

# SBIR Newsletter

## July 2006

### SBIR Success in NC InnerOptic

InnerOptic was founded in 2002 to commercialize the [patented 3D Laparoscope technology](#), initially developed by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. InnerOptic's [3D Laparoscope systems](#) will allow surgeons to perform minimally invasive surgery as if they were performing open surgery, providing a view into the body with registered, [real-time \*in vivo\* imagery](#) that is both stereoscopic and head-tracked. InnerOptic will provide two types of products to the medical community:

- [3D Laparoscope devices](#) are designed to assist surgeons with minimally invasive procedures, by acquiring and displaying true 3D data from inside the body.
- Their [Cancer Detection System](#) will offer more information to the examining physician than most other current cancer screening methods, in much less time—immediately—and at significantly lower expense, since the need for lab analysis of tissue samples will be greatly reduced.

Kurtis Keller and Nick England first started working towards the development and commercialization of these products in early 2003 when they started InnerOptic. Having developed the technology at UNC-Chapel Hill, they wrote their first SBIR grant proposal in 2003, but were not successful. Kurtis then took advantage of some entrepreneurship courses offered at the Kenan-Flagler School of Business and submitted another proposal, which they received in the Fall of 2003. Hoping to follow that success with a Phase II, InnerOptic's proposal was rejected on the grounds that their company was too small. Taking advantage of the comments and taking their second try more seriously, Kurtis and Nick were issued a Phase II grant from the National Science Foundation in March of 2005. They have used this funding to develop their Vidsee line of products, which they have successfully marketed and sold, but more importantly they have worked towards the completion of their 3D laparoscope technology. The main obstacle they are facing is making the products affordable and capable of operating in a real life surgical environment.

The SBIR grants have been crucial in establishing the due diligence needed to pursue private funding for their projects. Currently InnerOptic is waiting for the verdict on a proposal they sent in to NIH aimed at integrating implementing technology for cancer detection. Their first attempt was rejected, but they are optimistic about the re-submittal. The funding they have received has allowed them to bring on three full-time and two part-time employees and move to a new facility in Hillsborough. Right now InnerOptic remains focused on developing their Laparoscope technology and Kurtis stresses the importance of keeping a main goal and not pursuing too many avenues at once. Kurtis has attended a number of SBTDC events which he has found very helpful and he plans to go to more in the future. Apart from the help he has received from the SBTDC, Kurtis stresses the importance of acquiring a good business attorney.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Annual NIH SBIR/STTR Conference**

**July 13, 2006**  
**Cleveland, Ohio**

### **Highlights**

- Learn how to tap into \$640 million reserved explicitly for small businesses interested in Biomedical/Behavioral research
- Meet one-on-one with NIH staff
- Lots of networking time
- Get answers to **ALL** of your SBIR/STTR questions!

[Register Online](#) (registration fee is \$60)

## **DOE/USDA SBIR Energy Summit**

**July 6-7<sup>th</sup>**  
**Oak Ridge, TN**

The USDA SBIR program, led by CSREES (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service), is joining its Department of Energy (DOE) counterpart for the first DOE/USDA SBIR Energy Summit at Oak Ridge National Laboratories (ORNL) in Tennessee, July 6-7, 2006. The event will provide a forum to help engage the small business community in the development of energy technologies.

More Information available at: [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir\\_summit.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/sbir/sbir_summit.html)

## **SBIR/STTR Solicitations Abound this Summer**

Solicitations open this summer (or open shortly) include NIH, DoD, USDA, and NASA. Courtesy of the SBIR Gateway, you can visit <http://www.zyn.com/sbir/scomp.htm> to view the calendar show below with links directly to the agencies.

Open/Released Solicitations			
Program	Release Dates	Accepts Proposals	Closing Dates
<a href="#">DoD SBIR 2006.2</a>	30 May 2006	14 Jun 2006	14 Jul 2006
<a href="#">NSF SBIR/STTR</a>	13 March 2006	13 May 2006	13 Jun 2006
<a href="#">HHS/NIH SBIR/STTR (Grants)</a> <i>Non-AIDS Related Topics</i> PHS 2006-2 Omnibus	18 Jan 2006	1 Mar 2006	1 Apr 2006 1 Aug 2006 1 Dec 2006
<a href="#">HHS/NIH SBIR/STTR (Grants)</a> <i>AIDS Related Topics Only</i> PHS 2006-2 Omnibus	18 Jan 2006	1 Mar 2006	1 May 2006 1 Sep 2006 2 Jan 2007
<a href="#">HHS/FDA &amp; CDC SBIR (Grants)</a> PHS 2006-2 Omnibus	18 Jan 2006	1 Mar 2006	1 Apr 2006 1 Aug 2006 1 Dec 2006

Future Solicitations			
<i>** dates are subject to change</i>			
Program	Release Dates	Accepts Proposals	Closing Dates
<a href="#">USDA SBIR</a>	2 Jun 2006	2 Jun 2006	1 Sep 2006
<a href="#">HHS ACF</a>	15 Jun 2006	15 Jun 2006	31 Jul 2006
<a href="#">NASA SBIR/STTR</a>	7 Jul 2006	7 Jul 2006	7 Sep 2006
<a href="#">DoD SBIR 2006.3</a>	1 Aug 2006	13 Sep 2006	13 Oct 2006
<a href="#">DOE SBIR</a>	18 Sep 2006	18 Sep 2006	1 Dec 2006

## Thinking of Submitting to NIH for August 1?

The NIH website provides a comprehensive overview of the electronic application and submission process. If you are planning to submit to NIH for the August 1 deadline, check out the following site to learn the in's and out's at your earliest convenience:

[http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/prepare\\_app.htm](http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/prepare_app.htm)

## SBIR Services Provided by SBTDC

Learn about the SBTDC's SBIR/STTR services at:

<http://www.sbtdc.org/technology/sbir/brochure.pdf>