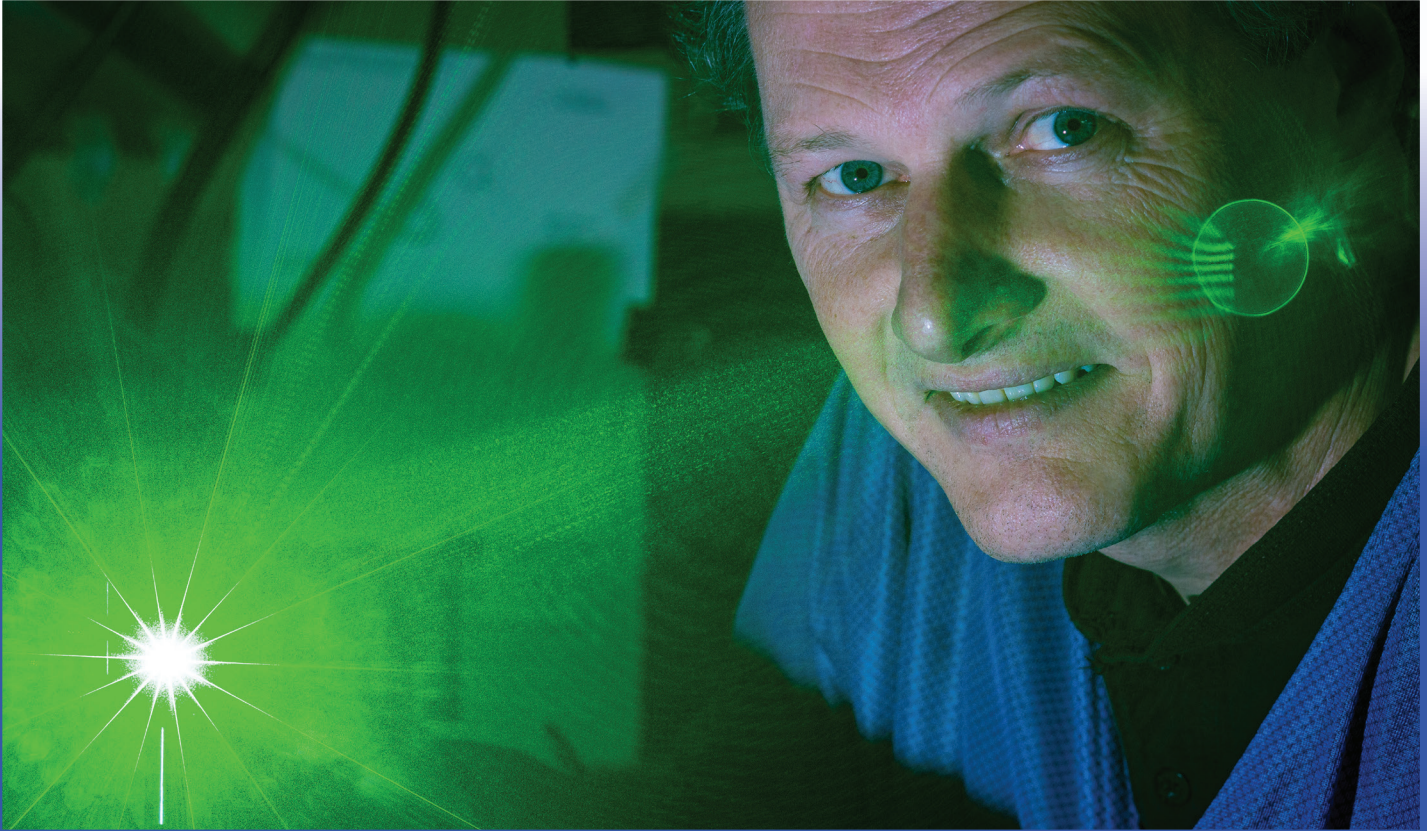


Like the Stuff of Science Fiction.

Photo by David Gibb Photography



MEDFORD, OR - Diode Laser Concepts, a company that makes "black boxes" with a laser, has been quietly working on some of the most advanced high-tech gadgets right in Medford for Fortune 500 companies.

Owned by Mike and Cindy Robinson, the company provides custom-designed and custom-assembled laser and optical services for national and international customers, particularly in the medical field.

Diode Laser Concepts has carved out a niche for itself by designing and manufacturing custom laser products that are integrated into their customers' systems.

The company has about 24 employees locally, plus another six at a manufacturing facility in Tunisia.

