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SYNOVA RECEIVES MULTIPLE-SYSTEM ORDERS FROM KOREAN OLED AND SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURERS; OPENS KOREA MICROMACHING CENTER (MMC)

Laser MicroJet® Adoption Continues Propelling Synova Further Into Leading-Edge Manufacturing Markets; Korea MMC to Support Regional Customers

SEMICON Korea 2007, Seoul, Korea, Jan. 31, 2007—Synova, the world pioneer and patent holder in water jet-guided laser technology, today announced tool orders from a Korean organic light-emitting diode (OLED) manufacturer and a leading U.S.-based semiconductor manufacturer's Korean facility. The first order was placed for Synova's Laser Stencil-cutting System, LSS 1200, for OLED mask manufacturing, and the second for the company's Laser Grinding System, LGS 200A, for thin-wafer edge grinding. Both orders mark Synova's penetration into the Korean market, and ultimately, the increased adoption of its Laser MicroJet® for leading-edge electronics manufacturing.

The order wins replace traditional cutting and grinding methods used in each of the manufacturers' respective processes. For OLED mask manufacturing, the LSS 1200 supplants chemical etching for mask cutting. While chemical etching is the dominant approach, the method faces significant challenges in accuracy, feature size limitations, flexibility and fab footprint. As OLEDs continue to advance in both efficiency and size, a novel approach is required to continue to reach new heights while remaining cost effective, paving the way for Laser MicroJet.

Similarly, the challenges apply to semiconductor wafer manufacturing where damage and process inflexibility can become costly and limiting issues. To this end, the order for the LGS 200A for installation at the Korea-based semiconductor manufacturing facility will displace the use of incumbent grinding wheels—the traditional, more aggressive and damage-prone process, particularly when used on thin wafers. Moreover, it is a slow and inflexible approach that leaves particles behind that can embed in the wafer surface. Synova's Laser MicroJet eliminates these issues, grinding the brittle edge of thin wafers without causing chips and micro-cracks at the wafer's edge, while reducing any mechanical stress that would weaken the wafer for the remaining manufacturing steps. Moreover, the water jet expels any residues from the wafer's edge alleviating concerns about contamination, ultimately increasing manufacturers' yield.

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“The level of interest and activity for Laser MicroJet in Asia, and particularly in Korea, has increased over the past years and these wins definitely bolster our presence not only in this critical region, but also among both the flat-panel and semiconductor markets,” said Frédéric Pasche, Synova’s Asia-Pacific sales manager.

“Moreover, these orders resound what we’re increasingly seeing in the market—the need for a novel approach such as Laser MicroJet—to sustain leading-edge manufacturing while increasing yield and remaining cost effective.”

In related news, Synova is increasing its presence in Korea with the opening of a new Micromachining Center (MMC) in the Seoul-area. The MMC, planned to open in March this year, will serve as a competence center for demonstration, sample testing and application development, reinforcing the company’s commitment to providing its customers with local support, as well as increase adoption of its Laser MicroJet technology. This follows previous announcements on openings in the U.S. (Silicon Valley and Boston), Taiwan and Japan, and is funded by recent financing Synova received from Swiss banks totaling CHF 10 million (USD 8.1 million).

About Synova

Founded in 1997, Synova is a leading supplier of state-of-the-art laser solutions for the semiconductor, electronics, flat panel display (FPD) and industrial micro-machining industries, among others. As the inventor of laser dicing technology, Synova—through its proprietary Laser MicroJet[®] (water jet-guided laser) technology—is fast emerging as the ideal provider for addressing the exacting manufacturing specifications and low cost-of-ownership (CoO) requirements associated with the volume production of today’s advanced electronic devices. Headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, Synova is a privately held company with subsidiaries located in Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and the United States. Additional information about the company is available on the Internet at: www.synova.ch

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Laser MicroJet is a registered trademark of Synova.