

Enterprise Ireland Backs Firecomms— A Photonics Company with “Global” Potential

Cork, Ireland—January 31, 2002 -- Enterprise Ireland is supporting a new photonics communications company whose technology has created huge international interest in the Information and Communications (ICT) Sector.

Firecomms Ltd. is developing technology leadership in the area of visible semiconductor light sources and photonic transceiver communications products. Its work is set to revolutionise the interconnection of computer, telecommunications and digital media equipment.

Based in Cork, Firecomms Ltd. spun out of the NMRC, the National ICT Centre which has prioritised the development of start-up companies, based on and integrated with the Centre’s research. According to Professor Gabriel Crean, director of the NMRC and chairman of Firecomms, “Firecomms has the technology and the support to be a global player in photonics.”

Total investment in the project is €6.5M over the next two years with the support of Enterprise Ireland.

Enterprise Ireland joins other high-profile investors who have supported the new company, including Mentor Capital, the investment company founded last year by Mike Pierce, chairman of Parthus, and headed by Mark Horgan.

“Our unique photonics technology portfolio, and the wide range of market opportunities it addresses, will allow Firecomms to grow rapidly on a world-wide basis,” said COO Thomas Moriarty.

Professor Gabriel Crean, NMRC’s director, sees the Firecomms story as presaging the development of a “cluster” of leading photonics companies in the Cork area. “There is no doubt there is the research capability and infrastructure at NMRC to support such a development. There are tremendous opportunities for new innovative companies in the photonics market, which is one of the fastest growing in the ICT sector with a projected

value of \$500 billion by 2013". Professor Crean predicts that "the 21st Century will be the Century of the Photon".

Projects supported by Enterprise Ireland are funded under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

Firecomms Ltd.

Firecomms provides innovative photonics solutions to OEMs operating in a number of rapidly growing high technology markets. Since May 2001 the Company has been supplying engineering samples of its products to key customers. An extensive network of contacts has been established with lead customers.

Firecomms uses a fabless business model, so allowing flexible and rapid scale-up of its output. A set of partnerships has been established to provide a complete supply chain from raw material through to finished products.

Photonic Communications is an enabling generic technology concerned with the transport of data by the use of light. This technology is being applied to an increasingly wider base of applications as various market sectors transition to digital technology and join the never-ending quest for increased bandwidth. As a result Firecomms has market opportunities in four areas: Telecommunications, Infotainment, Data Capture and Data Communications.

In **Telecomms**, glass fibre has been the perfect medium for long distance/high-speed telecommunication, but plastic optical fibre (POF) is a disruptive technology in the short distance FTTx (Fibre To The x) space. POF brings all the advantages of optical communication and is also easy to handle and terminate. Firecomms is at the forefront of new semiconductor light source technologies that will dramatically increase the bandwidth of POF.

Infotainment includes a variety of digital equipment appearing in professional and domestic environments such as digital camcorders, DTVs and set top boxes; CD and DVD players; digital video recorders, PC-based video editing, high bandwidth Internet connections and Internet TV. The standard for interconnecting this equipment is IEEE 1394 also known as FireWire™ or i-Link™. The world market for IEEE 1394 (FireWire) enabled devices is estimated to grow at an annual rate of 56%, from 82 million devices in 2001 to 495 million devices in 2005. The latest revision of this standard introduces plastic optical fibre to this market.

Firecomms' disruptive vertical cavity surface emitting laser (VCSEL) technology gives rise to exciting new opportunities for automating **Data Capture**, such as "one scan" internet access.

Data Communications networks in industry have used POF for years, and are crying out for the higher speeds and longer distances that Firecomms' technology will make possible.

#

F u r t h e r I n f o r m a t i o n :

Firecomms Ltd.

www.Firecomms.com

Thomas Moriarty, COO

Phone +353 (21) 489 7490

Fax +353 (21) 491 0159

tmoriarty@Firecomms.com

Enterprise Ireland

www.enterprise-ireland.ie

Grace Barry, Project Officer

Phone +353 (1) 206 6207

Fax +353 (1) 206 6376

Grace.Barry@enterprise-ireland.com

Mentor Capital

www.mentorcapital.ie

Mark Horgan, CEO

Phone +353 (1) 2059760

Fax +353 (1) 2059889

mark.horgan@mentorcapital.ie