During the Recession, the company saw a drop in its automotive industry customer base but pivoted quickly into other areas and has become well known as an advanced electronic manufacturer. Growth was steady despite the economic downturn, and employee compensation increased 40 percent from 2009 to 2011. The company has exceeded \$1 million a year in payroll since 2012.

Mike Robinson, Owner/Operator
Cindy Robinson, Owner/Operator
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"The city is conducive to business. There is a true entrepreneurial spirit here that goes below the radar."

- Mike Robinson, Owner
Diode Laser Concepts

Like the Stuff of Science Fiction.

MEDFORD, OR - It sounds like the stuff of science fiction, but Diode Laser Concepts Inc. creates some of the most advanced high-tech gadgets right in Medford for Fortune 500 companies.

"We make black boxes, with a laser coming out of them," says Mike Robinson, who with his wife, Cindy, has owned and operated the company since 1991.

Diode Laser Concepts, which isn't on most people's radar in Southern Oregon, provides custom-designed and custom-assembled laser and optical services for national and international customers, particularly in the medical field.

Diode Laser Concepts has carved out a niche for itself by designing and manufacturing custom laser products that are integrated into their customers' systems. Robinson said many competing firms have off-the-shelf laser assemblies that they provide to companies, which, in turn, have to adapt those devices to their own products. Diode Laser Concepts turns the table on that idea by designing the laser device for each application, relieving a lot of engineering headaches for companies.

"Our mission is not only to design the part for them but to manufacture it as well," Robinson said. "That makes life a lot simpler on their end."

The company has about 24 employees locally, plus another six at a manufacturing facility in Tunisia. Over the next five years, the Robinsons hope to double their size, which may require new facilities.

In 2002 Diode Laser Concepts had a small 6,200 square-foot facility in Central Point. When the company was thinking of expanding, SOREDI, helped them secure a Jackson County grant, and Diode Laser Concepts moved into a 15,000 square-foot facility, designed and built by S & B James, with enterprise zone property tax benefits. SOREDI also helped walk the project through the planning process. "It was very seamless and well oiled," Robinson remembers.

During the Recession, the company saw a drop in its automotive industry customer base but pivoted quickly into other areas and has become well known as an advanced electronic manufacturer. Growth was steady despite the economic downturn, and employee compensation increased 40 percent from 2009 to 2011. The company exceeded \$1 million in payroll since 2012.

In 2013, Diode Laser Concepts won the SOREDI Prosper Award for Ingenuity. "We often come across companies that are quietly doing their thing without much fanfare," said Colleen Padilla at SOREDI. "This is one of those companies that has been consistently bringing innovative ideas to life since 1991."

Like many firms that depend on highly skilled workers, Diode Laser Concepts searches far and wide for employees and is usually unable to find high-level engineers in the valley. The company has more success hiring production workers locally. Being in the Rogue Valley is attractive when they recruit because the cost-of-living is reasonable, and the area has plenty of entertainment in cities such as Ashland and Jacksonville. "I was raised in the Rogue Valley," he said. "That is why we're here."

The Robinsons are also heavily involved in the community. Mike is president of Pacific Bible College in Medford and an Oregon State University graduate. "We make money so that we can do things for the community," Robinson said. "We are intentionally a family-oriented business and serving the community helps to reinforce that value."

But there are other reasons that this area appeals to him and helps his company thrive. "The city is conducive to business," he said. "There is a true entrepreneurial spirit here that goes below the radar."

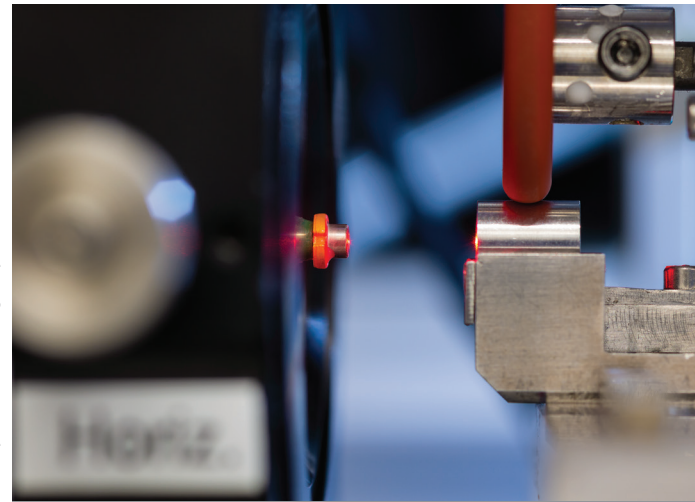


Photo by David Gibb Photography

Laser Subassembly



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