

# Turnaround at TechCity

## Growth apparent at long-struggling former IBM site

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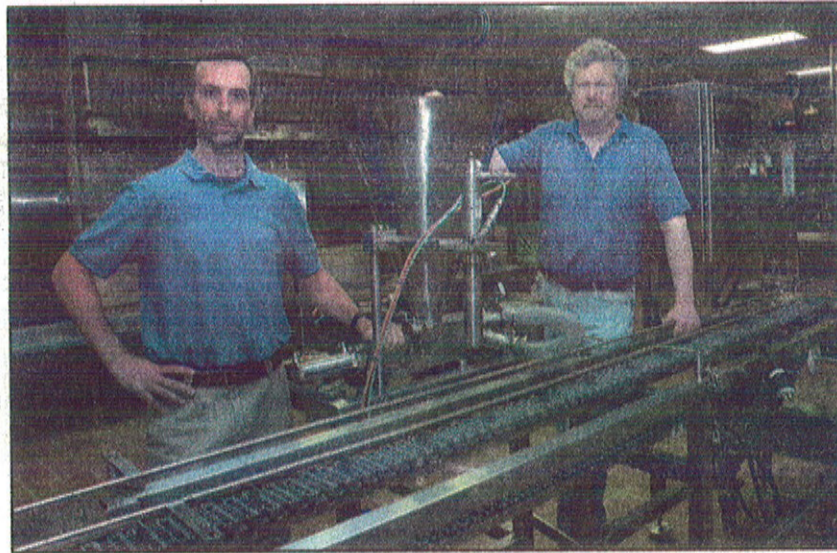
**W**ORKMEN have just finished installing the double-rack ovens that will be used to bake the muffins and quiches of tomorrow.

Heavy steam kettles are firmly in place, and industrial-size mixers and peelers off to the side are, inactive for the moment.

But not for long. Within weeks, the dream of business partners Luc Roels and Jim Hyland will spring to life in the 21,000-square-foot space that once served as the IBM-Kingston plant's kitchen and cafeteria.

**THE PAIR** is set to launch Farm to Table Co-Packers, a full-service contract packaging facility and kitchen incubator at the old IBM site, years ago renamed TechCity, in the town of Ulster.

"This was a perfect scenario," Hyland said, dodging the countless contractors tinkering in the space. "It was a kitchen that was serving 7,500 meals a day. IBM put a lot of money into it, which would be hard to replicate anywhere else. We were searching for three years in the area, and retrofitting a place like this



Freeman photos by Tania Barricklo

Jim Hyland, left, and Luc Roels co-own Farm to Table Co-Packers at TechCity.

**On the Web**  
Videos of several TechCity tenants talking about their businesses appear with this story at [www.dailyfreeman.com](http://www.dailyfreeman.com).



**Wieneke**  
vision of TechCity owner and developer Alan Ginsberg. "A lot of water has passed under the bridge for the past

■ List of TechCity tenants and their employment levels .. page A8

former IBM property and filling it with green-minded tenants who share the new "ecovillage"

10 years or so that Alan has owned this place, but I think he's finally so excited to see guys like Jim and Luc coming in and making something of this place. My directive is to support their effort as much as I can," Wieneke said.

**FRESH FROM** a success  
See TechCity, page A8

just makes so much sense, and TechCity's been great."

**THOSE ARE** just the words that make Dan Wieneke's day. As the president of TechCity Properties, he's the guy in charge of fixing up the 260-acre

# TechCity appears to be overcoming its longtime struggles

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that rebuilt the shuttered Plattsburgh Air Force Base in eight years instead of the 30 it was supposed to take, Wieneke hardly sees it as a daunting task to turn TechCity into a national model of 21st century green development.

That's not to say he thought it would be easy.

"I knew it was going to be a challenge ... getting everybody on the same page and working together and being patient," Wieneke said.

WHEN WIENEKE came to the Hudson Valley two years ago, some tenants like Bank of America and Hunter Panels already were occupying space at TechCity, but a tremendous amount of work still needed to be done.

IBM had departed from the site in July 1995, stripping the region of more than 7,000 jobs and leaving behind a trail of resentment.

Beyond that, there were environmental issues to address.

Not only were some of the 27 low-rise buildings obsolete, but the site's antiquated central utility plant had emitted 100 tons of airborne pollutants each year. The old plant had boilers the size of houses, burning No. 6 fuel oil.

GINSBERG bought the property from IBM in early 1998, and he's taken his share of criticism for inactivity over the years. He admitted there have been some rough moments.

"Of course we had to overcome some challenges, not the least of which was the collapse of the real estate market two years ago," Ginsberg said. "We've also worked very hard to dispel the hurt feelings of the local community in the wake of IBM's move out of Kingston. But this is a great community, and the community is certainly behind us now."

Ginsberg also noted that some business people have found it difficult to deal with government.

