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## CNY company, Upstate schools partner to develop machine-tool technology

The product would be aimed at small to mid-sized manufacturing companies

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ONONDAGA — A \$25,000 state grant, plus collaborations with several upstate universities, should help kick-start a project at MacKintok, Inc., a software and business solutions company, that could lead to a marketable product by year's end.

MacKintok, headquartered at 5036 City View Drive in the town of Onondaga, specializes in providing information-retrieval tools to the manufacturing and machine-tool industry. That's easy to do, MacKintok owner and founder Kenneth Tock says, when the machinery is newer and has Ethernet capabilities.

The only struggle there, he notes, is that different machines communicate in different "languages" so, until MacKintok partnered with MT Connect Institute, a group of companies working together to promote the use of MT Connect, each "language" needed its own system to communicate.

MT Connect is an open, royalty-free standard that translates all the various machine "languages" into one standard protocol and was the key to MacKintok developing one product that would display information from all types of machines, Tock says.

That information includes numerous details about how that machine is running, he says. Everything from how fast a spindle rotates to how many times the machine has broken down. Having that information easily accessible helps manufacturers stay on top of issues, tweak things to improve efficiency, and even set



up a maintenance schedule.

There was just one problem left, Tock says. There still wasn't a way for older legacy machines to communicate. "They are all over, but they aren't connected to the Ethernet," he says. The problem is finding a way for those machines to gather and communicate information.

The solution, Tock hopes, will come from the project for which MacKintok received a \$25,000 grant from CenterState CEO's Grants for Growth program to design and build a prototype device that will use sensors to gather and transmit that information.

"Basically, we're making those old machines intelligent and able to communicate," Tock says.

MacKintok will work with SUNY Cortland and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) to provide research opportunities for students to test different components. Students in Cortland's professional master's degree in sustainable-energy systems program will test the reliability, efficiency, and limits of the wireless sensors. Students in an advanced manufacturing processes and systems class at RPI will test the box that will receive the sensor data.

After that, "we're looking at a couple pilot projects with some local manufactur-

ers," Tock says. The company is working with the Cortland County Business Development Corporation and Industrial Development Agency to connect with companies in the area to test the product, he says.

If all goes well, Tock hopes to have product testing under way within a month and have a marketable product by the end of this year. "We're really close right now," he says.

Once that happens, Tock expects good things for his company, which he founded in 2004. The product would be aimed at small to mid-sized manufacturing companies, which don't necessarily have the resources to invest in new equipment.

"I think there's potential for growth there for sure," he says. While he declined to provide any sales projections, he says the product would provide almost limitless opportunities by offering customized solutions as well as a basic slate of options.

Currently, Tock is MacKintok's only full-time employee. He uses contractors on an as-needed basis, but expects that to change. "At some point, as this takes off, we're going to have to have full-time personnel," he says. □

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