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Making Moon

Posted by admin | Filed under Uncategorized



Mike Weinstein had encouraged me to come by this week as the plasma gun would be up and running. How could I say no to that? Walking in the entrance of the industrial building there was a familiar smell of rock and dust and heat, which puzzled me until I remembered my grandfathers basement, with it's rock cutters and polishers and tumblers. Mike introduced himself with a grin, a quick wipe of dusty hands on jeans and a handshake. I followed him up some stairs to a room that looked as bright as the sun. I expected the "we can't go in there right now" speech but instead had a welding helmet handed to me with a quick "you gotta see this"! I put the helmet on, was immediately unable to see a thing, and cautiously made my way into the next room, trying to keep clear, by feel, of what I assumed must be at least a 400 kv power supply. In the center of the room was indeed a sun; a plasma arc melting rock, which turned to glass and streamed out of the bottom of the furnace in a 10 ft long thin strand of lava into a quenching bucket below. Mike and his team were making moon dust. Incredible!

Mike and his colleague Sheryl Genco explained the business.

Zybek Advanced Plasma is pretty much the only company in the world that can exactly match the composition and morphology of lunar soil. They have figured out how to use plasma to duplicate what happens to rocks when they are changed by the heat and energy of a meteorite explosion. So what? As NASA heads back to the moon, it is very important that we know how thing will behave up there; will the drills work, will the bearings on the rovers last, how hard will it



be to excavate the soil? Zybek makes the stuff that allows NASA to answer those questions. And it will likely need a lot of moon soil to do so.

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As an entrepreneurial space company, Zybek is as unusual as it is typical. A unique, important niche business created because the team is very, very good in their area of expertise; in this case, melting rocks with electricity. They connected with NASA, and NASA asked them to try to do something that NASA thought was pretty much impossible. Turns out they could.

In the past two months Diane Dimeff, the Center Director and I have been contacted by more than a dozen companies. All quite different, all with great stories, most are exciting opportunities. As part of the process of deciding who eSpace can best support, we are being introduced to some really exciting developing companies. I had been invited to Zybek to see what they are doing after Mike had heard about what we were doing and thought that his company might be a good candidate for an eSpace company; a team with a great technology, needed by NASA, looking for a partner that could help them with the ins and outs of developing into a thriving successful space business. Zybek does look like a great fit and be great fun to work with. We look forward to a developing relationship and will keep you posted..

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One Response to "Making Moon"



Tim Tramutt Says:

April 13th, 2009 at 7:39 pm

This post reminded me of an oil sample a guy gave me at my place of work. It was oil extracted from the earth nearly 2 miles deep. The guy said it had paraffin in it, hence I thought about actuators and eSPACE. I can see the paraffin on top of the oil!! Just thought I would share because I thought it was interesting. The guy said not all oil has paraffin in it.

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