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Hitachi High-Tech to Establish a Process Engineering Center in the U.S.

—Expanding the Process Equipment Business by Strengthening Customer Support Capabilities—

Hitachi High-Technologies Corporation (TOKYO: 8036, Hitachi High-Tech) has decided to establish a Process Engineering Center in the suburbs of Portland, Oregon in the U.S., for the purpose of strengthening its overseas customer support capabilities in the semiconductor process equipment business.

Expanding the Evaluation Laboratory operated by Hitachi High Technologies America, Inc. (President: Masahiro Miyazaki; Head Office: Chicago, Illinois), a wholly owned subsidiary of Hitachi High-Tech, the Process Engineering Center will include a new clean room. The Center will be equipped with design and demonstration lab functions, along with other features. Plans call for the Center have a total floor space of approximately 3,800 m² (40,900 ft²) with a total investment amount of approximately 2.4 billion yen. By opening the Center, Hitachi High-Tech will improve its ability for customer responsiveness and efficiency in business operations, with the view to driving further business expansion.

In the semiconductor manufacturing equipment business, Hitachi High-Tech offers a product lineup spanning etching systems, metrology & inspection equipment, and back-end process & assembly equipment. In this field, Hitachi High-Tech has expanded business globally targeting Japan and the North America region, as well as South Korea, Taiwan region and other Asian regions.

The Process Engineering Center to be newly established will be the Hitachi High-Tech Group's first full-fledged overseas development site for semiconductor manufacturing equipment. Traditionally, Hitachi High-Tech has conducted development, design, demonstration and other functions related to process equipment at its primary base in the Kasado area (Kudamatsu-shi, Yamaguchi Prefecture) of Japan. By enabling the Center to provide these and other functions in an integrated manner, Hitachi High-Tech will develop technology and achieve equipment performance on time to customer roadmaps. In addition, Hitachi High-Tech aims to transfer certain functions carried out in Japan to the Center. These functions include assembly and parts procurement of process modules and other items fitted to newly developed link-type platforms*, which will be conducted locally. In doing so, Hitachi High-Tech will strive to improve production lead times, while reducing its exposure to foreign exchange risk associated with the yen's appreciation, in addition to expanding the scale of its business.

Through the foregoing measures, Hitachi High-Tech will further improve and expand its development support framework for overseas customers, while promoting highly efficient and speedy business operations eyeing the development of products addressing 450 mm wafers.

Hitachi High-Tech plans to start construction of the Center in March 2013, with completion scheduled for September 2013. Operations will commence successively thereafter.

Beginning with the establishment of the Process Engineering Center in the U.S., Hitachi High-Tech will globally develop and strengthen the business foundations of its semiconductor process equipment business, where it must address cutting-edge technologies such as finer design rules allowing higher device density and lower power consumption. As a development partner of customers on the cutting-edge, Hitachi High-Tech will vigorously press ahead with Joint Development Programs (JDP), with the aim of further maximizing the value provided to customers.

* Link-type platforms: A high-speed, state-of-the-art wafer transfer system developed by Hitachi High-Tech with its own unique concept. The system enhances productivity by linkage of multiple vacuum transfer units, along with achieving extendibility by enabling various process chambers to be equipped through modularization design concept. Hitachi High-Tech has already started accepting orders of this system for mass production of the most advanced devices.

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