

Oceanside/Island Park

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Putting Oceanside on the map

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Medical company sets up shop on Royal Avenue

By JOSEPH KELLARD

Two infant Filipino boys conjoined at the head became worldwide news after doctors separated them using technology innovated by a company that now calls Oceanside home.

In a series of surgeries from October 2003 to August 2004, Dr. James Goodrich and Dr. David Stadlenberg successfully separated the boys' brains and vital blood vessels they shared with a dual-frequency radio wave device, a device patented by Ellman International, the Royal Avenue-based designer, manufacturer and marketer of various high-radio frequency products for such enhanced surgical procedures.

Around the time of the first surgery, after a search for a new building that took them as far as Bayshore and Hauppauge, company CEO Alan Ellman and President Dr. Jon Garito settled on the outskirts of Oceanside's industrial area, from where they now work to convince the medical world that radio wave technology is the wave of the future.

"We're exposing doctors from around the world to Oceanside and putting it on the map," Garito said, as his company prepares to have its technology used in what may become another high-profile case involving a young girl with conjoined legs.

While other technologies in the medical, dental and veterinary fields, such as electro-surgical and laser devices, operate with low frequency and high temperatures, Ellman International's radio frequency models employ the reverse for optimal surgical precision. The physicians' instrument, which Ellman and Garito envisioned working like a scalpel, attaches to their four-megahertz energy source and a software-controlled device gives the doctor tissue-related feedback during the surgery.

"At this point, the Ellman technology became a key in splitting the conjoined brains with as little injury as possible," Goodrich wrote in a letter to Ellman and Garito about their SurgiMax dual-frequency unit. "...Both boys are doing very well, with no evidence of any neurological deficit. Your resources were invaluable and very much appreciated."

"It was pretty incredible that our technology was part of a really important part of that procedure," Ellman said.

Unlike more conventional methods, Ellman International's technology causes no burning, less cellular alteration, decreased scar tissue formation, faster healing and a better aesthetic outcome, Ellman and Garito claim. "We believe our units are far ahead of lasers," Ellman said. Garito added, "But you don't hear too much about it because we're not some huge, hyped laser company."

On entering the lobby of their new building, visitors are greeted by a wall display of plaques of the company's 60 patents, mostly for instruments Ellman and Garito created for health care providers. "These are used in surgeries for hair transplantation to rhinoplasty to spinal work to separating conjoined heads. Moreover, the innovators presently have some 14 patents pending. Their innovations originate when physicians come to them with their needs, describing the areas of the anatomy where they want the radio frequencies to go. Ellman and Garito then develop the instruments and accessories.

"We consider the surgeons artists," Garito said, "and that we provide them with the brushes and paints to express their surgical expertise."

A relatively small but independent company, Ellman International was founded by Ellman's father, Dr. Irving Ellman, a dentist and electrical engineer, who innovated and patented the radio frequency technology for his practice in 1959. His son and Garito took over the busi-

ness in 1976, and decided to relocate from their Hewlett offices as business productivity and expansion demand.

While in Hewlett, the company operated out of two separate buildings — each about a block apart — that totaled 23,000 square feet. Their new all-in-one Oceanside building, which boasts almost double the square footage, was a run-down structure that housed a machine parts manufacturer that went belly up. The new facade is done up in tan stucco and bricks complemented by "ELLMAN" in bold crimson letters, and the interior features a mix of the old and the refurbished. Exposed metal rafters, heating ducts and steel perpendicular beams compete against maroon walls, cherry wood furnishings and shellacked hardwood floors.

"Moving here shot up the morale in the company," Garito said. "People really enjoy working here, they enjoy the environment, and they enjoy the neighborhood, they enjoy Oceanside. It's just been such a positive experience."

With the new building located directly behind the railroad tracks near the Oceanside train station, the company was able to retain most of its employees from the Hewlett office, and the close proximity of Weidner Avenue makes direct access to Oceanside's restaurants and many big-name retail stores conducive to entertaining visiting physicians, distributors and prospective employees.

"We're on the radar screens now for a lot of companies not only in the United States, but also around the world," Garito said. Ellman concluded, "Our goal is to keep growing the company as we entertain more new ideas, and our building still has plenty of extra space that lends itself to our expanding if we need to."

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