The chief private backers are Digital Electronics Corp. and AT&T, both of whom will be making personnel and facilities available to Rensselaer-EAMRI. Other supporters include GM, IBM, Northern Telecom, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and Georgia Institute of Technology.

"Our project is, perhaps, best described as a major controlled experiment," says Rensselaer-EAMRI director Robert Graves, professor of decision sciences and engineering systems at RPI. "We're going to conduct demonstrations involving actual printed circuit card assembly. This will comprise multiple sites, with all of the crucial information accessed solely via the network."

In one such experiment, a single design will be manufactured at several AT&T sites; in another, multiple designs—from several project members—will be manufactured at a single AT&T facility. All designs will be accessed via the communication architecture developed by the project.

As to the nature of that prospective architecture, Graves says it will be as open as possible and it will be adaptable to the needs of the largest possible variety of electronics manufacturing applications. "Like the STEP standard that automotive and other manufacturers are working towards, it's an effort to smooth the bumps in the information exchange process."

HP's Open Migration Program Adds Leading Tech-Transfer Firm

BY MARTY WEIL

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA—In an effort to bolster its Open Migration Program, which assists customers in moving from competitive platforms to Hewlett-Packard systems, HP has enlisted the services of Bluestone Co. (Mount Laurel, NJ), a leading technology-transfer firm. Under the terms of the agreement, HP's Professional Services Organization and Bluestone—HP's first channel partner with significant expertise in the Sun Microsystems environment—will assist users of Sun and Digital Equipment Corp. computers in moving to PA-RISC workstations and business servers based on HP's UNIX-system-based HP-UX operating system.

"In the past six months, we've had a growing number of Sun and Digital Equipment customers asking for assistance migrating to HP-UX," states Shari Zedeck, marketing program manager in the workstations systems group at HP. "Our agreement with Bluestone is part

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Photo courtesy: Elsag Bailey

The joint marketing agreement between Elsag Bailey Process Automation and Digital Equipment Corp.embodies a new product concept called Strategic Enterprise Management. SEM tightly integrates the four levels of enterprise operations.

ecution system (MES) application software to complete the SEM system. They will work with the MES vendors to develop a disciplined methodology for attaching their products to the SEM system. Both Elsag Bailey and Digital Equipment will collaborate with the companies to fine tune products for SEM system application.

Up to 10 different MES applications which are now on the market will be integrated into the global SEM entity. These include maintenance management, laboratory information, and government compliance systems. Both Elsag Bailey and Digital Equipment agree that the incentive for cooperation is the opportunity to develop new technology and the resulting benefit to each company's marketing efforts.

Elsag Bailey will demonstrate a significant portion of the SEM system at ISA '94 in Anaheim, CA, and at Interkama in Dusseldorf, Germany; both shows are set for October. Third-party application software will be demonstrated at next year's ISA '95, along with the SEM system database, which requires the greatest development effort.

The marketing agreement is non-exclusive, giving Digital the right to let other companies use software and hardware. Elsag Bailey can port its SEM system products to HP, IBM, and Sun platforms. Both companies point out that functionality will be reduced to information sharing capabilities similar to those offered in competing packages.

Anticipated benefits of SEM system technology include reduced employee training and greater flexibility, since the same man-machine interface will be used throughout the enterprise. The SEM system's tightly coupled data sharing, which involves common manipulation versus simple access, will make the information more useful and will provide new benefits—but, as with many new ideas, they have yet to be fully formulated.

NEWS

IN BRIEF

Datalogix, AlliedSignal Engineer World-Class Software Deal

Datalogix International Inc. (Valhalla, NY) and the Engineered Materials Sector (EMS) of AlliedSignal Inc. (Morris Township, NJ) have signed a multimillion dollar contract which extends the use of Datalogix's Global Enterprise Manufacturing Management System (GEMMS) client-server software solution into AlliedSignal's manufacturing process. "Our commitment to customer-linked manufacturing is a perfect fit with the GEMMS solution," says Kathy Brittain White, director of information management at AlliedSignal Engineered Materials. "As we move to reengineer our business processes and streamline information management, we will deploy GEMMS as our integrated manufacturing solution in several major divisions."

Wonderware Acquires Rubicon

Wonderware Corp. (Irvine, CA), a supplier of Windows-based software for the industrial automation marketplace, has acquired Rubicon Technology (Mountain View, CA), a developer of expert systems software for automating troubleshooting and repair support in factory and process automation applications. The transaction makes Rubicon Technology an operating unit of Wonderware, via a pooling of interests valued at approximately $1.5 million. "The product segment that Rubicon serves with its SupportManager product is a direct extension of the markets we serve with our InTouch man-machine interface products," says Norman R. Farquhar, Wonderware senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Meet Siemens in St. Louis

Siemens Industrial Automation (Alpharetta, GA) has established a North American Industry Technology Center in St. Louis, MO, that will provide engineered electrical and automation solutions to the North American food and beverage industry. The Center will focus on delivering engineered solutions targeting applications ranging from raw material to finished-goods handling.

