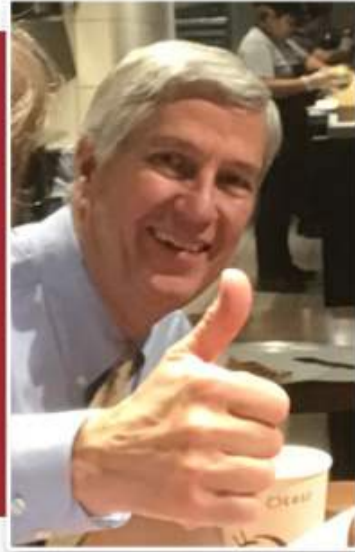


In this issue:

- A tribute to Jay Eastman
- Meet a Navy veteran who's thriving in a second career as an Optics Technician
- Central Florida is now the newest ecosystem to grow the Optics workforce



A Talent for Amplifying Talent in Others

Look up the many tributes to **Jay Morgan Eastman** upon his recent passing and you will see the words creative, generous, brilliant, humble, and entrepreneurial. And you will see this passage:

“His talents knew no limits; he could build or repair anything.”

Jay Eastman envisioned — and saw to the building of — what is today the American Center for Optics Manufacturing (AmeriCOM). Our team honors his legacy every time a new optics technician realizes the range of their own talents and proudly enters the workforce in companies across the United States. Every year, more people are doing just that thanks to an idea Eastman sparked nearly a decade ago.

The Early Days

In 2013, Jay Eastman began working with the Rochester Regional Photonics Cluster (RRPC) to establish a center for optics manufacturing. The first step was securing a New York State grant through the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council. The grant funded a big-ticket, shared-use piece of infrared metrology equipment for RRPC members. This led to an idea to expand efforts beyond the Rochester region and create a national consortium for optics manufacturing.



Jay Eastman meets with the late Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY) to promote optics manufacturing.

During numerous trips to Washington D.C. over the next several years, Eastman worked with RRPC Executive Director Tom Battley and other stakeholders to promote the concept of a larger optics manufacturing center based in Rochester, NY. Battley called Eastman “our voice” for the concept of a laboratory setting to develop the manufacturing technology solutions for America’s defense precision optics manufacturing industry. He added it was Eastman who came up with the name “American Center for Optics Manufacturing.”

The two also encouraged the New York delegation to establish a congressional optics and photonics Caucus. Today, the bi-partisan Congressional Caucus is co- chaired by Rep. Joe Morelle (D-NY) and Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL), and includes 11 other members representing districts around the country.

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Technician Spotlight – Navy Veteran Helps Make Lenses for Equipment Used in Military

Enrique 'Ricky' Gomez joined the United States Navy in 2009, which helped him pay for college where he studied engineering. He enjoyed his time in the military, serving active duty for four years before enrolling in an associate degree program in engineering sciences. But when a friend suggested he take a job interview at a nearby company, Ricky unknowingly started on a new path— one that would utilize his military training and help benefit the Navy he proudly serves.



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AmeriCOM Fosters Newest Optics Ecosystem



AmeriCOM’s national strategy of identifying and nurturing optics ecosystems is a multi-faceted process based on a simple premise: Filling the workforce gap where there is a need. By working closely with the team overseeing the Accelerated Skills Training (AST) program at Valencia College, the training program in Precision Optics, Photonics, and Fiber Optics was developed to fill a workforce gap, making central Florida home to the country’s newest optics ecosystem. As a Valencia College administrator explains, students who come could have optics jobs waiting for them once they complete the program.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

23rd Annual Western NY Optics Golf Tournament
July 20, 2023

SPIE Optics & Photonics Conference
Aug. 20 - 24, 2023

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