



SOURCE: Zephyr Photonics



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## Zephyr Photonics Sets Sights on Commercial Success

**Twenty-Five Year Old Research and Development Company Going Commercial With Proven Photonic Technology After Being Acquired by Torch Hill Investment Partners**

ZEPHYR COVE, NV--(Marketwire - Oct 25, 2011) - Since 1987, [Zephyr Photonics](#) has operated as OptiComp, a small, stealth research firm focused on mission critical programs for the U.S. government. During its 25-year history, the company has captured more than 60 research and development grants and prototype contracts for a variety of programs, including intel satellite communication systems and the cutting-edge Joint Strike Fighter. Today, the company announced that it has been acquired by Torch Hill Investment Partners, a Washington D.C. private equity firm, and is now transitioning to a commercial enterprise orientation. Zephyr will use its patented [vertical-cavity surface-emitting laser](#) (VCSEL) technology to deliver high-bandwidth, [harsh environment photonic solutions](#) for applications that focus on vital national security needs.

To lead the company into its commercial stage, Torch Hill has appointed Tom Steding as chief executive officer. Steding has served as CEO of 10 high-tech companies, most recently with Red Condor, which was acquired by St. Bernard Software (now EdgeWave) in 2010. Steding is also the chairman and founder of Quadrix Partners, a leadership consulting organization for developing high execution organizations. He earned a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from University of California, Berkeley and a master's degree in management from Stanford University Graduate School of Business as a Sloan Fellow.

"While Zephyr may be a secret to much of the country, it has a tremendous history of innovative research and development, and is primed for growth with a pipeline of commercial products ready to hit the market in the coming months," said Steding. "We have a great opportunity to help prospective customers overcome harsh environment data communications obstacles and enable optical interconnect solutions that meet the requirements of military, aerospace and security applications. We have a great management team, the backing of a proven investment team, strong relationships with manufacturing and communications companies, and we will be announcing an advisory board soon that is unrivaled in the industry. We are literally hitting the ground running with all of the opportunities ahead of us, and expect to make product announcements very soon."

Based in Zephyr Cove, Zephyr Photonics maintains a 17,000 square foot facility, including a 3,000 square foot class 10,000 cleanroom, and an onsite fabrication and test lab. The company is ITAR-compliant, ISO 9001 certified and has a growing staff of Ph.Ds with extensive backgrounds in the design, fabrication and testing of optoelectronic data communication products, materials and devices.

"We acquired Zephyr Photonics because of its incredible photonics technology portfolio, its success with the defense, intelligence and security sectors, and its committed and highly skilled staff. We have a technology and product roadmap that is years ahead of current competitors," said Brian Nugent, Board Chairman and partner with Torch Hill. "We needed the right people to lead the company forward, and with Tom and the rest of the team he has put together, we feel we have the DNA to lead Zephyr to commercial market success."

### About Zephyr Photonics

Zephyr Photonics (formerly OptiComp) is a privately held company that was founded in 1987. Recently, acquired by Torch Hill Investment Partners, a DC-based private equity firm, Zephyr is focused on providing solutions to the Department of Defense, aerospace, and intelligence markets. For the past 25 years, Zephyr has worked as a research and development company, creating its unique technology over 60 contracts from U.S. government agencies, communication companies, and defense prime contractors. Zephyr Photonics has independently developed its first commercial solution, a patented [VCSEL technology](#) available nowhere else in the country. The innovative technology enables the production of harsh environment, integrated optoelectronic modules for ultra-wide bandwidth data networking and optical interconnect applications. For more information, visit [www.zephyrphotonics.com](http://www.zephyrphotonics.com).

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