SEMATECH Launches Research and Development Wafer Fab as Independent Subsidiary

July 10 2004

SEMATECH announced that it has created an independent subsidiary of its Research and Development wafer fab and associated analytical laboratories. The new subsidiary, which began operations as Advanced Technology Development Facility, Inc. (ATDF) on July 1, will offer a broad range of services to an expanded customer base, in a move designed to meet the mounting Research and Development needs of the semiconductor industry and related industries.

“ATDF has been and will continue to be a major resource for SEMATECH,” said Mike Polcari, SEMATECH’s president and CEO. “While the SEMATECH consortium continues to focus on our core business of building industry infrastructure in lithography, materials, and manufacturing, the new company represents a complementary effort to meet the more targeted R&D needs of individual companies and universities. But ultimately we share the same goal—to accelerate the commercialization of research, and foster innovation in the development of advanced technology, equipment, and materials.”

ATDF will offer the following customized services:

- Technology development services, including non-classical CMOS; custom development projects; prototyping services; and university projects
- Wafer processing services for both SEMATECH and external

customers, such as suppliers of equipment and materials
- Analytical services and electrical testing services for advanced materials and device characterization

“ATDF will be the place where semiconductor research meets manufacturing,” said Juergen Woehl, general manager of the new company. “We’ll serve chipmakers, equipment and materials suppliers, universities, and companies working in emerging technologies—all of whom can take advantage of our custom products, our focus on protection of intellectual property, and our fast cycles of learning. Our vision is to become the world’s leading technology R&D center.”

Woehl further stated that ATDF will provide a site for companies and universities to test new designs, integration methodologies, and prototype systems in a manufacturing environment, leveraging the experience, facilities and tools already in place in the ATDF fab. Each customer’s data and IP will be fully protected. ATDF will also develop industry-wide, accepted baseline processes to speed the development of new tools and materials for faster manufacturing at lower cost.

The new subsidiary will continue serving as SEMATECH’s primary R&D facility under a service agreement. ATDF has been working on programs with member and non-member companies, equipment and materials suppliers, and universities for the last year as part of a pilot program.

“The success of the pilot program and the need for customizable research and development activities give us tremendous confidence in the success of this new venture,” said John Schmitz, SEMATECH’s chief operating officer for Manufacturing, Operations and Technology.

Included in the new company is SEMATECH’s 62,000-square-foot Class 1 cleanroom, which offers both 200 mm and 300 mm processing

capabilities, along with SEMATECH's Process Characterization Laboratories, which provide metrology and analytical services.

The new subsidiary is a privately held corporation with its own management and board of directors. About 240 SEMATECH employees have become employees of the new company, and new positions will be created as the company grows. "We're bringing new R&D to our facility here in Texas, and with that comes the potential to create new high tech jobs," said Woehl.

The announcement of ATDF as an independent subsidiary of SEMATECH is the latest in a series of SEMATECH initiatives, including the formation of a new consortium, International SEMATECH Manufacturing Initiative (ISMI), dedicated to helping semiconductor manufacturers reduce cost per wafer and cost per die, and the creation of the Advanced Materials Research Center (AMRC), a collaboration between SEMATECH and Texas universities to investigate promising new semiconductor and related technologies. Started with funds from the Texas Enterprise Fund and SEMATECH, the AMRC will rely on ATDF to provide leading-edge processing and prototyping capabilities to support AMRC's R&D efforts.

The original press release can be found here.