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Partnership could bring jobs
Firm gives grant to energy center

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A high-tech Tennessee-based start-up firm with an office in Tallahassee and the Economic Development Council are giving a \$10,000 research grant to the Center for Advanced Power Systems.

In return, the start-up will get space in the center for a year and gain access to expertise in superconductor research that could be used in the marketplace.

For nearly six years, the center has been researching how to develop the energy systems for a new fleet of all-electric Navy ships.

Tai-Yang Research Co., which opened an office here about a year ago, researches the materials to build superconductors. Superconductors conduct electricity with no resistance, allowing more power to move through smaller devices without damaging them.

Founded in 1999, the company has its headquarters near the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Knoxville and the University of Tennessee.

But if research plans prove successful over the next year, the company will relocate to Tallahassee. It has six employees, and two of them work in Tallahassee. Scott Marshall, principal engineer, who worked at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory for 10 years, heads up the local office.

"I'm taking all I learned there and using it in this company," said Marshall, who stresses the company is not a spinoff of the mag lab.

The mag lab draws hundreds of scientists who do experiments using the high magnetic fields generated by the lab's big magnets.

Researchers and officials at Innovation Park, where the lab is located, have long felt that the mag lab and the Center for Advanced Power Systems would help attract businesses that want to apply their technologies to their products.

Tai-Yang is one such example.

The grant will be paid for by the EDC and Tai-Yang, both of which will give \$5,000. The EDC's portion will come from its marketing dollars.

"This is our effort to incubate a high-tech company for our community," said Brad Day, executive director of the EDC. "This is the kind of company that can grow rapidly."

Already Tai-Yang has built relationships with NASA, the U.S. Navy, the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy. It has been awarded several Small Business Innovation Research grants from a federal program that encourages small businesses to develop their research or ideas that might be used in the marketplace.

Marshall said the company already is "out looking for more money" that will fund them for a three-year period.

"We're getting close to pulling it together," he said.