

## ***Some GREAT things that happened in Oak Ridge in 2011! Part 6***

**(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on February 21, 2012)**

As we continue to celebrate successes in Oak Ridge during 2011, I want to bring you a continuing story that is unfolding in a huge way. Because of the dedication of several key individuals and the willingness to cooperate among religious groups, a new local outreach activity is being formed. TORCH is the acronym for this newly developing initiative.

Sheila Michel, Trinity Outreach Director, said, "I am happy to announce that we are moving forward in developing use of the upper level of Trinity education building. This will be a long, involved process with hopes of opening the building to the public in January of 2013."

"This particular initiative is called **Trinity Out-Reach Center of Hope or TORCH**. The Torch is the symbol of the light of God leading the way. God is light we are told, a lamp unto our feet. The goal of Torch will be to light the path for children of God who have found themselves in need and/or in crisis.

"The vision is to assist people in learning to help themselves such that they are in a position to pass the torch on to others. This is what God asks of each of us. We are called to love, help, understand and encourage each other such that we may each become the best disciple possible.

"The early stages of this initiative are very involved as people in the community are interviewed to determine what is needed, what is not being done currently and how we can coordinate our efforts. Oak Ridge is a wonderful city filled with good people and fine organizations that are doing what they can to assist those in need.

"But the demographics of the community are changing, as governmental assistance is becoming less. If we can coordinate all of our efforts and address those issues not currently being addressed, we could see amazing things happen within the community. Other communities have accomplished this and are a fount of advice and inspiration.

"I feel called to this work, but it is quite daunting. If you would like to learn more about the TORCH vision and offer feedback, please consider inviting me to your Sunday school class or Small Group. If you feel called to Champion a specific effort let me know.

"TORCH Mission Statement: To develop an interfaith community center which establishes opportunities for the unemployed, uninsured and/or working poor of our community to find adequate food, clothing, job training, financial training, employment, housing and spiritual guidance. To help Oak Ridge community develop an even stronger sense of community and become a model of rebuilding.

"TORCH Vision Statement: To build each individual's sense of self-worth and beauty in the eyes of God, which will, in turn, extend to a community sense of value.

"TORCH Values: Community, Diversity, 'Pay it Forward,' Physical and Mental Health and Growth

"TORCH Possibilities: Food Bank, Used Clothing Store, Job Training, Financial Training, Computer Center, Warming Center, Spiritual Center, Counseling Center, Interview Workshops, Employment Assistance, Housing Center

"Each initiative's goal would be to encourage the community to invest in its people as the people invest in themselves, creating a productive, vibrant, flourishing city with productive, thriving citizens.

"It is with outrageous optimism and a firm belief in God's love and concern for those in need that I believe it is possible for the vision of TORCH to become a reality. I am attempting to listen and follow the path

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being laid before me even when it seems overwhelming and downright frightening. I invite all of you to join in our efforts at becoming 'Christians in the Real World.'"

Sheila's description of TORCH first appeared in the First United Methodist Church's *First Things Newsletter*. I am grateful to Sheila and others for helping me capture this amazing initiative that had its start in 2011, but seems destined to grow stronger as time goes by.

Let me now focus on economic development. By looking at these innovative new companies in Oak Ridge, I hope to give you a glimpse of the future. The companies that have recently located in Oak Ridge are creating the next wave of positive results in Oak Ridge's history. Jesse Smith of Tennessee Innovation Valley provided these details.

First let's look at the Composite Applications Group which is located in the Halcyon Commercialization Center at the Science & Technology Park at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. They work with companies to develop carbon fiber and composite solutions for new applications.

The group's President, Jeff McCay had this to say about the company, "We have received a lot of value by being in the Science & Technology Park at ORNL. The game changing low-cost technology is being developed there and we get to interact with those at the forefront of that technology."

Jeff continued, "We also worked with ORNL's Partnership's Group to bring Alex Borla of Borla Performance Exhausts of Johnson City, TN, for a visit that ultimately resulted in them participating with ORNL in 'America's Next Top Energy Innovator Challenge.' This might never have happened if Innovation Valley hadn't introduced us to the Partnerships Group at ORNL."

McCay also indicated that with the help of ORNL's Partnerships Group, they have hosted several Fortune 500 companies introducing them to technology being developed in low-cost carbon fiber materials.

Finally he said, "The success of carbon fiber into new market applications is heavily reliant on ORNL's success with these materials."

Next let's look at Atriax Materials who recently located in the East Tennessee Technology Park at the Heritage Center industrial park. Their skill is to take research done on smaller scales such as at universities or national laboratories and scale them up to industrial production volumes.

