

MEP SUPPORT FOR OPTICAL PROTOTYPE COMPONENT
TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATION

ABOUT OPTIMAX SYSTEMS INC. Optimax Systems Inc. of Ontario, New York, manufactures the optics behind breakthrough technologies in aerospace, defense, semiconductor and medical devices with over 350 employees. They have become America's premier precision optics manufacturer, specializing in asphere, cylinder, sphere, and plano/flat optics in sizes up to 500mm. Notable customers include U.S. National Laboratories and NASA. Optimax has manufactured thousands of high energy laser optics for the most powerful laser in the world, the NIF laser at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Optimax optics can also be found on many NASA missions, including all of the Mars Rovers and the TESS space telescope.

THE CHALLENGE. Optimax was introduced to a specialized optical measuring instrument through a local research facility, and realized their need for a similar instrument to develop better, more efficient optical coatings for their products for semiconductor applications. This project was identified as a top priority of Optimax during a coordination meeting with NextCorps MEP representatives, part of the New York MEP and the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. NextCorps arranged for funding for engineering design, installation, and user training through the Rochester Regional Photonics Accelerator grant, one of 10 grants issued nationwide as part of NIST's Advance Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge program. NextCorps also partnered with the Workforce Development Institute to provide partial funding for the instrument itself. As a result, the installation and implementation of the instrument was accelerated by 12 months and the overall system cost was reduced by 50%.

"Nextcorps is always a pleasure to work with and the investments that they have helped us make over the last several years have been extremely helpful as we try to continue to develop new markets, improve our workforce and grow the business. Nextcorp grants have made it possible for Optimax to be aggressive in developing new technologies, in the form of engineering prototypes, that have been critical in the growth of new markets. Nextcorps grants have been used to solve challenges in manufacturing some of the most difficult optics in the world. These advancements have improved efficiency, performance and yield in emerging markets which have grown by millions of dollars for Optimax. The investments have also gone a long way in helping solidify Optimax's position as a global leader in the manufacture of precision optics. Nextcorps is a great asset for the Rochester optics community and we continue to appreciate their support."

-Rick Plympton, Chief Executive Officer

RESULTS



\$8,900,000 in new investment



\$8,000,000 in increased or retained sales



\$70,000 in cost savings



12 created or retained jobs

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