
Monday, April 6, 2009

Contact: Nancy Engel, Executive Director, Economic Development Council, (941) 748-4842, ext. 127
Jennifer Whitehead, Co-Owner, 1800Endoscope.com, (941) 792-7138, sales@1800endoscope.com

Veterinary medical device maker launches new product for global markets from Bradenton location

Bradenton, FL – A Bradenton company that has patents pending on one of the world’s first affordable, portable veterinary endoscopes has launched the second generation of the PortaScope® device, which is assembled in Bradenton, according to Nancy Engel, executive director of the Economic Development Council, Manatee Chamber of Commerce (EDC). The company will exhibit the instrument and other products in June at HOSPITALAR, the leading health trade show in Brazil and Latin America, with the help of a \$1,000 international trade grant facilitated by the EDC.

“1800Endoscope.com is one of our local success stories,” Engel said. “The business started in Bradenton 10 years ago and sells its products worldwide, mainly via the Internet. The owners saw an opportunity in a niche market and went for it.”

1800Endoscope.com LLC manufactures, assembles, sells and re-sells endoscopes for the medical and veterinary markets. The devices allow physicians and veterinarians to view the inner workings of people, pets and large animals using video technology. The company manufactures and assembles various devices at its Bradenton location. Sales figures were not disclosed by the private company, but co-owner Jennifer Whitehead said the market for the company’s new PortaScope® device could be 50,000 units per year, worldwide. The company has 8 employees working in 2,400 square feet at a West Bradenton location and maintains a small international sales staff in Miami.

“Our PortaScope® makes video endoscopy much more affordable than previous devices, and there is a huge pent-up demand for this kind of non-invasive diagnostic tool. We could conduct our business from almost any location in the world,” said Whitehead, who grew up on Anna Maria Island. “My husband, Wayne Natt, started the business in Bradenton 10 years ago after moving here as an employee of another endoscope company. This is where we want to live, and we are finding all the resources we need to continue our business growth.”

The EDC facilitated a \$1,000 international trade grant for the company to attend HOSPITALAR in Sao Paulo, Brazil in June and is assisting Whitehead in networking with local contacts in the veterinary field, Engel said.

About the EDC

The Economic Development Council, a division of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, is the sole organization responsible for developing and implementing programs designed to attract new value-added businesses and to assist in the retention and growth of targeted existing businesses in Manatee County. Information: www.ManateeEDC.com.

#