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MICRONANO

New Year's Greetings



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I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to all for a happy and prosperous 2007. I have no idea what kind of a year this will turn out to be, but I hope to try and make it a good one.

Last year's increases in the price of oil, materials, and parts have cast shadows over the recovery of the Japanese economy, particularly in the manufacturing industry, which had been gradually progressing supported by firm domestic demand. At the same time, major defects damaging the product reliability of well-known companies that are the face of Japan have occurred. These incidents are shaking Japan's manufacturing industry to its core and possibly weakening and endangering the basic technology in design, production, and product evaluation that has thus far supported the manufacturing industry.

Newly elected Prime Minister Abe last year hammered out the Innovation 25 policy, saying that he intended to make Japan the world leader in innovation. This is a long-term strategy initiative aimed at 2025 that should lead to the creation of basic technology innovations to support existing industries as well as innovation seeds in nano, bio, and other frontier technologies.

The Micromachine Center promotes research and development in MEMS (Micro Electro Mechanical Systems). MEMS are small, high-precision, low-cost, low-energy frontier technologies that are now being applied in a diversity of industrial fields such as information and telecommunications, automotives, biotechnology, and medicine, and their market is gradually continuing to expand. MEMS technologies are attracting attention as basic technologies vital for strengthening the international competitiveness of major areas within Japan's manufacturing industry by increasing differentiation and the added value of key parts. Against this background, the MEMS Industry Forum (MIF) was established in April last year as a special committee within the MMC with the purpose of providing support for the further development of MEMS industries and contributing to the strengthening of the international competitiveness of Japanese industry. The Forum's activities are broad-ranging - including the promotion of MEMS technology R&D, a foundry service network, industry-academia-government collaboration, researcher and engineer training, regulation and standardization, and overseas expansion - and the Forum's member businesses take a central role in the promotion of policy recommendations and industrial exchange/revitalization that concern fundamental issues for MEMS industrial expansion.

In November 2006, the Micromachine Center hosted Micro/Nano 2006 at the Tokyo International Forum. Comprising the MEMS Forum - the first public presentation of information by the MIF - Micromachine Exhibition, MEMS International Standardization Workshop, International Micromachine/Nanotechnology Symposium, and the Report of MemsONE Project Achievements, this event provided an excellent opportunity for people to see all at one time the latest technologies and industrial trends in the micromachine field and was extremely well received. In 2007 the event will move to Tokyo Big Sight and plans are for it to be held on an even grander scale than before. I hope that you will kindly participate and cooperate in this event.

Through the generation of innovation, the Micromachine Center will continue with our activities aimed at establishing basic technology for and the industrialization of micromachines and MEMS in order to contribute to the maintenance and further strengthening of the international competitiveness of Japan's manufacturing industry.

In conclusion, I would like to ask for your continuing support and understanding of our efforts and again warmly wish everyone a fruitful and prosperous 2007.