

New computer will aid accident reconstructionists

■ Innovation foundation gives boost to technology that helps figure out speeds and stopping times based on measurements it takes.

By BRUCE BARTLETT
Telegraph-Journal

Leading-edge technology used in accident reconstruction, that was developed in Saint John, received a \$325,000 investment from the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation Monday.

It also drew Premier Bernard Lord to Saint John to congratulate Impact Data Systems Inc. for developing a new way of measuring friction on highway surfaces.

The company has already sold its machinery to the U.S. military, but expects its main market will be police forces around the world, said Thomas Watters, vice-president of technology and marketing for the company.

The DART LX dragsled allows friction on pavement to be measured accurately in a fraction of the time it took for older low-tech devices to do the job.

It is a lightweight field computer that takes thousands of measurements in seconds and allows accident reconstruction personnel to figure out speeds and stopping times based on those measurements.

"DART is presently in service with major police forces in the United States and as far away as the New South Wales Police Force in Australia," said Mr. Watters.

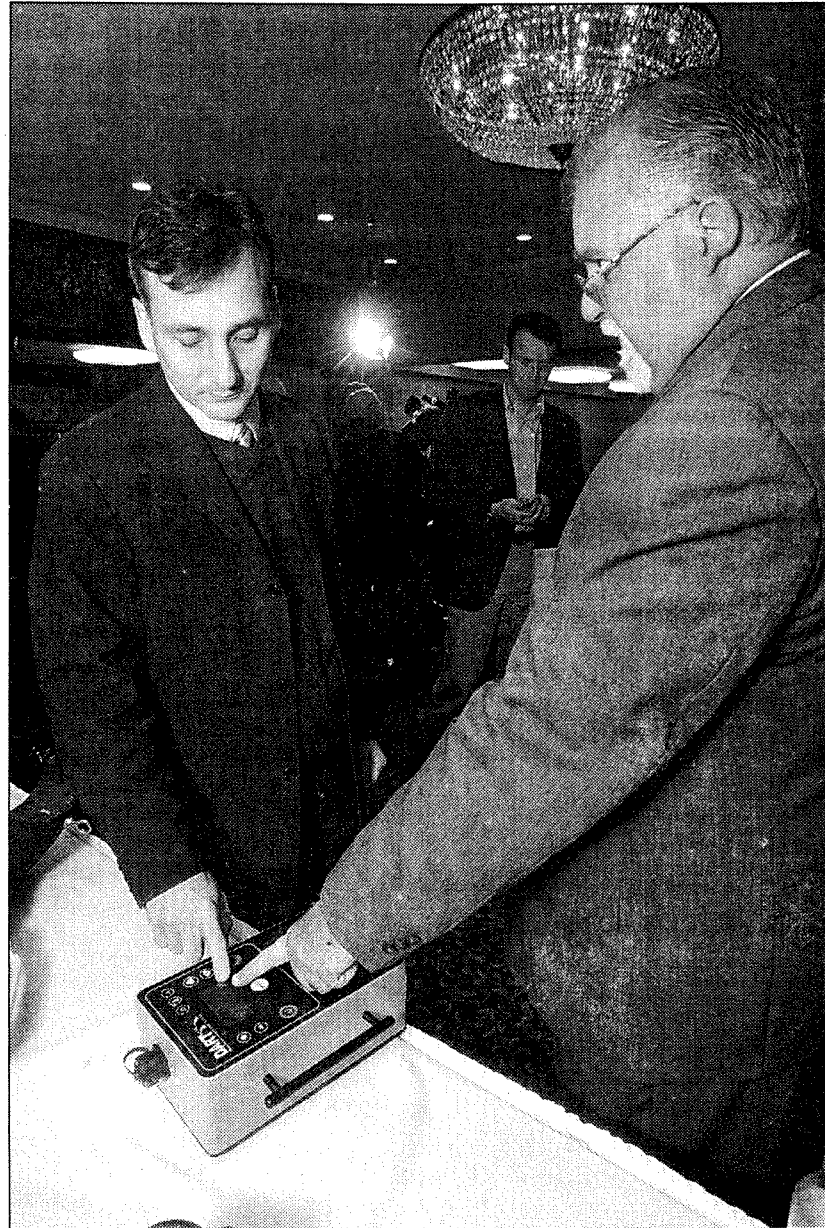
The New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, a \$20-million fund created in 2002 by the provincial government, is designed to help local companies take their ideas to a larger market.

The DART LX has other uses such as taking measurements for slip and fall accidents for the insurance industry and court cases.

The investment from the innovation fund will help in the marketing of DART and free up Impact Data Systems to work on some of its newer ideas, said Mr. Watters.

"This is a day where we celebrate the advances we are making in New Brunswick and where we are hoping for a brighter future," said Mr. Lord.

The investment in Impact Data



Noel Chenier/Telegraph-Journal

Thomas Watters, vice-president Technology and Manufacturing for Impact Data Systems, demonstrates their product the DART LX-1 dragsled for Premier Bernard Lord after it was announced they were recipients of a \$325,000 equity investment from the NB Innovation Foundation.

Systems Inc., is the ninth one in a private-sector company for the innovation fund, said the premier.

The innovation foundation has taken some company shares in return for its investment and now has a presence on board, said Barrie Black, foundation president.

"We invest in companies and then we stay involved," he said.

The ideal is that profits from these startup companies will eventually find their way back to the foundation to be invested in other innovative companies.

But the foundation also puts money into research at universities and community colleges where there is little likelihood of money coming back, said Mr. Black.