"They hear about how government wants to encourage business and create jobs, but then they can't figure out how to access the programs," he said. "We've solved that problem by bringing on a full-time staff member with expertise in government and the various programs that are out there to help businesses, and we can now provide that expertise to compa-

TechCity tenants			
Company	Nature of business	Square footage occupied	Number of employees
Bank of America	Tax processing	394,631	1,500
Hunter Panels	Building materials	168,000	80
Precision Flow Tech.	Hi-tech equipment	97,000	75
W&W Industries	Warehouse	39,000	2
Partsearch	Product repairs	23,303	150
Farm to Table	Food processing	21,000	30
AmeriBag	Warehouse	20,000	5
LEDs America	LED lighting	10,500	5
Prestige Services	Meals provider	6,430	30
Erdman Anthony	Architecture/engineering	5,013	8
EarthKind Solar	Solar equip. distribution	2,200	5
Oakdale Flooring	Flooring warehouse	4,000	2
Precision Ceramics	Die casting	3,750	5
Imagetech	Medical image storage	3,105	5
Global Transol	Freight forwarding	2,087	3
Collegeview/Miron	Real estate	1,050	5
CNS	Pharma info provider	1,200	3
Solartech	PV panel manufacturing	927	4
Porto Bread	Bakery	660	3
Boy Scouts	Non-profit	640	0
Snacktree	Warehouse	500	2
Kingston Soccer	Non-profit	300	1
HV Medicoach	Medical transport	150	3
Solar Thin Films	Solar energy	150	0
Solar Energy Consortium	Solar energy	150	0
Light Tower Fiber	Fiber/data svc. provider	100	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS:			1,931
PEAK NUMBER OF IBM JOBS AT SITE IN 1980s:			7,100

nies that consider locating here.

"That's crucial, because while we have developed TechCity fully at our own private expense, several of our tenants have received government incentives, and that's enabled them to be successful and grow," Ginsberg added.

GINSBERG IS steadfast, and he refuses to look back. Armed with a new vision, he believes he's making things happen.

"I am extremely pleased with the progress we are making at TechCity, especially because we wanted to create a hub for sustainable industries, and we're doing just that," he said. "Even better, we now have a cluster of ecofriendly businesses that can help each other grow."

Ginsberg has shut down the central utility plant and replaced it with individual, low-emission, natural gas-fired rooftop units in the occupied buildings. The result is a 36 percent reduction in energy usage, he said. Not only that, but some of the obsolete buildings are being torn down to incorporate a system of sidewalks, landscaping and covered parking.

GINSBERG LOOKS it

over with an overdue sense of satisfaction.

"We are really moving ahead with our master plan. Visitors to TechCity can see progress — real, visible progress — month-to-month," he said.

"TechCity will be the hub of sustainable industry," he added. "We will be generating much of our electricity and heating from the sun. All of our buildings will be redeveloped and modernized, with a greenway down the middle. We will be a place where people will work and play, and I hope, live in an ecovillage."

FOR NOW, though, the improvements are small but steady. A walk-through of the facility reveals signs of life — and tenants — around every corner. Some of the space has been newly renovated and is actively being shown to prospective clients.

Wieneke hopes companies like a health-and-beauty research firm from outside the state and a popcorn packager will bite in the coming weeks.

Other business people, meanwhile, are firmly planted already.

John Smigelski, managing director of EarthKind Solar, is one of them. The sound of



Freeman photo by Tania Barricklo

John Smigelski, left, is managing director of EarthKind Solar, which operates at TechCity in the town of Ulster. Pictured with him is Ron Kamen, the company's vice president.

visitors outside his office prompts him to poke his head out the door.

"We really enjoy being at TechCity," Smigelski declared. "It's great people to work with. We have a warehouse and office space with great facilities."

EarthKind occupies 2,200 square feet of office, warehouse and manufacturing space. The company, the first solar energy firm to move into TechCity, assembles and markets photovoltaic and solar-thermal products, and it trains installers.

**NOT FAR OFF**, in Buildings 43, 64 and 29, Kevin Brady and his crew at Precision Flow Technologies are busy growing, hiring up to five people a week.

The company, part of The Solar Energy Consortium, makes tools used for the production of high-brightness LEDs. Precision Flow is building a 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at TechCity.

Brady expects to hire close to 200 more people in the coming months. Another 30 will construct the growing facility.

**WIENEKE IS** excited about that and all the other economic signs of life budding because of TechCity's activities.

"There are lots of people working. They're local contractors. They're local business people. They've been in

here, tearing it down, and now, they're in the final stage of putting it all together," he said.

"When you talk about the impact of the dollars that these guys have ... and when you look at the hundreds of tradespeople working at TechCity now before the companies even get started, it's all so positive," Wieneke added.

**SOME AREA** business leaders have taken note, and they like what they see.

"Since Alan brought in Dan Wieneke from the North Country to manage the site, their emphasis on environmentally friendly, green industries has resulted in significant growth at TechCity, which in 2010 is home to a host of new tenants," said Ward Todd, president of the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce.

"We've always known this, but now it should be obvious to everyone around the Northeast that TechCity is a great place for businesses to locate," Todd added.

**GINSBERG**, too, is full of praise for the man making it happen.

"Dan Wieneke is a genius, and I don't use that term lightly," the site owner said. "He is that rare person who can grasp a developer's vision and then instantly translate that into an action plan. Nobody can do that better than Dan. And our tenant

companies admire him so much because he understands their needs ... and he helps them thrive."

**WIENEKE** refuses to take the credit.

"It's Alan's vision," he said. "He had the idea. He had the 'stick-to-it-iveness.' He's used his personal money, his family trust money. If he was Joe Blow from Timbuktu and he walked in here today, he'd probably get all kinds of incentives and initiatives. He hasn't. He's been here for 10 or 12 years and he hasn't given up."

"Now we're all working on the same page. We're sharing information and documentation on the science to make this go forward," Wieneke added. "That's exciting, and those are things the public really doesn't see. We have to keep focused and our eyes on the finished line."

**SPEAKING OF** keeping an eye on the finish line, that's just what Roels and Hyland are doing. They're counting down the days until those ovens fire up and those kettles bubble and sizzle.

According to their timetable, Farm to Table Co-Packers should be up and running by June, with the kitchen incubator not far behind.

"Alan and Dan are working together with us, and they understand our vision," Hyland said. "They've been behind us since we've been here, and it's going great."