

STAR TEC Graduate Continues Its Success

Alakai Defense Systems (<http://alakaidefensesystems.com>) has come a long way since its outgrowth as a successor to Alaka'i Consulting & Engineering, Inc. in Hawaii by Ed Dottery and Guy Ontai, two West Point graduates, physicists, and former U.S. Army officers.

Wanting to take advantage of the favorable business climate, the company moved its headquarters to Florida, becoming one of STAR TEC's earliest clients in 2006. Since that time, Alaka'i and its extensive network of affiliated partners have grown to provide next generation sensor and technology solutions to challenges facing the Defense and Security market place, with a particular specialty in laser and electro-optic remote sensing and systems integration to detect trace molecules of military significance, such as found in explosives, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), and CBRNE threats.

After its graduation from STAR TEC in October 2008, Alakai moved to larger facilities in the National Science Forensic Technology Center in Largo where the company is now seeking additional lab and office space. Although the local office serves as corporate headquarters, Alakai has also opened an office at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to "stay close to the end user – the Soldier" and anticipates opening another location in Maryland to be close to their Army laboratory customers as well.

A seven-figure Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security Prime Contractor, Alakai is a founding member of the Florida Federal Contractors Association and has already received a number of significant awards, including the 2009 Florida Governor's Diversification Award for Entrepreneurship in the Mega Market category and Pinellas County Emerging Entrepreneur Award in 2008. Alakai was recently awarded the Tampa Bay Technology Forum's 2010 Emerging Technology Company of the Year Award.

"From our formal ribbon cutting to our graduation, STAR TEC has provided top flight coaching and mentoring that has helped us optimize our fast growth," says Dottery, Alakai president. "The support of the STAR TEC network has presented numerous opportunities and their advice has led to helpful strategic partnerships, positive media attention and direct financial benefits. We would not be where we are today had STAR TEC not provided us with the knowledge and expertise of advisors specifically selected to match our needs."