



**GEORGIA TECH VIDEO:**  
**LASER ATLANTA GROWS,  
PROSPERS: GEORGIA TECH  
ATDC GLOWS WITH PRIDE**

February 25, 1992

Laser Atlanta was just a glimmer in the eyes of founders Mark Samuels and Scott Patterson as recently as 1989. Today, the company's laser guns are cruising the country in police cars, sailing the Pacific Ocean on America's Cup yachts -- and in July they'll speed into orbit on the space shuttle.

Company President Samuels and Vice President Patterson, both Georgia Institute of Technology graduates,

**VISUALS AVAILABLE:**

- \*Computer display of space shuttle/satellite system the laser gun will assist.
- \*Person using laser gun to clock car speed.
- \*Assembly of laser gun circuit cards.
- \*Optical alignment testing of laser gun.
- \*Interviews with Scott Patterson, Laser Atlanta vice president, and Wayne Hodges, ATDC director.

were equipped with the technical knowledge and skill they needed to develop new applications for laser technology when they started Laser Atlanta three years ago. But the two co-founders needed some assistance preparing a business strategy -- that's where Georgia Tech's Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) was able to help, Patterson said.

"ATDC assigned us an advisor, who helped us prepare a business plan," he said. "They pointed out initial needs for financial, legal and marketing expertise. ATDC kept us

from leaning too hard to the technical side."

ATDC is a business development program that assists emerging technology companies, says Wayne Hodges, ATDC director. In operation since 1981, it is one of

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the oldest such programs associated with a university in the country and is now assisting 34 companies.

"The common denominator among the companies we work with is they have the technical talent and background, but no strategic business background," Hodges said. "We help them focus through a business or marketing plan and tie them into networks of support -- attorneys, accountants, investors. We helped Laser Atlanta in identifying their market and we've taken investors to the company."

Prospective ATDC member companies must be developing or producing technology products and have the beginnings of a marketing team and business plan. A company does not have to be associated with Georgia Tech to become a member. After evaluation, companies accepted into the program get free assistance from ATDC and may opt to rent space at ATDC's complex on 10th Street in Atlanta.

The state-funded ATDC program is administered by Georgia Tech. Currently, Georgia gets a return of \$11 for every \$1 it invests in ATDC, Hodges said.

Meanwhile, Laser Atlanta's 13 employees are developing laser guns for space shuttle astronauts to use in docking with satellites. The guns will clock the speeds at which the shuttle and satellite move toward each other, preventing collisions.

The guns are also being marketed and sold by Kustom Signals of Kansas to police departments all over the United States for use in clocking vehicle speeds. The product is more accurate than the microwave radar police carry now -- the thin laser beam used can accurately isolate and clock the speed of one car at a time.

Five America's Cup yachting teams, including the two U.S. groups, are using the guns to find out how fast and in what direction their race competitors are sailing.

The product is unusual in that it offers a computerized "head-up" display of speed, direction or other measurements the customer wants. "Head-up" displays allow users to see the numbers they need while they look through the gun's viewfinder at the scene, car, satellite or other object they are tracking.

Laser Atlanta is exploring other applications for its technology as well, in areas such as cataract removal that leaves the lens of the eye intact, and diabetes detection.

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***If you are interested in reporting on this information and need more information or missed our Tuesday, February 25 satellite feed, please call David Kennedy at (404) 894-2453 or Lea McLees/John Toon at (404) 894-3444. Wayne Hodges can be reached at 894-4935. Our satellite feeds are scheduled 3 to 3:15 p.m. each Tuesday through May 26, 1992, at coordinates Westar 5, Transponder 24, Audio 6.2/6.8.***