



Thirst quencher or fashion accessory?

If you remember when people drank water from a glass or faucet, you are probably not a student. Water bottles have become the latest fashion accessory as Auburn students respond both to one of the hottest, driest summers on record and to the growing acceptance of bottled water as a consumer product.

Technology Transfer Office helps launch four start-up companies

The AU Office of Technology Transfer has announced the formation of four start-up companies based on technologies developed within the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. Two of the start-ups will be based in the Auburn area.

"Historically, we have helped launch two start-ups per year, but we have only done two purely engineering-based companies to date," said Technology Transfer Director Jan Dowdle Thornton. "To ramp these up so quickly, and have all of them come out of the College of Engineering is truly an unprecedented event for Auburn University."

The four new companies are:

- ◆ **Aunigma Communications Technologies, Inc.,** Atlanta. Based on wireless engineering research in the labs of John Wu and David Irwin of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Aunigma is launching next generation network security solutions. The technology will address new and expanding communication pathways and related Internet security threats. Aunigma's flexible and efficient protocols bring to the marketplace multiple threat protection while achieving unmatched performance compared to competing security offerings. Aunigma was founded by Auburn graduate Ken Garrard.

- ◆ **Modular Carpet Recycling Inc.,** or MCR, Auburn. Using a carbon dioxide-based process invented by Chris Roberts of Chemical Engineering, MCR will provide turn-key plants for efficient recycling of nylon from used carpets on a local and regional level. The company has initiated efforts to raise capital to demonstrate the technology in a pilot plant. A team led by Paul Swamidass of the Thomas Walter Center for Technology developed an Alabama Launchpad award-winning business plan for the company.

- ◆ **Applications Quest LLC,** Fairfax, Va. With recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings placing affirmative action under fire, mechanisms are needed to provide solutions to allow universities to realize their diversity objectives in a manner that is both effective and in conformity with legal standards. Applications Quest clustering software developed by Juan Gilbert of Computer Science and Software Engineering provides this capability by comparing application pools in their entirety,

thereby allowing multiple factors such as income, race, gender and geographical location to be considered without any one of them becoming a deciding factor.

- ◆ **OcuMedic Inc.,** Auburn. Co-founded by Mark Byrne of AU Chemical Engineering, OcuMedic is a drug delivery and medical device company with proprietary technology that creates new polymer films to allow increased loading and delayed release of drugs. Byrne and his group have invented a number of novel contact lenses to deliver medications to the surface of the eye, improving therapy over standard eye drop formulations. Part of OcuMedic's mission is to create a product line of therapeutic contact lenses to deliver medication for extended periods to address the considerable unmet need for more effective ocular drug delivery.

Brian Wright, associate director for commercialization in the Technology Transfer Office, attributed the increase to support from the Ginn College of Engineering. "Dean Larry Benefield and the college have significantly supported technology transfer efforts, including analysis and marketing efforts which have contributed directly to the development of these new companies," Wright said. "And, of course, tremendous credit goes to the researchers, for not only creating the licensed inventions, but for also being supportive of the start-up process."

Thornton said a contributing factor has been the inaugural Alabama Launchpad event, a university-centered statewide business plan competition. Auburn placed two teams in the finals of the events, MCR and OcuMedic, the winner of the \$100,000 competition.

"There's no question that Alabama Launchpad had a big impact on our start-up activity this year. OcuMedic was launched directly from its involvement in the competition, and MCR, the carpet recycling business, certainly received a big boost in recognition and contacts," Thornton said.

Larry Benefield, dean of the Ginn College of Engineering, said the commercialization of intellectual properties developed by Auburn faculty represents a significant funding component for the college. "The technologies on which these companies are based represent truly innovative and forward-focused research with real-world applications," he added.

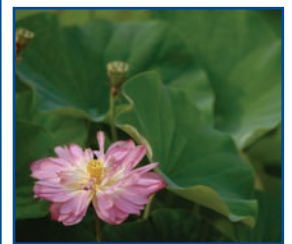
Geoff Hill to discuss search for Ivorybill

Geoffrey Hill, author of "Ivorybill Hunters: The Search for Proof in a Flooded Wilderness," will speak in Draughton Library at 3 p.m. Wednesday as part of the Discover Auburn Lecture Series.

Hill, Scharnagel professor of biology in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, will present the public lecture in the library's Special Collections and Archives Department.

"Ivorybill Hunters" tells the story of how Hill and two colleagues stumbled upon what may be a breeding population of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, long thought to be extinct, in the swamps of northern Florida.

Written like a detective story, the book delves into the science behind the rediscovery of a species, explaining how professional ornithologists respond to the sighting of a rare bird and how this activity differs from the public's perception of how scientists work.



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