

Thursday, June 09, 2005

A roundup of business activity in the Northwest

### **House panel awards \$6 million to 3 Vancouver-area outfits**

The House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee awarded Wednesday a total of \$6 million to three businesses with ties to Vancouver. Oregon Iron Works will receive \$3 million to design and partially build an aerial vehicle for the Navy at its Vancouver plant; NLight Photonics will receive \$2 million for research and development of high power semiconductor lasers for the Air Force; and Armor Systems International will receive \$1 million to develop a product to protect vehicles against rocket-propelled grenade attack. Approval is expected in the House and Senate, said Rep. Brian Baird, D-Wash., who made the announcement. "These are great projects that are urgently needed," Baird said.

The aerial vehicle assigned to Oregon Iron Works will conduct aerial spying, using air sensors that can detect chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. The company has a production facility in Vancouver, Baird said, but some of the project work may be done at the company's Clackamas plant.

NLight, which has plant outside the Vancouver city limits, already has been working with the Air Force on the design and use of high-powered lasers. The company's products also are used in medical and industrial applications.

Armor Systems International, which has about 12 employees, will hire about five more to research and develop the new protection system at the company's Tri-County Industrial Park plant in Tualatin, said Terry Billedeaux, company president.

-- Allan Brettman