

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Refining optics worldwide

Co-owners met at Bausch + Lomb

Alan Morrell

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The optics industry has long been huge in Rochester. That's no surprise, considering the histories of companies like Eastman Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch + Lomb that long drove the region's economic engine.

Nowadays, optics are in all kinds of gee-whiz technological advances. To get those optics to perform as planned, customers turn to companies like AccuCoat.

AccuCoat

Founded: 1998.

Location: 111 Humboldt St.

Executives: Paul Meier-Wang, co-owner and president; Patrick Iulianello, co-owner and vice president; Alan Parsons, sales manager.

Employees: 20.

Website: www.accucoatinc.com.

stuff that is making breakthroughs in all kinds of areas.

A Rochester native, Iulianello started AccuCoat with Paul Meier-Wang, the company president, back in 1998. They met while working for Bausch + Lomb after both previously held positions in other firms. For Iulianello, that included stints with Boeing Aircraft and a healthcare company called Baxter International.

"We saw it as a good opportunity to take what we had learned and do it on our own," Iulianello said of AccuCoat's inception. Since then, AccuCoat has grown into a precision optical coating facility.

Iulianello describes the work as an in-process operation: AccuCoat designs the necessary coating, whatever the type,



Alan Parsons, left, Patrick Iulianello and Paul Meier-Wang at the RBJ Technology and Manufacturing Awards. AccuCoat was a 2018 finalist. PROVIDED BY ACCUCOAT



Introducing East High Precision Optics Program students into the workforce is something that AccuCoat has supported for many years. Kathy works with Rishad, an East High Optics Program Student. PROVIDED BY ACCUCOAT

"We make special coatings that go on glass, metal or plastic optics, to help handle or divert light," said AccuCoat co-founder and vice president Patrick Iulianello. "We're the old-fashioned tool shop: Send us components, we'll add a coating and send it back to them. We're basically a job shop for the optics industry."

The coatings play an integral role in the process. They might be used to reflect light back for a variety of purposes or to allow light or lasers to pass through more freely. It's all high-tech

and then applies it to the components. Major clients now include the military, medical companies, and industries that are making virtual-reality products, self-driving cars and camera lenses. The coatings might be for one- or two-piece prototypes — perhaps for a company like Corning, for instance — or hundreds of pieces needed by manufacturers.

The business started in a 3,000-square-foot site on Humboldt Street and has since quadrupled in size. A new high-tech facility was added beginning in 2005, the same year that a sales manager was brought aboard.

AccuCoat's customers come from all over the world, including a major presence throughout the U.S. along with a large base in Canada and parts of Europe. Iulianello said the variety of optical vacuum coating machines can handle a variety of components and sizes.

The firm also supports educational programs at colleges like the University of Rochester and Monroe Community College and at East High School, which has a "hands-on" fabrication lab. The hope is to keep things going, and growing, through future generations, particularly with the buzz around here surrounding photonics.

"This is a big industry in Rochester," Iulianello said. "Unfortunately, it's not taught enough."

It's been a big industry here for a long time and shows no signs of letting up. And AccuCoat will continue to do its part to keep the high-tech gizmos performing as expected.

Alan Morrell is a Rochester-based freelance writer.

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