



Rochester Regional Photonics Cluster
150 Lucius Gordon Drive
Rochester, NY 14586
T: 585.329.4029
F: 585.214.2458

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Dr. John Souders
OPTEC
PO Box 21689
Waco, TX 76702-1689

Dr. Souders:

The Rochester Regional Photonics Cluster is an industry association representing both the highest concentration *and* the largest number of optics, photonics and imaging companies in America.

In our region, over 80 innovative companies, employing over 20,000 people are engaged in "working with light," creating optical components, assemblies, systems, instruments, sophisticated machines, glass, and optically-enabled devices. The ongoing research & development in this realm includes optical and photonic systems that enable every other industry in America, from manufacturing, to consumer products, military and aerospace systems, medical devices, computers, telecommunications, etc.

Unfortunately, as the Rochester region transitioned from one dominated by large "light-enabled" employers like Eastman Kodak, Bausch and Lomb and Xerox, to one comprised of smaller, more nimble and innovative enterprises, the optics program at Monroe Community College lagged. New technologies were not adopted and taught. Investment by corporate giants in the program dwindled, and graduate numbers fell. Our work with OPTEC on this NSF grant represents acknowledgement by our membership that the situation is no longer tenable.

Even in the current economy, optics technicians are in demand in the Rochester OPI market. At least two of our members have plans which include doubling their workforce within the next three years, and in its current state, the regional workforce system is unable to supply the number of trained optical technicians for that to be possible. In order for the region's companies to continue to thrive, a state of the art program for training optics technicians is essential.

We have been working with OPTEC for over a year now in hopes of establishing such a program once again at Monroe Community College. The proposal to the National Science Foundation is a critical part of our region's future.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Battley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Thomas Battley
Executive Director