

# frontline



miamisburg mound community improvement corporation

winter 2009



## Scientist Capitalizes on Powerful Ideas

The issue of curbing U.S. dependence on foreign oil was hot political fodder during the 2008 election. Yet even as politicians, pundits and journalists were hashing through the policy details, one local scientist continued his hands-on approach to solving the problem.

### Countless user-friendly applications

Dr. David Firsich, president of MATC-based Inorganic Specialists, has spent the past six years researching, developing and perfecting a conductive carbon nanofiber paper that can enhance the performance of energy storage devices such as fuel cells and lithium ion batteries.

“This is a platform technology,” he explained. “Once you can make a conductive, porous, flexible nanofiber paper, you can modify it, coat it, put catalysts on it and even grow smaller nanotubes on it. This is a user-friendly form of nanotubes with many applications.”

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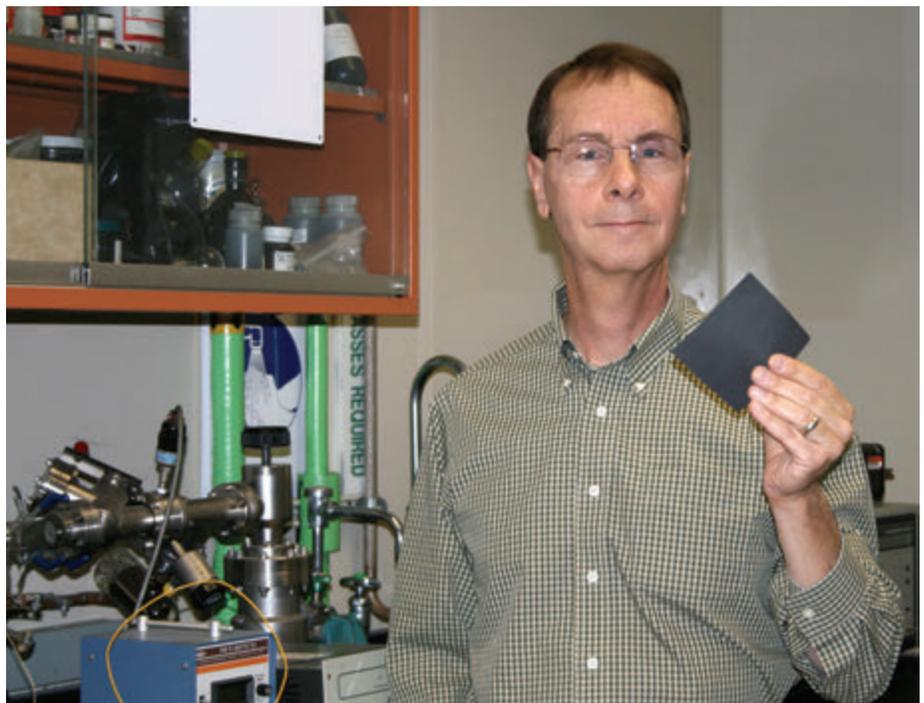
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Dr. David Firsich



## unique features highlight offering

Scenic river views and a combination of unique features make 480 Vantage Point a rare find in today's real estate market. One of the newer buildings on the Mound campus, this four-story structure offers a large floor plate to support flexible office configurations and the following assets and amenities:

- 150-seat auditorium
- large executive conference room
- highly secured lobby
- two glass atrium spaces
- cafeteria
- raised-floor data center
- new HVAC system
- robust utilities and telecommunications capabilities
- new parking lot

The building's 89,290 square feet of space can be configured for one or multiple tenants. MMCIC will work with tenants on the internal modifications needed to tailor the space for use.



Interested? Miller-Valentine Group holds the listing, so you may call 937-293-0900 or drop an email to Pete Nichols ([pete.nichols@mvg.com](mailto:pete.nichols@mvg.com)) or Gerry Smith ([Gerry.smith@mvg.com](mailto:Gerry.smith@mvg.com)) or contact MMCIC president Mike Grauwelman at 937-865-4462. You may also visit our Web site at [www.mound.com](http://www.mound.com) for more information.

**“Scientist Capitalizes on Powerful Ideas”**  
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### A more economical process

Firsich is working on one of the most promising applications of his nanofiber paper with a Fortune 500 company that is developing the hydrogen fuel cell, an evolving technology for powering vehicles of the future. In the next generation of these fuel cells, Firsich's technology may provide a way to reduce the amount of high-priced platinum compounds needed as a catalyst for releasing the fuel cell's stored energy.

“The real hurdle has been the machine to make this product,” said Firsich, who has developed a production process with the help of a South Carolina company. “If you want to do practical nanotechnology, you need a way to manufacture.”

With the equipment designed and under construction, Firsich plans to bring the process to Ohio this spring. He hopes

to locate it at Mound and hire technical personnel to operate it.

### Part scientist, part entrepreneur

A scientist with DOE's Mound Labs for 15 years, Firsich started Inorganic Specialists in 1996, soon after the site's closure was announced. He has enjoyed a solid relationship with MMCIC from the beginning.

