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Tedco showcases high-tech successes by *Lindsey Robbins*

Staff Writer

If a rural resident needs a biopsy to determine if a tumor is cancerous, he or she might have to travel hundreds of miles, as local physicians probably lack the \$250,000 instrument needed to pinpoint the growth site.

Clear Guide Medical of Baltimore hopes to change that through its clip-on devices that would provide guidance imaging for most ultrasounds at one-tenth the cost.

Clear Guide is among the finalists in the Maryland Technology Development Corp.'s Innovation, Corporate Excellence and Entrepreneurship awards. The awards, which will be presented May 31 at the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel, recognize businesses in each of the three categories for their accomplishments.

Nominees are selected from the state investment corporation's portfolio of more than 300 seed and early-stage companies that have received its funding and assistance.

Tedco "is proud to work with each of its more than 300 outstanding portfolio companies, which are producing solutions in fields from cancer research to electric vehicles," Robert Rosenbaum, president and executive director, said in a statement. "The ICE Awards give us an opportunity to highlight some of the most dynamic companies and individuals in business and technology.

Five finalists are competing in each of the three categories.

Clear Guide is in the running for the innovation award and will start its first stage of testing this week, said COO Dorothee Heisenberg.

The company is a 2010 spinoff from John Hopkins University, beginning with two professors who often heard physicians' complaints about guidance imaging systems being "clunky" and difficult to use, she said.

"Without guidance, the physician might have to do 50 to 60 sticks to get the correct tissue sample," Heisenberg said. "With this, we can bring that down to one or two."

She said local physicians could use the guidance system for the first pass and then send off tissue samples to pathologists for proper testing.

"Being able to identify cancer early makes all the difference. In cases where someone might have to travel to get the biopsy done, they might put it off," Heisenberg said.

BioMarker Strategies, another finalist in the innovation category, also focuses on cancer diagnostics.

The Baltimore company was founded in 2007 by Hopkins pathology professor Douglas Clark and Scott Allocco. BioMarker developed its SnapPath technology to test live tumor cells. Most testing typically is performed on cells that have been preserved, Allocco said.

With SnapPath, cells can be tested soon after a biopsy has been performed and then exposed to drugs outside the body, enabling researchers to develop tests to prescribe treatment, he said.

SnapPath soon will be tested at several universities in early clinical studies of melanoma, Allocco said.

About \$2.5 million of BioMarker's funding has come from the National Cancer Institute, with an additional \$9.5 million coming from foundations and individual investors, he said.

The entrepreneurship category focuses on company founders, such as Michael Raphael of Direct Dimensions in Owings Mills.

Direct Dimensions produces three-dimensional scanning systems that can be used for technical manufacturing and industrial design. In the case of buildings, an architect might scan the building to get its dimensions and plan for revisions.

Among some of Direct Dimensions' scanning projects have been the Liberty Bell, the Wright brothers' airplane and the USS Constellation, said Raphael, the company's founder and president.

"Nobody does what we do as broadly," he said.

The idea came to Raphael while working in the aerospace industry and noticing that three-dimensional designs for vessels were not coming out properly, he said. He wanted a more exact system.

Direct Dimensions also images objects used in movies for special effects and has developed a camera system for three-dimensional portraits, Raphael said.

The full list of finalists is available online at marylandtedco.org/_media/pdf/ICEAwardsFinalists.pdf.

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