



**Strategic Impact Plan
2021 – 2024**

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Optics Valley Strategic Impact Plan 2021 – 2024

Introduction

In October 1992, the Arizona Optics Industry Association (AOIA) was formed as the first optics industry cluster in the world. At the end of December 2016, AOIA was dissolved as an independent organization, and its work continues as Optics Valley, a Committee of the Arizona Technology Council (AZTC). Today, Optics Valley is recognized as a world-renowned industry cluster representing the optics, photonics and astronomy communities in Arizona.

Mission (This is today and for the foreseeable future.)

The mission of Optics Valley is to catalyze, convene and connect optics, photonics, astronomy, and supporting business interests throughout Arizona.

Vision 2024 (This is what we strive to be at the end of 2023 when the SBA contract is complete.)

In 2024, with over 200 members throughout Arizona, Optics Valley is widely recognized as one of the leading global clusters for optics, photonics and astronomy. Our members have a strong sense of community and a culture of cooperation and collaboration to foster continued industry growth. We are undisputedly the most active Committee in the Arizona Technology Council (AZTC), and our members participate actively in other AZTC programs and benefits.

It is important to note that our members come from the broadest sense of the optics industry. We include not only companies with a direct focus on technology improvements, but we also embrace application and end user companies who implement these creative innovations. In addition, we actively solicit supply chain and other support organizations. Additionally, we have a wide variety of individual and student members.

We have quarterly business meetings in both Tucson and Phoenix. Member participation has matured to where there are active subgroups focused on specific end-user industries and opportunities, including medicine, aerospace and defense, and Quantum Information Science (QIS).

Ongoing support programs include the on-line Member Directory, the bi-weekly FOCUS newsletter, monthly networking and subgroup meetings, as well as Tech Series webinars, which are promoted and broadcast worldwide. In addition, our dynamic website is always current and filled with valuable information, including a company job board. Finally, Optics Valley sponsors an Other Transaction Opportunities (OTA) consortium to assist companies to respond to Federal opportunities including SBIR/STTR.

We maintain worldwide strategic collaborations and partnerships including membership in SPIE, OSA and IEEE. Annually, there is an Optics Valley “pavilion” in many key worldwide conferences and exhibitions. We continue to play a leadership role in the Global Photonics Alliance (GPA), a group of over 50 optics and photonics clusters. In addition, we maintain close relationships with UArizona, especially the Wyant College of Optical Sciences, as well as the Arizona Tech Parks.

Our flagship event continues to be Arizona Photonics Days (APD), held annually in Tucson, just prior to Photonics West. We attract over 250 attendees to this event where there is an active exchange of both company and technical information, as well as lots of networking time to build our worldwide collaborative relationships.

In order to support our industry growth, Optics Valley is heavily involved in workforce development. Our Advisory Committee has helped build optics training at Pima Community College (PCC) into a complete independent program that is a model for other similar programs. In addition, we serve as a hub for apprentice/internship programs for both university and high school students.

In order to develop the pipeline for tomorrow's workforce, we are active in optics education in K-12 programs. We work closely with the AZTC SciTech Institute to promote the inclusion of optics curriculum in STEM programs throughout the state. We also work with Pima JTED and high schools throughout our region to expand the optics content to more locations in their programs.

Our members are active in the entrepreneurial community, many providing coaching and mentoring to fledgling companies in support of UArizona and community incubator and accelerator programs. There is a monthly informal get together to help young companies get to know each other. We have a focused sub-group within the Desert Angels to provide a vehicle for investment opportunities.

We are active in the community to enhance visibility and awareness of our important enabling industry. This is highlighted by the annual celebration of the International Day of Light on May 16th. In addition, we participate and sponsor many events throughout the year in both Tucson and Phoenix. We have also produced informational videos for both the community and corporate attraction.

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In the area of public policy, we cooperate with and support the National Photonics Initiative (NPI) and the Congressional Photonics Caucus. We have a close relationship with the Arizona Governor's Office, the Arizona Commerce Authority, and county/city administrations throughout the State of Arizona.

Finally, Optics Valley is financially and organizationally stable. We have an elected Advisory Board, made up of member volunteer leaders, which provides guidance and direction to our full time paid Executive Director, who is an employee of AZTC. He/she is supported by other AZTC employees who share joint duties. Optics Valley finances are provided by sponsorships and event fees as well as dedicated endowments.

2021 Optics Valley and AOI Objectives

Overall 2024 Goal: Optics Valley is a sustainable organization after the SBA Arizona Optics Initiative (AOI) program is completed at the end of 2023.

2021 Objective (Objective Lead)

Establish an ongoing Optics Valley program in the **Phoenix** area. (Jack)

Develop a proactive program to interact with all **government** levels from city to Federal. (John)

Create Optics Valley **organizing documents** that guide transition to, and support of, a self-sustaining organization. (Mark)

Design an **education** and implementation plan to feature optics in both STEM and Career and Technical Education (CTE) through the state. (John)

Develop and implement a **coaching and mentoring** program that provides measurable progress for both ongoing and entrepreneurial companies (Don)