

Firecomms a Winner at Irish Venture Capital Event

Cork, Ireland—December 18, 2001 --It has been announced this morning that Firecomms Ltd., a new Irish photonics communications company, was a winner at the Irish leg of an international competition, called the Science-to-Market Innovation Tour. Organised by the European Venture Capital company Tornado Insider and its Irish partner, HotOrigin, the Irish final was one of a series organised in 10 European cities searching for Europe's most promising early stage technology projects spinning out of universities, research institutes, and corporations. A selection of Ireland's most promising technology spin-outs and companies presented their technology projects in front of an audience of business angels, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, technology transfer officials, and service providers. Firecomms and Neosera, the Irish winners, will go on to present in front of a large international audience during the 3rd Annual Tornado Insider UpStart Europe Conference in Amsterdam, May 20-22nd, 2002.

Firecomms Ltd.

Firecomms Ltd. is a *Photonic Communications Company* spun out of the National Microelectronics Research Centre (www.NMRC.ie). A team of outstanding engineers and scientists within the company are developing and extending the company's technology leadership in the area of visible semiconductor light sources and communications technology.

Firecomms will supply photonics solutions to OEMs operating in a number of rapidly growing high technology markets. Since May 2001 the company has been supplying engineering samples of its products to key customers. An extensive network of contacts has been established with lead customers and other major multinationals with complementary technology will help to open up the markets for Firecomms.

Firecomms uses a fabless model for production, so allowing rapid scale-up of its output without major capital commitments. A further set of partnerships has been established to provide a complete supply chain from raw material through to finished products.

Photonic Communications is an enabling generic technology concerned with the transport of data by the use of light. This technology is being applied to a wider base of applications as various market sectors transition to digital technology and join the never-ending quest for increased bandwidth. As a result Firecomms has market opportunities in four areas: Telecommunications, Infotainment, Data Capture and Data Communications.

In **Telecomms**, glass fibre has been the perfect medium for long distance/high-speed telecommunication, but plastic optical fibre (POF) is a disruptive technology in the short distance FTTx (Fibre To The x) space. POF brings all the advantages of optical communication and is also easy to handle and terminate. Firecomms is at the forefront of new semiconductor light source technologies that will dramatically increase the bandwidth of POF.

Infotainment includes a variety of digital equipment appearing in professional and domestic environments such as digital camcorders, DTVs and set top boxes; CD and DVD players; digital video recorders, PC-based video editing, high bandwidth Internet connections and Internet TV. The standard for interconnecting this equipment is IEEE 1394 also known as FireWire™ or i-Link™. The world market for IEEE 1394 (FireWire) enabled devices is estimated to grow at an annual rate of 56%, from 82 million devices in 2001 to 495 million devices in 2005. The latest revision of this standard introduces plastic optical fibre to this market.

Firecomms' disruptive vertical cavity surface emitting laser (VCSEL) technology gives rise to exciting new opportunities for automating **Data Capture**, such as "one scan" internet access.

Data Communications networks in industry have used POF for years, and are crying out for the higher speeds and longer distances that Firecomms' technology will make possible.

For further information check out the Firecomms web site at www.Firecomms.com.

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TORNADO INSIDER

Tornado Insider was founded in late 1998 as the first media company serving the new pan-European technology industry, providing entrepreneurs, investors and other participants with the information they need to succeed in Europe's new economy.

Further information can be found at *www.tornado-insider.com*.

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HOTORIGIN

HotOrigin is a leading Irish early-stage venture capital and specialist consultancy company.

Further information can be found at *www.hotorigin.com*.

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NEOSERA

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