TRIZ Hits U.S. Shores

BY GREGORY FARNUM

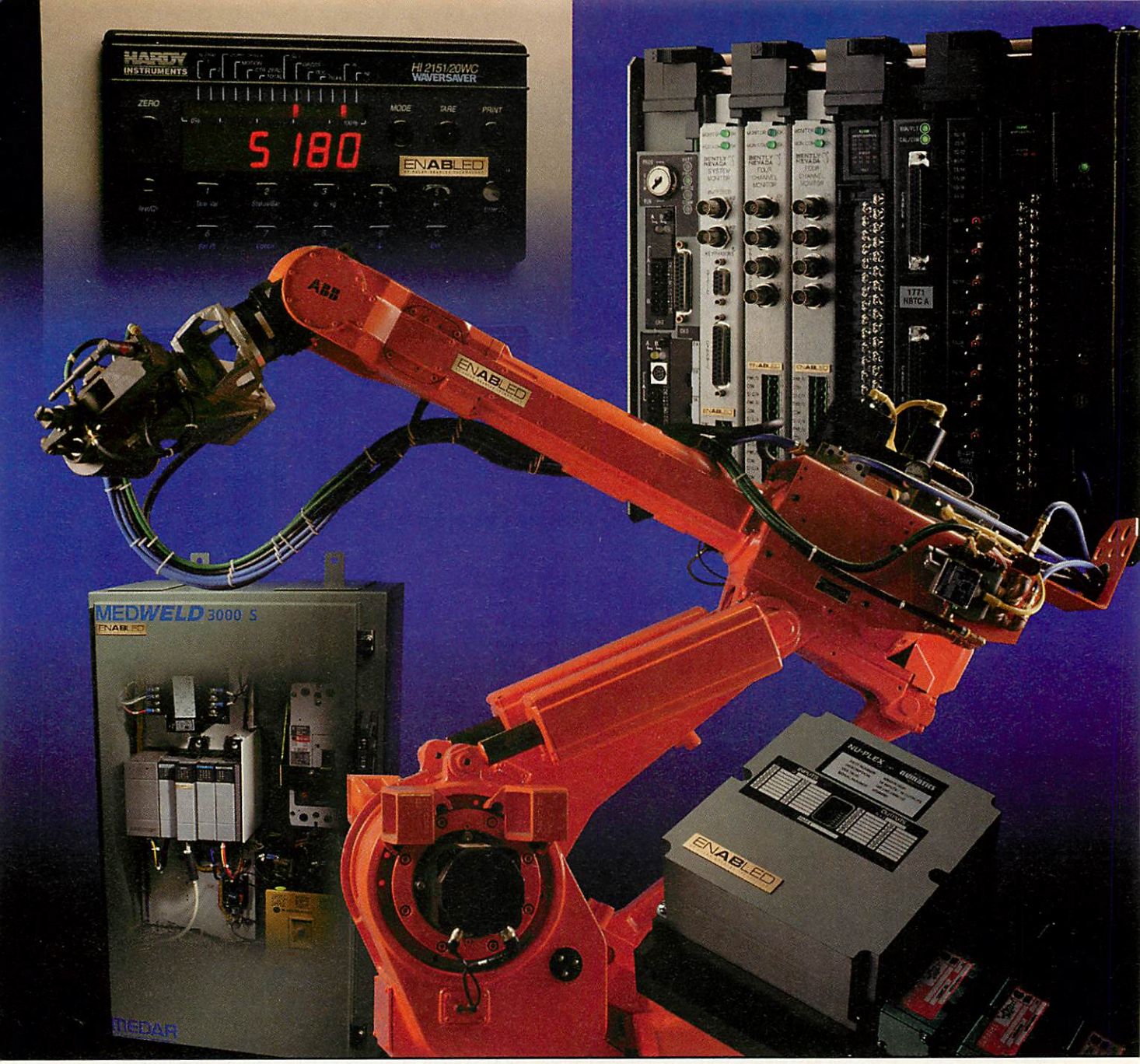
ALLEN PARK, MI— Never heard of TRIZ (a Russian acronym for Theory of Inventive Problem Solving)? You're not alone. The brainchild of Russian scientist G.S. Altschuller, information about this engineering methodology was kept largely within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union by tight government restrictions. Today it's widely taught throughout this same area and in Israel, where it was carried by Soviet emigres. Now the American Supplier Institute (Allen Park, MI), in conjunction with Ideation Corp. (Santa Monica, CA) is attempting to bring it to the U.S.

"TRIZ is a breakthrough system that helps narrow the search for solutions to a manageable range of standard problems," says Steve Ungvari, president of the American Supplier Institute (ASI), which sponsored TRIZ seminars this past spring in Detroit, MI; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; and Philadelphia, PA.

Ungvari describes the system as "a knowledge-based way of generating inventive solutions to difficult technological problems based upon a very extensive analysis of the world's patents. TRIZ offers a fresh approach to technical creativity, resulting in decreased development time and better products."

The roots of the methodology go back to the 1940s when Altschuller, then an official with the Soviet Patent Office, began to analyze the world's most significant patents with the goal of discovering underlying patterns of invention. He identified a series of such patterns which had been successfully applied in seemingly unrelated branches of science and engineering, and then formulated extensive guidelines for their use.

ASI's interest in TRIZ began last year when Ungvari was introduced to the system by members of Ideation Corp., which was working with Russian scientists in an attempt to



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