

Alaka'i

Expanding in the Defense and Security Sector



Alaka'i Consulting & Engineering, Inc., a provider of next generation sensor and technology solutions to challenges facing the Defense and Security market, found the solution to its growth challenges in Pinellas County, Florida. An expansion for the company includes plans to add ten new jobs in the targeted defense electro-optics field. The new jobs, paying 200% of Pinellas' average annual wage, enable Alaka'i to take advantage of Florida's Qualified Target Industry tax refund program, and the company will receive an additional Brownfield Bonus due to their location within a designated Brownfield area. Alaka'i's facility renovations and new equipment purchases have easily run above six-figures. "The enticing incentives offered by Florida, superb incubator/accelerator facilities in the Young-Rainey STAR Center, the Headquarters of the War on Terror at MacDill, coupled with our established partnerships with existing industries and colleges/universities, made our Florida location the perfect choice for expansion," said Ed Dottery, President of Alaka'i.

The company contracts with the Department of Defense and has research and development operations at its Pinellas County headquarters as well as its other U.S. operations in Hawaii and New Hampshire. Key application areas are protection of combat vehicles, light infantry and key infrastructure from explosives and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) used by insurgents and terrorists. In the near future, Alaka'i anticipates investigating maritime and homeland security applications for their technologies.

Florida's **Qualified Target Industry (QTI)** program will help Alaka'i meet the growing demand for its services. The QTI program, referred to the company by **Pinellas County Economic Development**, is available to new and expanding Florida businesses in targeted, high-growth industries that create at least ten new, high-paying jobs. The program allows employers to receive substantial tax refunds for every new job created.

Alaka'i is located at the **Young-Rainey STAR Center** in Largo. The Center is the product of a collaborative effort between Congressman Young and former Pinellas County Commissioner Rainey to turn a closing DOE plant into a magnet for new industries like Alaka'i and its higher-paying technical jobs. As a designated Brownfield area, the STAR Center location allows Alaka'i to utilize the **Brownfield Redevelopment Bonus** incentive, through which the company will receive an additional \$2,500 tax refund for each new position created in the expansion. This key redevelopment program encourages environmental improvement and job creation of underutilized commercial properties where redevelopment is complicated by perceived environmental concerns.

Expanding in **STAR TEC**, housed within the STAR Center campus, provides additional benefits for the growing company, as Nancy Howe, STAR TEC Advisory Board Chair, explains: "Alaka'i is a great example of how STAR TEC supports the growth of early stage technology-based companies. Here, businesses have access to a wide array of services ranging from shared equipment, to administrative services, to business networking systems. Our goal is to provide the resources growing companies need to succeed."

Alaka'i's expansion came about only a short time after locating in Pinellas County. "We've experienced rapid growth in the Florida market," explains President Ed Dottery, "and should at least double, and possibly triple, our revenue in 2007. Pinellas County and STAR TEC have proven to be a very fertile environment for us." Learn more about Alaka'i at www.alakai.us.

Pinellas County Economic Development can help with your business expansion needs. Contact a Business Development Manager at (727) 464-7332, or visit www.PCED.org for more information.

