

Right Stuff sparks federal interest

Company signs contract with U.S. Missile Defense Agency

BRANDY DELAVEGA
bdelavega@rsg.com

A Reno company's cutting-edge research has caught the attention of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency.

The Right Stuff of Tahoe Inc. has signed a six-month, \$100,000 contract with the MDA to develop fault-tolerant multicomputers that could be used for earth-based or space-based supercomputing applications.

The contract, which includes a three-month, \$50,000 hardware-design option, was offered through the MDA's advanced systems department. The department explores new technologies that could be utilized by the agency.

Larry LaForge, president of The Right Stuff, said the research his company is doing would allow computers to communicate with each other wirelessly.

"Right now, supercomputers communicate through really small wires that get in the way," LaForge said. "We are exploring what would happen if each computer could connect to a lot of different computers by using a device called a vertical cavity emitting laser."

The Right Stuff is researching how the technology can be used and the design involved. If the MDA grants the company the hardware-design option, LaForge said the research would go from an investigative effort to building a prototype.

LaForge, a graduate of MIT and McGill University in Montreal, has been a three-time NASA Fellow and



In space or on earth, vertical cavity semiconductor-emitting lasers, or VCSELS, serve as enablers for multi-computer architectures.

professor of computer science and mathematics with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Part of the research is based on LaForge's mathematical formulas, which he said is how he approaches

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THE RIGHT STUFF OF RENO:
www.the-right-stuff.com

computer design.

"One of the reasons we are different is that our computers are designed by numbers," he said. "We're trying to think outside the box."

That unique approach has piqued the interest of the MDA.

Chris Taylor, spokesperson for the MDA, said The Right Stuff's research fits with the work being done by the advanced systems department.

"The agency is looking at lightweight computers for space and air applications across the ballistic missile defense system," Taylor said. "We are constantly looking down the road at the next technology."

This isn't the first time the government has taken an interest in The Right Stuff's work.

In 2004, the company had contracts with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security's Advance Research Projects Agency.

Besides researching hi-tech applications for the government, The Right Stuff also has developed a system that can be used by the everyday businessman.

The RightCardPro software prints barcodes on the back of business cards that can be scanned by a variety of scanners. The barcode can download your business information or whole documents onto a computer.

So far, about 5,000 customers



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Multi-computer architecture of vertical cavity semiconductor-emitting lasers, or VCSELs, extended across multiple spacecraft.

Right Stuff/Reno-based company founded in 1997

From DE have bought the software.

LaForge said the company, founded in 1997, is still in the research and development phase, but he loves what he does.

"You can't have a small business without having a passion for what you do," he said. "The people here tend to be pretty passionate about what they are doing."

He has used his experience

to offer guidance to the roughly 50 members of the Nevada Inventor's Association.

Don Costar, the founder of the organization, said LaForge joined more to help others than to get help himself.

"He's one of the few people that doesn't join because he needs our help," Costar said. "He joined with the idea to help someone else in our organization. He's that type of person."

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CONTACT
BUSINESS EDITOR
RONALD E. SMITH
775.784.6426
BUSINESS@RGJ.COM