Mike Black, Vice President of Operations said, "When Atriax Materials was looking for a site for our new business, we were drawn to the Oak Ridge area because of the proximity to Oak Ridge National Laboratory and other technology resources in the area."

Black continued, "Since we are in the business of materials development, access to people with a broad range of talents from machine operators to engineers is a necessity. The staff of Knoxville Oak Ridge Innovation Valley, The Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce and Oak Ridge National Laboratory listened to our needs and helped us with everything from real estate selection to personnel options. We made the right decision to locate to Oak Ridge and look forward to growing our business here."

Did you get that? Read it again...Mike Black has nailed it. He has stated the real reasons Oak Ridge is such a great place for technology companies to locate. Wow!

Here is another. PKMJ (this name actually is formed from the initials of the owner's children's names), located at 1020 Commerce Park Drive, is a nuclear consulting organization providing software and engineering solutions to the nuclear energy industry. They interact with most of the nation's nuclear utilities to ensure they have the needed parts during preventative maintenance and shutdowns. They alert them to any components needed that may be obsolete.

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Paul Tobin, Sr., Manager - Tennessee Operations for PKMJ, said, "The folks at Innovation Valley and Oak Ridge have been extremely helpful in finding a location, bringing all the parties to the table at the right times during this process. We have been thrilled with the help we have received and hope to continue to expand here." Yeah! That is what we need to do for all companies who might want to locate here. We help them and they grow our economy.

Here are even more relative new companies.

Enercon opened an office at 599 Oak Ridge Turnpike in 2010. It is an industry leader in the resurgence of nuclear power plants in the United States and is in the forefront of developing the licensing, engineering, and environmental aspects of the next generation of power plants. Enercon is an engineering, environmental, technical and management services firm providing a broad range of professional services to private, public and government sector clients throughout the United States.

Longenecker & Associates located at 40 New York Avenue is a consulting firm that provides highly specialized fast response technical and management support to the nuclear and environmental industries.

ATC-Nuclear is located in Terry Mullins' building at the corner of Emory Valley Road and LaFayette Drive. It is the location where Oak Ridge Tool-Engineering Inc., was located for several years. ATC-Nuclear is using a warehouse and other buildings on the 8.7-acre site. ATC-Nuclear delivers best-in-class safety-related and non-safety related hardware and services for the nuclear industry.

North Wind is a small business leader in the environmental, engineering, and construction services industries. It is also located at 40 New York Avenue.

Longenecker & Associates, also located at 40 New York Avenue, is a consulting firm that provides highly specialized, fast response technical and management support to the nuclear and environmental management support to the nuclear and environmental Industries.

Gilmartin Engineering Works, located at 40 New York Avenue, Gilmartin Engineering Works was formed to promote and expand domestic suppliers in the energy industry. With over 26 years experience in the energy field, Gary Gilmartin brings a wide-ranging network throughout energy related initiatives and innovative approaches to providing our nation's energy needs.

LED North America's Andrew Wilhelm, one of the company's founders, decided to locate the company in Tech2020, a business incubator in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. That decision brought with it several advantages.

One is that he is able to take advantage of the numerous resources offered by Tech2020's Center for Entrepreneurial Growth to its client companies, such as assistance in obtaining funding and access to experienced executives who can offer valuable advice. Another is that by being in proximity to ORNL, he is able to work closely with Klett to further refine the integration of the graphite foam material into the LED lamps.

Other technologies for cooling of LED lamps are available, but LED North America chose the graphite foam because of its exceptional thermal conductivity and easy machinability, which greatly increase design flexibility. In addition, other materials used for heat sinks, such as copper and aluminum, are heavier, more expensive, and less efficient than graphite foam.

All these companies, except Enercon which located in their present location in 2010, have located in Oak Ridge in 2011. It has been a year of growth and innovation in Oak Ridge!

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Again, I am pleased to see the continuing emphasis in The Oak Ridger on the positive in the special section *Progress, Focusing on our Community*. If you feel the same way, please communicate your appreciation for this positive focus in the newspaper. It was a real pleasure to read in Keys Fillhauer's guest column a line suggesting I keep up the positive stories.

I am convinced we must change the flavor of the talk about Oak Ridge. The Oak Ridge Mall is an example of something we need to turn into a positive once again. I am just as convinced that it can be done.

We can be proud of Oak Ridge and sing our praises. Look for the good, the pleasant the noteworthy and talk about that. It will make ua feel better and soon reality will reflect our positive attitude. Try it and see!



Mike Black, Vice President of Operations, Atriax Materials, LLC

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Dave Weiss, Vice President of Technology, Atrix Materials, LLC



ATC-Nuclear entrance at the corner of Emory Valley Road and LaFayette Drive

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