



Congressman Murtha

## IEE Highlights in 2004

“One person, one idea, one company”—the IEE works on a highly individualized basis to support the growth of small businesses. In 2004, the IEE:

- Counseled 853 clients for a total of 7,691 hours of consulting
- Assisted 66 clients in starting or purchasing a business
- Assisted clients in securing loans or investments for a total of \$21.6 million
- Provided 4,938 hours of training to 1,605 people through 58 programs
- Fielded 6,345 phone inquiries for information of concern to small business
- Fielded 824 web inquiries for information of concern to small business

Another example of this kind of RFID technology is already being employed in hospitals that use “smart cabinets,” the product of an IEE client, Mobile Aspects. Smart cabinets can read a hospital employee’s identification badge and note the type of equipment or drug removed from the cabinet, the amount, and the date and time.

Companies sometimes come to the IEE for advice in one area and are enriched in other areas as well. Dielectric Solutions, based in Butler, Pennsylvania, is a good example. “They have engaged with us at two levels,” says Dugan. “The company initially came to us through the young CEO’s program sponsored by the Entrepreneurial Fellows Center. They wanted to improve their management skills as they were very technically oriented. As we got to know them, we started keeping an eye out for marketing opportunities that might fit their product.” The IEE helped Dielectric Solutions obtain a new round of venture financing, vamped up its board of directors, and helped to refine their business model. The company is now actively producing products for the First Responders program (see sidebar).

Dugan anticipates two key initiatives for the Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence in 2005. “With the additional resources that the NCFRT grant provides us, as well as the number of companies that have been through our business management programs, the IEE is now working with more than 200 companies in Western Pennsylvania. As we see marketing opportunities arise, we can match them to the companies that we know.”

The second initiative of the center is to tie more Katz MBA student projects around the IEE’s contact companies. Many small, high-tech companies have a good handle on their technology, but need help identifying the best, most sustainable market, or developing a business plan that provides an effective point of entry for the product. Using teams of MBA students is an obvious win-win for everyone. “When students can apply the skill sets learned in the classroom to real life examples, they make better employees,” Dugan notes.

The Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence is in its first, five-million dollar phase of a \$15 million capital campaign, seeking a named endowment. Dugan is excited about the prospects of developing high-technology in Western Pennsylvania. Noting that the country’s rate of commercial innovation is falling behind that of other industrialized countries, she concludes: “As a country we make significant investments in research—we now need to turn that research into products and technologies that will benefit the region, the country and, indeed, all of us.”

For more information on any of the programs of the Institute for Innovative Excellence, visit <http://iee.katz.edu>, phone (412) 648-1544 or inquire at [ieeinfo@katz.pitt.edu](mailto:ieeinfo@katz.pitt.edu).

