

[Back](#)

Software company plans to help ICAR program
Intec hopes to begin exchange program for Clemson students

Published: Saturday, February 2, 2008 - 2:00 am

By Rudolph Bell
BUSINESS WRITER
dmbell@greenvillenews.com

A German software company that serves the auto industry has established its first beachhead in the United States at the International Center for Automotive Research, Clemson University's research park in Greenville.

Intec GmbH, maker of Simpack virtual simulation software, has also donated software and support services worth more than \$1 million for use at ICAR's graduate school of automotive engineering, the company and university said Friday.

The 50-employee company, based in Munich, counts BMW, Daimler and Honda among its customers, said Alexander Eichberger, co-owner and managing director.

Eichberger said Intec would initially station one employee at ICAR -- Bob Solomon, president of its U.S. unit -- and it hopes to have 15-20 employees on the research campus in three to five years.

Advertisement

"We have to start small to see how it develops," he said. "The U.S. market is a difficult market at the time. The automotive industry is not doing very well. We hope it will recover."

Intec, with about \$9 million in annual revenues, also has customers in the railroad, aerospace and wind turbine industries. Its software is also used by Formula One race teams and numerous universities, Eichberger said.

Eichberger said he plans to talk to General Electric Co. about the possibility of using Simpack in its wind turbine business, part of which -- engineering and some manufacturing -- is located in Greenville.

Intec picked Greenville instead of Detroit for its first U.S. presence, he said, partly because it wanted to be part of an advanced vehicle research facility such as ICAR and partly at BMW's behest.

"They've set up operations here," he said about BMW. "They wanted us also to set up operations in the U.S."

BMW's sole U.S. manufacturing plant is near Greer, and the German automaker operates a research center focused on information technology at ICAR.

Eichberger said Simpack was created at a government-funded aerospace research center in Germany and spun out as a private company in 1993. BMW and Daimler began using it in 2005, he said.

Imtiaz-ul-Haque, chairman of Clemson's mechanical engineering department, said the software's virtual prototyping capability reduces the time to bring new products to market.

"This package gives us the ability to capture the physics of what happens in a vehicle or in any other machine or mechanism through simulation, and that is a very big deal," he said.

In addition to the software itself, Intec is providing training and internships for students, ul-Haque said.

"Our students will have the opportunity to go over to Germany and work on internships, work in the company, work on the software, work on projects with other companies," he said.

"They're giving us technical expertise here so if we have problems with the software we have someone to come to. So they're giving us a lot of different things. And that's what makes it very, very attractive."
