

Hartop of Yost Engineering wins innovation award

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Submitted Photo

Francesca Hartop accepts award at ceremony in Athens, Ohio.

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Francesca Hartop of Yost Engineering was named Entrepreneur of the Year at the Innovation Awards Gala celebrating creative

innovation in Southeast Ohio and TechGROWTH Ohio's (Third Frontier) Fifth anniversary at Ohio University's Baker Ballroom in Athens, Ohio Tuesday night.

"I was very surprised," Hartop said. "OU Athens does a lot as far as sponsoring and spinning off research from the university. I know Shawnee (State University) is looking to do similar things here. I was surprised and rather delighted that they recognized a company from Portsmouth for that. I saw the list of the people that had been nominated for that and felt kind of honored just to be in that group - and was absolutely stunned when they called me up there for that."

Yost Engineering, located on Second Street in Portsmouth, has two divisions - the Health Care Division and a Technology Division.

"On our Health Care Division side we basically run a bunch of systems using various A.I. (Artificial Intelligence), as well as coding staff to take complex regulatory information from Medicare and private payers in the health care industry in general, and condense that into databases and tools that health care providers, as well as payers can use in trying to manage health care information, especially on the billing, the reimbursement side," Hartop said. "On our technology side, one of the things that steers us towards this is our Three Space Sensor. Our Three Space Sensor is a miniature IM unit, and that's something that basically, as an object moves, it basically describes how it's turning, twisting, accelerating, stopping. And so that can be used in anything - for example, sports analysis to rehab. We also work with the Department of Defense on some of these things. We have it on entertainment and gaming. So, for example, if you want like an immersive environment or virtual reality set up, you can use these to determine how the person is moving, looking, viewing, reaching out and doing things."

Hartop said Yost Engineering works with entities across the country and into other countries.

"We don't really have a large market here in Portsmouth. We don't do much locally," Hartop said. "We arrange IT support to

like Hill View (Retirement Center) and the City Health Department. We do a little bit for them, and 95 percent of our revenues come from even outside of the state of Ohio."

Why is a business with international ties located in Portsmouth?

"When we started, Paul (Yost), my co-founder, was still teaching at the (Shawnee State) University and we knew that there were really good students graduating from Shawnee," Hartop said. "They grew up in the area, their parents were here for some reason, and these were our engineers coming out of there, and we both felt if we could find a way to keep them employed and do something here, that's better than these people having to leave family and friends and people they've grown up with to go get a job somewhere else because there weren't those opportunities here. So, although Portsmouth isn't exactly the center of a bunch of tech innovation, we didn't see that as a reason we couldn't start that here and try to get some of that culture going and at the same time, with the internet and broadband, you can be almost anywhere, and have a company like this as long as you have bandwidth and the ability to connect with everyone."

Hartop said she was surprised to have been selected to receive the award.

"I am thrilled and I am very honored," Hartop said. "I was completely stunned last (Tuesday) night, and I was speechless for a moment."

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