

## **What's in a Name? Osceola's Advanced Manufacturing Consortium Now Called BRIDG**

ORLANDO, Jan. 18, 2017 – The International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research, known as ICAMR, announced Tuesday that it will officially do business as BRIDG, an acronym that captures the central mission of the innovative technology collective – “Bridging the Innovation Development Gap.”

Leaders say the new name better stands for what they do – connecting researchers and industry to accelerate the development of emerging technologies.

Since it launched in 2014, the consortium has provided a platform for advanced manufacturing development to “bridge the gap” between advanced research at Florida’s universities or industry innovators and cost-competitive manufacturing of new products tied to connected devices and the Internet of Things.

Its partners now range from a Belgium-based leading international hub in nano-electronics and digital technology to a home-grown photonics and smart sensor developer.

“We’re entering a new phase of this project that will transform Osceola County and Florida’s economy, giving us a competitive advantage over advanced, nano-scale manufacturing centers around the globe, and our new identity reflects that,” said Chester Kennedy, CEO for BRIDG.

In addition to a new name for the consortium, Osceola County has renamed the 500-acre, master planned site where the consortium is headquartered from the Osceola Tech Farm to NeoCity.

Osceola County leaders say the name signals a new horizon for the region’s high-tech economy, and the site will be more than a traditional research park with its community connections and surrounding natural landscape.

In March, BRIDG will open its new design center at NeoCity, across from Osceola Heritage Park. The 109,000-square-foot facility will be one of the most advanced fabrication labs in the world and offer partners and others the opportunity to share equipment and conduct research needed to profitably access the next-generation sensor economy.

The design center and consortium are led by Osceola County, the University of Central Florida and the Florida High Tech Corridor Council (known as The Corridor), and are poised to change the region’s technology industry.

“Tonight was a glimpse of things to come. It’s here, and it’s real. It is the future of nano-technology research and development. The global high-tech spotlight is shining on us as we change the face of Florida’s economy – putting us at the forefront of the next generation of nano-scale, micro-electronics,” said Osceola Commission Chairman Brandon Arrington. “None of this would have been possible without unanimous support of this Osceola County Commission, which has had the vision and foresight to make the commitment to fund this journey.”

The project has garnered widespread support.

State lawmakers approved \$15 million toward the project last spring, and, in a major announcement in July, Belgian nanotechnology firm imec announced its partnership and plans to build its research and development design center at NeoCity, in collaboration with BRIDG. The company's new U.S. headquarters will focus on photonics and high-speed electronics integrated circuits.

"With our local and global partners, we will create new solutions and economies of scale to transform the smart sensor industry, while diversifying the economy to lift our community," said Dale Whittaker, UCF Provost and Executive Vice President. "That's what happens when you bring together the best minds from the research labs and manufacturing centers with future-focused government leaders."

Other major partners include Harris Corporation, Argonne National Laboratories, Kissimmee-based Photon-X, Florida International University, University of South Florida and University of Florida among others.

"This project is another demonstration of the power of partnerships, as almost from the start people and organizations have raised their hands and opened their wallets – even before being asked – to join the founders in a venture we all know will create jobs and amazing new technology," said Randy Berridge, president of The Corridor.

To access new logos for BRIDG and NeoCity, along with photos, please visit: <https://goo.gl/ub52Bf>

#### **About BRIDG**

BRIDG is an industry-led consortium for advanced sensors, optics and photonics and other advanced manufacturing devices, focusing on the development of innovative manufacturable processes, materials and equipment for next-generation smart sensors and other future high-tech products. Supported by Osceola County, the University of Central Florida and the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, BRIDG facilitates the connection between innovation and industry and "bridges" the innovation development gap that makes commercialization possible. BRIDG is initially targeting the mega-growth technologies that will lead to over 50 billion smart sensors and imagers predicted by 2020, transforming the way humans interact with the world every day. Learn more at <http://GoBRIDG.com>.

#### **About Osceola County**

Osceola County is a fast-growing, dynamic and innovative community. While we honor the history and traditions passed down from our pioneer ranching families, we are focused on a vision to be the center of research and manufacturing innovation for "smart sensors" that will supercharge the regional economy as the leader in what will be a \$154 billion industry by 2020. As part of the Orlando Metropolitan Area, we proudly host approximately 7 million annual overnight guests who enjoy easy access to Central Florida's world-famous theme parks and Osceola County's unique sights and unmatched hospitality.

#### **About UCF**

The University of Central Florida, one of the largest universities in the nation with more than 64,000 students, uses the power of scale and the pursuit of excellence to make a better future for our students and society. Described by *The Washington Post* as demolishing "the popular belief that exclusivity is a virtue in higher education" and credited by Politico with creating a "seamless pipeline of social mobility," UCF is recognized as one of the best values in higher education. UCF aligns its teaching, research and service with the needs of the community and beyond, offering more than 200 degree programs at more

than a dozen locations, including its main campus in Orlando. Faculty and students are creating innovations in areas as diverse as simulation and training, optics and lasers, hospitality management, video game design, business, education and health care to solve local and global problems. For more information, visit [www.ucf.edu](http://www.ucf.edu).

#### **About The Florida High Tech Corridor Council**

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council is an economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida (UCF), the University of South Florida (USF) and the University of Florida (UF). The mission of The Corridor is to grow high tech industry and innovation through partnerships that support research, marketing, workforce and entrepreneurship. A partnership involving more than 25 local and regional economic development organizations (EDOs), 14 state colleges and 12 CareerSource boards, The Corridor is co-chaired by the presidents of UCF, USF and UF. The Corridor includes the presidents of two state colleges, the president of the Florida Institute of Technology and representatives of high tech industry. The unique partnership has resulted in a strategic approach to high tech economic development that supports matching funds research, marketing, workforce development and entrepreneurship leveraging governmental, EDO and corporate budgets on a regional rather than local basis. For more information, visit [www.floridahightech.com](http://www.floridahightech.com).

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