

December 22, 2009

\$2.8M military contract benefits Ulster solar firm

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TOWN OF ULSTER — Job expansion at Precision Flow Technologies is expected to stay on track with a contract to make the fabricating equipment for production of solar wafers as part of a \$2.8 million contract awarded to Saratoga County-based C9 Corp. for development of defense industry projects.

The funding was announced by U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey during a press conference at TechCity, where a 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility is being constructed for Saugerties-based Precision Flow Technologies.

Hinchey, who founded The Solar Energy Consortium that brokered the manufacturing facilities agreement for Precision Flow Technologies, said funding from the 2010 Defense Appropriations bill that is intended to help job growth locally has been approved.

“The company (Precision Flow Technologies) currently has 185 employees and is hiring 20 new workers to work at TechCity on a variety of solar-related projects with a total of 50 to 60 new employees expected to be hired at Tech City within one year,” Hinchey said. “The work the company is doing in conjunction with C9 for the military will result in the creation of five to seven new jobs.”

Under the agreement to improve silicon carbide semiconductor grade material for the military, Hinchey said C9 Corp. is seeking to overcome difficulties in creating man-made silicon carbide materials in a process that officials believe “will revolutionize semiconductor/solar manufacturing. This technology will have widespread applications for the military as well as by private-sector power utilities, automotive, aerospace and computer” industries.

C9 Corp. President Kevin Donegan said to his company will get about 60 percent of the \$2.8 million appropriated for the project after military reviews are conducted, with Precision Flow Technologies being paid as one of four subcontractors for the project. He said the funding would be paid through L-3 Communications as primary subcontractor with C9 Corp. and NanoDynamics-88 as subcontractors that use Precision Flow Technologies to develop machinery.

“I am going to be sending (Precision Flow Technologies) at least 80 percent (of the 60 percent C9 gets),” Donegan said.

Some of the work being done includes finding ways to get more battery life for powering hand-held and back-pack devices for troops, recharging unmanned reconnaissance platforms, and development of hybrid vehicles.

“These are products that haven’t been really designed yet in a sense,” Donegan said. “For other products you say you are going to be in production by such and such a date. We have to hope we’re going to be in production, because you’re still in the (research and development) stage, you are still commercializing.”

Precision Flow Technologies President Kevin Brady said the company could grow by \$100 million to \$200 million if the product development is successful.

“If you look beyond the military application, the commercial opportunities could literally double the size of the company if you hit the timing correctly,” he said.