“I'm here because of the interaction with other companies at this site,” he said, noting his special partnership with Mound Technical Solutions in the development of hydrogen fuel cell test equipment as part of Ohio's Third Frontier initiative. “I like to use these companies' services whenever I can.”

In talking about his company, Firsich is equal parts entrepreneur and scientist.

“Doing things like this is always a risk,” he said. “But when you have good ideas, good things happen.”



Despite harsh weather conditions and widespread outages throughout southwest Ohio this fall, buildings at Mound did not lose power.

## we've got the power

Hurricane Ike blew through southwest Ohio for about three hours on September 14, but its impact was felt much longer. Property destruction, downed trees and power outages affected thousands of people and places of business.

While many local companies had to close for several days because they had no power, those located at the MATC were not affected.

“Our utilities are robust. These buildings and systems were built to withstand even the most severe weather conditions,” said MMCIC Operations Manager Frank Bullock. “MATC companies never lost power. It was business as usual.”



## BOARD MEMBER: mound offers opportunities, options

MMCIC Board member Keith Johnson approaches his position with the vision of a city planner and the pragmatism of a business development professional. Both perspectives have helped him contribute to Mound's redevelopment.

Johnson's first exposure to the project came in 1994 when he was hired by the city of Miamisburg to replace city planner Michael Grauwelman, who had been appointed to lead the Mound redevelopment effort. Three years later, he was promoted to economic development director. In both positions, he helped to develop plans and negotiate business deals involving the Mound site. He was named to the MMCIC Board in 2004.

### 'Jumped at the chance'

"As city planner, I had worked with MMCIC on several projects related to Mound,"

he said. "We were eager to strengthen communication between the two organizations, so I jumped at the chance to join the board."

According to Johnson, Mound is destined to play a key role in the community's future.

"I can foresee Mound being reincarnated, but even better. In its new life, the site doesn't have to rely on just one niche (as it did under DOE)," he said. "There is synergy among the businesses there, and that's important. They feed off of each other."

### Opportunities created

Johnson believes MMCIC does well at utilizing its capacity to create opportunities to attract companies to the site.



Keith Johnson

"We listen to companies, hear their needs and bring together the right resources to help them," he said. "We have so many options. The services and support we offer separate Mound from other sites around the region."

### A great place

A Tennessee native and graduate of Austin Peay State University and the University of Tennessee, Johnson had originally planned to work in Miamisburg for just five years. With challenges and responsibilities growing over time, however, he changed his mind.

"It's a great job and a great town," he said. "I like the small town atmosphere. I don't miss the rat race."

## 'mound builders' honored

Two prominent individuals were recognized for their leadership and contributions to the success of the Mound's redevelopment as a scientific and business technology park.

A 2008 Mound Builder Award was presented to **Robert Lowden**, a local businessman and one of seven original MMCIC board members.

"Over the past 15 years, Bob Lowden has played a key role in building the foundation of MMCIC and sharpening our focus on attracting innovation-driven businesses," said MMCIC President Michael Grauwelman. "We are fortunate to have the benefit of his common sense approach to solving problems and making decisions."

While Lowden's business experience has been varied, his latest venture combines two favorite pastimes: golf and travel. He and his wife of 53 years, Barbara, are owners of Golf on Tour, a company that provides custom golf and sightseeing trips around the world.

"I've stayed with the Mound project because I feel that a successful outcome is important to the community," the Miamisburg native said.

A second Mound Builder Award was presented to nine-term U.S. Congressman **David Hobson**, a "true friend to our community," according to Miamisburg mayor Dick Church, Jr. While Hobson does not represent Miamisburg, the Springfield resident has served as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and worked for Congressional approval of funding to complete environmental cleanup at Mound.

"Congressman Hobson's leadership has been critical to the future of this site," said Church. "He has been a champion in the effort to ensure that the federal government meets its obligations to this community."

Church also praised Hobson's collaborative work on Mound's behalf with Congressman



2008 Mound Builders Rep. David Hobson and MMCIC Board member Robert Lowden

Mike Turner, former Congressman Tony Hall and other members of the Congressional delegation.

A successful local businessman, Hobson served in the Ohio Senate from 1982 to 1990. He was elected in 1990 to represent Congressional District 7, which includes parts of Springfield, Xenia, Fairborn and Beavercreek.

The Mound Builder award is now in its third year.





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**FRONTLINE** is a summary of news

and information about the

Mound Advanced Technology

Center. It is published for

stakeholders by the Miamisburg

Mound Community Improvement

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Please call us at 937-865-4462.

## new systems save energy, boost bottom line

Like so many other organizations and businesses around the country, Mound is getting “green.” The first steps toward greater environmental responsibility are focused on reducing power consumption.

Within the past year, MMCIC has invested \$325,000 to equip three buildings with new HVAC controls. The systems are connected to the Internet and can be monitored and regulated remotely through a Web-based interface. The feedback from the HVAC systems is continuous and in real time.

“It allows us to detect problems and inconsistencies in how the systems are operating,” said Operations Manager Frank Bullock. “We can make adjustments and fix some problems from the central monitoring location – without even touching the actual controls.”

According to Bullock, the new system should help to reduce tenants’ power usage by up to 30 percent.

