



USPAE
U.S. Partnership for
Assured Electronics

NEWS FROM THE U.S. PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSURED ELECTRONICS (USPAE)

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USPAE DEVELOPING PUBLIC-PRIVATE VENTURE TO CATALYZE ADVANCED U.S. CIRCUIT BOARD MANUFACTURING CAPABILITIES

October 2, 2023 (WASHINGTON) – In the first known effort of its kind in the United States, a new public-private venture could answer the need for ultra-high-density interconnect (UHDI) printed circuit boards (PCBs) and integrated circuit (IC) substrates used in everything from automobiles and medical devices to advance defense weapon systems.

Such a venture would catalyze domestic production of UHDI PCBs with manufacturing services, increased demand, workforce development, and research for technologies, processes and materials. In addition to the unique aspect of being a production facility, this venture would help transition UHDI PCB manufacturing capability to U.S. manufacturers as soon as they are ready.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) recently [announced](#) a \$754,000 award to the U.S. Partnership for Assured Electronics (USPAE) to develop a plan that will quickly bring much-needed manufacturing capabilities to the U.S. electronics industry. The award follows USPAE-led workshops to find an approach that supports both private industry and defense needs for domestic UHDI and substrate manufacturing capabilities.

“There is an urgent need in the United States for UHDI PCBs and IC substrates that are currently supplied mostly by foreign manufacturers. These overseas dependencies create economic and national security risks,” said Nathan J. Edwards, USPAE’s executive director. “USPAE envisions this effort as a market catalyst to rebuild and strengthen the entire domestic PCB industry as quickly as possible.”

Joe O’Neil, whose nearly 30 years in the electronics industry includes leading PCB manufacturers and servicing OEMs with contract manufacturing services, will direct the development effort for the partnership.

“The results of this effort will be transparent and available for the entire industry to leverage in their own operations,” said O’Neil. “With that vision in mind, we need and invite industry input to shape what this effort will look like.”

The USPAE team led industry and government leaders through a collaborative process to arrive at this approach. Industry participants included large defense contractors as well as PCB manufacturers and materials providers that spanned small, medium, and large enterprises.

Participating PCB manufacturers produce more than 80% of DoD’s custom printed circuit boards, highlighting the security significance for developing both domestic manufacturing capabilities and the workforce needed to staff the growing industry.

With input from across the manufacturing spectrum, though, USPAE expects outputs from the partnership to benefit non-defense industries in addition to those in defense.

USPAE predicts a rapid launch for the public-private venture, with plans for UHDI manufacturing delivered to the DoD in four months and substrate manufacturing in eight months.

“This public-private venture will deliver to the U.S. a necessary electronics manufacturing capability that it currently does not have – in far less time, for a lot less money, and with smaller workforce needs than is the case in the semiconductor industry,” Edwards said.

Interested parties who want to provide input on this public-private venture can lend their insights through USPAE’s website under www.uspae.org/PCBMarketCatalyst. On this page, people can also sign up for updates and find more information.

About U.S. Partnership for Assured Electronics (USPAE)

USPAE helps ensure the U.S. government (USG) has access to resilient and trusted electronics supply chains. An independent industry association, USPAAE strengthens interactions between the USG and leaders in the electronics industry and academia. It facilitates collaboration on electronics innovations, helps solve government challenges, and accelerates the adoption of new technologies. USPAAE is a non-profit organization and its members are organized in the U.S. or its allied countries. They are leaders in researching and developing innovative technologies and experts in designing, prototyping and producing advanced electronics. All have committed to high standards in quality, cybersecurity, anti-counterfeiting and supply chain risk management, helping ensure they are resilient, trusted and secure. USPAE.org

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