and craft. From the industry’s first pitchable liquid yeast, to a complete revolution in the way it’s propagated and packaged, White Labs has worked with brewers, distillers and winemakers worldwide to create the best, most environmentally friendly products available. White Labs collaborates with many breweries to create unique flavors in beer by using the proper yeast and fermentation techniques. Now, in addition to operating in California and Colorado, White Labs will be covering the entire United States with distribution and operations in Asheville, NC.

Zebra Technologies

Zebra Technologies manufactures the highest quality thermal labels and tags to be used in the simplest to most extreme environments. The San Diego facility uses the Lean and 6 Sigma processes to fine tune the operation constantly. Since 2014, a total of 298 Kaizen and 12 Lean projects have been completed, to return total savings of $162,000; 2,500 man hours and 204 miles in motion. The San Diego facility has held a 99.5 percent on-time delivery rate since 2007. Zebra is dedicated to sustainable practices. Unused chemicals and inks are responsibly recycled through their vendor Safety-Kleen who processes all leftover inks, varnishes, and oily rags so they do not end up in a landfill. Packaging supplies such as boxes and roll cores are made from recycled materials.
The San Diego Business Journal celebrated its annual Manufacturing Awards recognition event at the San Diego Marriott La Jolla on Thursday, September 15. More than 250 guests recognized the region’s leading companies representing all aspects of industrial production from hand-crafted musical instruments to state-of-the-art craft beer to precision medical and biotech instruments. The vast range of companies exemplifies the diversity, technological sophistication and international scope of this thriving sector.

A total of 41 organizations were honored at the event which was highlighted with a keynote presentation by Sam Mascareno, regional managing partner for RSM US LLP. A special Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Elie Yehezkel, senior vice president of manufacturing for General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

Sponsors for the awards program include presenting sponsor RSM US LLP, title sponsor Cox Business, gold sponsor Union Bank, and bronze sponsor Manpower-West.
Adam Lohr and Benjamin Boyer, both with Presenting Sponsor RSM US LLP; Amy Winer, Associate Publisher, San Diego Business Journal; Amon Mills, Publisher Emeritus, San Diego Business Journal

Sam Mascarenos, Keynote Speaker, Presenting Sponsor RSM US LLP

Kara Taylor and Andre Miller, both with White Labs Inc.

Ted Dawson, Joe Kight, Katrin Engel and James Kordas, all with Gold Sponsor Union Bank

Photos by Bob Thompson, Fotowerks. Additional photos from the event are at the following link: http://fotowerkssd.smugmug.com.