



SILICOM VENTURES, MEXICO VISIT – October 3 – 7, 2005– by R. Chatav

Objective: Silicom Ventures (SV) was asked by the local (San Jose) representative of the Mexican government's Technology Business Accelerator (TechBA), a unit of the Ministry of the Economy, to send a representative to attend a special review session of Mexican high tech companies to be held in Mexico City, the top companies to be awarded funding by the TechBA.

Background: The Mexican government has been spending significant resources in promoting new business creation (not only high tech). As an example – during our meetings in Mexico City, at the Banamex (the country's largest convention center), 1000 small businesses (of which about 100 were high tech) were presenting their wares at the convention center, all at government expense.

Reviewing Members: in addition to SV, there were four other American representatives, two from the Bay area, and two from the Austin area (where TechBA has another field office).

The Review Sessions: over a period of three days we reviewed 24 companies, in areas ranging from graffiti removal paints to 3-D graphics technology. The review mechanics were quite simple but efficient – a company was allowed 10 minutes to present, followed by a 15 minutes Q&A session with the reviewing panel. As a summary we each were required to complete a ranking sheet where specific topics were graded – market; unique technology; management; competition; investment needs, etc. - were evaluated and scored.

Final Session: After all companies presenting were graded and ranked, we applied a limited subjective review of specific companies and agreed on the top 12 companies. These top companies will be awarded government grants and an opportunity to visit and present in the US. The awards were then handed out at a ceremony attended by all companies, the TechBA management, FUMEC (the US Mexico Science Foundation – the funding entity) and the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Economy.

Summary: This was a good first visit to our neighbors to the south to better understand the opportunities for high tech collaboration; investment opportunities; partnering, etc. As a follow-up, SV will also be hosting a one day all Mexico high tech companies' presentation in late January 2006 – which is a natural continuation of the Mexico visit.

